

# On The Alert!

**Date:** May 12, 2017  
**Attention:** ASCIP Members  
**Affected Department(s):** Risk Management/Administration, Athletics, Trainers  
**Applicability:** K-12, Community Colleges, and Charter Schools

## EXERTIONAL HEAT STROKE, RECTAL THERMOMETERS, AND DISTRICT

Several ASCIP members have recently questioned the need to utilize rectal thermometers to measure the core body temperature of heat illness victims.

Pertinent to this concern, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) position statement opines that "...[e]xercise (heat) exhaustion ... is difficult to distinguish from exertional heat stroke without measuring rectal temperature." The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) position statement on exertional heat illness can be found at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC164365/>.

In a hypothetical scenario when an athlete collapses on a school's training field during a hot day, the athletic trainer calls an ambulance to transport the athlete to a local hospital for observation and evaluation.

During the wait time before the ambulance arrives, the athletic trainer provides first aid assistance, which can include

assessing the athlete's temperature and cold water immersion to reduce core temperature. **ASCIP recommends that the athletic trainer follows his or her District's approved protocol. These protocols should be approved in writing by a licensed physician and reviewed on an annual basis.**

While ASCIP cannot provide medical guidance, the most relevant need when an athlete is overheated is to reduce the athlete's core temperature. Therefore any method used, such as cold water immersion, would be the fastest and most effective action. However, in the event an athletic trainer is in a situation where they are directed by protocol to use a rectal thermometer (or any other invasive procedure), the procedure must be observed by another adult.

### For more information

You can also review ASCIP's **Heat Illness Prevention Revisions Effective May 1, 2015** at <http://ascip.org/risk-services/bulletins-alerts/> and ASCIP's **Athletics Risk Management Guidelines** at <http://ascip.org/risk-services/guidelines-best-practices/>.



**Please contact your ASCIP risk services consultant at (562) 404-8029 to discuss further.**