

there's safety in numbers...



VARSITY SPIRIT

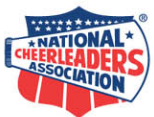
# A Parent's Guide to Cheerleading Safety



VARSITY SPIRIT



Partners in Coaches' Education

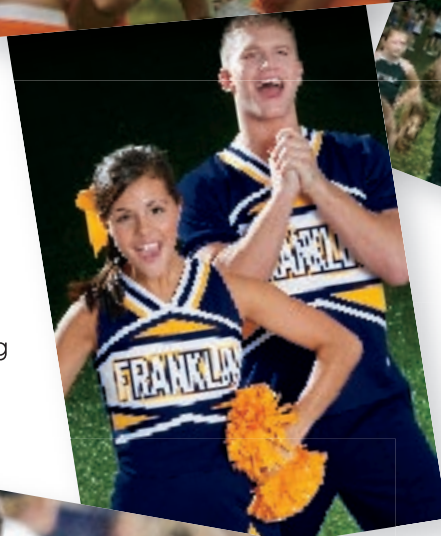


Cheerleading is a vigorous, athletic activity and Varsity Spirit Corporation's top priority is to help keep it safe. One way we work to improve cheerleader safety is through training and education. Last year alone, more than 350,000 cheerleaders and coaches received training at our camps and clinics. Another way we're taking the lead on safety in cheerleading is by being a resource on safety guidelines for parents. Varsity Spirit Corporation offers the following top five questions parents should be asking when their child joins a school cheerleading squad.



**1**  
**Is our coach AACCA certified through American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators safety course and has our school conducted the appropriate background checks?**

The American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators is the largest not-for-profit educational organization for cheerleading coaches. AACCA operates as an independent organization since its founding by Varsity Spirit Corporation. AACCA certification features safety awareness training with a safety test administered at the end of the training session.



**2**  
**Does our coach adhere to AACCA practice and performance guidelines?**

AACCA practice guidelines require direct supervision by a coach with practices held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e., use of appropriate mats, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.),

**3**  
**Does our coach ensure that performance skills are taught in the proper sequence using skills progression training, with an emphasis on training all squad members in proper spotting methods?**

Skills progression training ensures that cheerleaders build upon mastered technique when learning more difficult and advanced stunts or tumbling, i.e. cartwheel to round-off to back-hand spring. Spotters are responsible for assisting or catching the top person in a stunt with a priority to protect the head, neck, and shoulders of the top person coming off of a stunt.

**4**  
**Does my child's coach properly balance practice time between athletic training and spirit leadership instruction?**

Cheerleading is an activity that builds self confidence, leadership and communication skills and involves more than stunts and tumbling. Safety begins with leadership. Instilling these qualities in cheerleaders helps prevent accidents when all squad members hold safety as a priority. The stunts and tumbling involved in cheerleading should aid the cheerleader in generating excitement and participation by the fans. Performing difficult stunts only for the sake of athleticism should be avoided at games and reserved for competition venues with professional spotters and mats.

**5**  
**Does our squad have an emergency plan in place?**

A comprehensive emergency plan is necessary to provide a quick and effective response to an emergency situation with specific duties assigned to all responders. Sample emergency plans can be found at [www.varsity.com/safety](http://www.varsity.com/safety).

For more information, visit [www.aacca.org](http://www.aacca.org)