



National Federation of  
State High School  
Associations

# Memorandum

**To:** State Association Executive Directors

**From:** William M. Heinz, MD  
Chair, NFHS SMAC

**Subject:** Heat Stroke Alert

**Date** August 25, 2015

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Dr. Kristen Kucera, the Director of the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR), has just brought to my attention that 6 catastrophic heat stroke events (5 confirmed, 1 possible) have occurred so far this year in high school football. In 2014 we had a total of 3 heat strokes (1 fatal) plus 2 fatal cases of overhydration/water intoxication reported. In 2013 we had 1 non-fatal heat stroke. This represents a significantly higher number of heat stroke events compared to each of the past 2 years, and it must be stopped. Remember, this is not just a football issue. All athletes in all fall sports are at risk.

As you know, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) just reported that July 2015 was the hottest month on record in the United States, and expects August to also be hotter than normal. This means that School Administrators, Athletic Directors, Coaches and Athletic Trainers need to remain hyper-vigilant about preventing, detecting and treating heat illness. I continue to believe that heat illness is 100% preventable and it remains inexcusable that any student athlete is injured by it. Please review the following “Pillars for Exertional Heat Stroke Prevention and Treatment,” provide by Dr. Douglas Casa at the Korey Stringer Institute. Also, please consult the NFHS SMAC Position Statements on “Recommendations for Maintaining Hydration to Optimize Performance and Minimize the Risk for Exertional Heat Illness” and “Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention”, the NATA Handout on “Heat Illness” and the free NFHSLearn course on “Heat Illness Prevention.”

The link to the two NFHS SMAC Position Statements:  
<http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/smac-position-statements-and-guidelines/>

The link to the handout from the NATA on Heat Illness:  
<http://www.nfhs.org/media/1015650/2015-nata-heat-illness-handout.pdf>

The link to the handout from Korey Stringer Institute:  
<http://www.nfhs.org/media/1015695/ksi-5-pillars-of-exertional-heat-stroke-prevention-2015.pdf>

The link to the free NFHSLearn online course “Heat Illness Prevention”  
<http://nfhslearn.com/courses/34000>

With your assistance and leadership, we can stop this very worrisome and potentially deadly series of heat-related incidents across the country.

Thank you for all your help!