

AACCA Recommendations and Guidelines for College Cheerleading safety

(These guidelines apply to all camps, clinics, practices, games and special events. We recommend that collegiate cheerleading programs adopt these safety guidelines.)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach.
2. All practice sessions should be supervised by the coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e.. use of tumbling mats: away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.)
3. Advisors/coaches should recognize a squad's particular ability level and should limit the squad's activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers to the squad's talents as a whole and individuals should not be pressed to perform activities until safely perfected.
4. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
5. Professional training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads.
6. All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength building program.
7. A structured stretching exercise and flexibility routine should precede and follow all practice sessions, game activities, pep rallies, etc.
8. Tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be limited to appropriate surfaces.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Partner Stunts, Pyramids and Tosses

1. All partner stunts, pyramids and basket tosses shall be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution. "Hands on" spotting is required until new stunts are mastered.
2. An additional spotter that assists in the dismount is required for the following:
 - a. Twisting dismount with more than a 360-degree rotation.
 - b. Flip dismounts from shoulder height partner stunts.
 - c. Stunts which use only one arm of the base for support.
3. In all pyramids, there must be at least two spotters designated for each person who is above two persons high and whose base does not have at least one foot on the ground. One of the spotters must be in the back and the other can be at the side or in the front of the pyramid to spot the front. This spotter can move to the back to catch the cradle. The spotter must assist the top person when dismounting.
4. Pyramids over "two high" should be limited to appropriate surfaces.
5. Cradles from pyramids over two high must use at least two catchers.
6. Toe touch dismounts off of pyramids two high or above must use three catchers. Toe touch dismounts off a single layer table top must have at least one spotter.
7. Basket tosses or similar tosses may only be performed from ground level and shall be cradled by three catchers (the original two bases and a spotter at the head and shoulder area). These tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the top person.
8. Pyramids over "two high" should be performed only during pre-game, time-outs, or half-time activities.
9. During indoor events, basket tosses should be performed only during pre-game, time-outs, or half-time activities.

B. Tumbling

1. All tumbling activities should be reviewed and approved by the advisor/coach prior to execution.
2. Tumbling Skills must use at least one spotter until performance consistency is demonstrated.
3. A clear accurate communication between performer and spotter must be established prior to attempting a skill.

4. New tumbling skills should be mastered on a mat whenever possible. If a mat is not available, "over spotting" should be employed.
5. Tumbling should only be performed on appropriate surfaces.

SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS

A. Partner Stunts, Pyramids and Tosses

1. The use of trampolines, mini-trampolines, springboards, or any height increasing apparatus is prohibited.
2. Pyramids higher than "two and one-half persons in height" are prohibited. (Pyramid height is measured by body lengths. A shoulder stand is defined as "two persons high"; a chair or shoulder sit is defined as "one and one half persons high"; an extended stunt on top of a thigh stand is defined as three persons high, and is prohibited.)
3. Single based split catches are prohibited.
4. Flips into or from partner stunts and straddle catches are prohibited. (Exceptions: Flips from basket tosses or elevator tosses, front flips from shoulder height stunts and front and back flips from shoulder height elevators are allowed to a cradle with one additional spotter.)
5. Leg pitch, toe pitch, walk-in and "smoosh" front and back flips are prohibited.
6. Full twist dismounts from a chair are prohibited.
7. Twisting dismount greater than two rotations are prohibited. (Exception: side facing stunts - i.e. Arabesque, Scorpion, Double twisting full twist cradling to the front are legal.)
8. Front, back and side tension drops are prohibited.
9. All flips with two rotations or greater are prohibited.
10. All flips from pyramids except a forward three-quarter roll dismount to a cradle are prohibited.
11. The top person in a partner stunt, pyramid or transition cannot be dismounted or tossed to be purposefully caught in an inverted body position.
12. You may not jump, flip or dive over, under or through partner stunts, pyramids, or individuals from basket tosses, partner stunts or other tosses from hands.
13. Flips from partner stunts, pyramids or basket tosses should not be performed indoors without the use of cushioned mats.

B. Tumbling

1. Somersaults greater than one rotation are prohibited.
2. Twists greater than two rotations are prohibited.
3. Dive rolls are prohibited (a dive roll is defined as a forward roll wherein the performer is airborne prior to the completion of the forward roll).
4. Tumbling skills performed over, under, or through partner stunts, pyramids, or individuals are prohibited.

Revised guidelines will be released on an annual basis by the AACC. Call 800-533-6583 for the most recent guidelines.

Note: The above safety guidelines are general in nature and are intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics (including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps) should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach.

The American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors makes no warranties or representations, either expressed or implied, that the above guidelines will prevent injuries to individual participants.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Base - The bottom of a partner stunt or pyramid.
- Top - The top person of a partner stunt or pyramid.
- Spotter - A person who assists with any tumbling skill or who is responsible for assisting with or catching the top person in a partner stunt or pyramid.
- Cradle - A dismount from a partner stunt or pyramid, in which the top person is caught in a face-up, piked position before being placed on the floor or remounting into another stunt or pyramid.
- Free Falling Flip - An unassisted aerial somersault where the top person is not in constant contact with the base(s).
- Vault - A dismount with a three-quarter rotation where the top person has contact (other than hand-to-hand) with another person.
- Suspended Roll - A dismount with a rotation where the top person has continuous hand-to-hand contact with the base(s) or spotter(s).
- Toe Pitch/Leg Pitch - A stunt (or a loading procedure into a stunt) in which the performer is assisted into a skill by being lifted at the foot or leg by another person.
- Split Catch - A stunt in which the top person is being held in a straddle position.
- Dive Roll - A forward roll where the body is airborne before the hands touch the floor.