

# 2009-10 AACCA College Safety Rules

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## A. Definitions

1. **Base** - A person who is in direct contact with the performing surface and is supporting another person's weight.
2. **Controlled environment** – A performance environment that meets the following conditions: the surface is matted; the area is clear of non-cheer personnel; and the event is not a pre-game, game-time or a time-out. Basketball post-game, football half-time, an alumni function, practices and competition settings are all examples of a controlled environment if they are matted and sufficiently clear of non-cheer personnel.
3. **Cradle** - Dismount from a stunt/pyramid/toss in which the top person lands in a face-up, semi-piked position.
4. **Cupie/Awesome** – A stunt in which both of the top person's feet are in one hand of the base.
5. **Dive Roll** - An aerial forward roll where the feet of the performer are at or above the performer's waist prior to the hands making contact with the performing surface.
6. **Flatback** - A stunt in which the top person is in a face-up, straight-body position parallel to the performing surface.
7. **Flip** - When a person is airborne while the feet pass over the head.
8. **Height-increasing Apparatus** - Any type of equipment that increases the height of a skill.
9. **Helicopter Toss** - A stunt in which the top person is tossed into the air with the body parallel to the ground and completes a 360 degree horizontal rotation (like the blades of a helicopter.)
10. **Loading Position** - Any intermediate position below shoulder level that uses continuous motion to put a top person in a stunt or pyramid. Examples: Elevator/sponge load, basket load, smooch, scoop from the back, etc.
11. **Middle** - A person who is being supported by a base while also supporting a top person.
12. **Pyramid** - A skill in which a top person is being supported by a middle layer person.
13. **Rewind** - Skill in which the top person starts with BOTH FEET on the ground, is tossed into the air and performs a backward or side rotation into a stunt, pyramid or loading position (this would include a cradle).
14. **Spotter** - A person who is responsible for assisting or catching the top person in a partner stunt or pyramid. This person cannot be in a position of providing primary support for a top person but must be in a position to protect the top person coming off of a stunt or pyramid.
15. **Stunt** - A skill in which a top person is supported by a base or bases.
16. **Top** - A person who is either being supported by another while off of the performing surface or who has been tossed into the air by another person.
17. **Toss** - A movement by a participant or group of participants that propels a person into the air so that the person is airborne (i.e., free of contact with the performing surface).

## B. General Program 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 advisor/coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (e.g., use of appropriate matting, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.)
3. Prior to the performance of any skill, the immediate environment for the activity should be taken into consideration including, but not limited to proximity of non-squad personnel, performance surface, lighting and/or precipitation. Technical skills should not be performed on concrete, asphalt, wet or uneven surfaces or surfaces with obstructions.
4. Advisors/coaches should recognize the particular ability level of all participants and should limit the squad's activities accordingly. Participants should not be pressed to perform activities until they are safely prepared.
5. Skills that have not been mastered should be performed only in a supervised practice environment.
6. Thorough training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads.

7. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
8. All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength building program.
9. An appropriate warmup exercise should precede all cheerleading activities.
10. All programs should qualify cheerleaders according to accepted teaching progressions. Appropriate spotting should be used until all performers demonstrate mastery of the skill, and when spotting is required by specific rule.
11. In environments where there is close proximity to the athletic event and out of bounds plays pose a significant risk of injury to the participant, no technical skills should be performed while the ball is in play.
12. All partner stunts, pyramids, and tosses should be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution.

### **C. General Restrictions**

1. The use of any height-increasing apparatus (e.g. mini-trampoline, etc.) other than a spring floor is prohibited for performance.
2. The top person in a partner stunt, pyramid or transition cannot be released from bases with the intent to land or be caught in an inverted body position.
3. An individual may not jump, flip or dive over, under, or through partner stunts, pyramids or individuals from basket tosses, similar tosses, partner stunts or other tosses from hands.
4. Drops (knee, seat, thigh, front, back and split) from a jump, stand or inverted position are prohibited unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands/feet which breaks the impact of the drop.
5. Jewelry of any kind is prohibited (e.g., navel jewelry, tongue jewelry, earrings, necklaces, etc.) Medical bracelets are allowed provided they are taped to the body.
6. Soft-soled athletic shoes must be worn while cheering or competing. Gymnastics shoes, jazz shoes and/or boots are prohibited.
7. Basket and Elevator/Sponge Tosses are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.
8. Flipping skills into or from stunts, tosses or pyramids are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.
9. Two and one half high pyramids are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

### **D. Partner Stunts**

1. Twisting dismounts with more than a 360 degree rotation require an additional spotter that assists on the cradle.
2. **Released load-ins from a handstand position (stationary or through a handspring load-in) to a partner stunt require an additional spotter.**
3. Stunts in which the base uses only one arm for support require a spotter when:
  - a. the stunt is anything other than a cupie/awesome or basic liberty. All other one-arm stunts require a spotter (e.g., heel stretch, arabesque, high torch, scorpion, bow and arrow, etc.).
  - b. the load-in or dismount involves a twist. The spotter must be in place during the twist and assist on the cradle during twisting dismounts.
  - c. the top person is popped from one arm to the other.
4. Single based split catches are prohibited.

5. **Flips into or from partner stunts are prohibited, with the following exceptions. (Note this entire rule has been rewritten. Please read it carefully.)**
- a. Rewinds into a pyramid, stunt, loading position or cradle are allowed under the following conditions:
    - 1) The top person is limited to one and one quarter rotations and may not twist.
    - 2) Bases are limited to one quarter turn under the top person.
    - 3) An active spotter is required throughout the skill.
    - 4) If the rewind is continuous to a cradle, the spotter must assist in the cradle.
    - 5) In a rewind to a pyramid or to another base, the original base may serve as the spotter.
  - b. Flips from stunts in which the top person is in an upright position standing in the hand(s) of the base(s) are allowed under the following conditions:
    - 1) Front flips are allowed from shoulder level and below single base stunts to a cradle or the performing surface on the feet with assistance from the base.
    - 2) Front and back flips are allowed from shoulder level and below double base stunts to a cradle.
    - 3) The top person is limited to one and one quarter flipping rotation.
    - 4) Only dismounts to a cradle may have up to one half twist.
    - 5) Must have additional spotter active throughout the skill. In a single base stunt, the spotter may not assist in the initiation of the flip.
  - c. Flips from stunts in which the top person is in a horizontal position not being supported at their feet are allowed under the following conditions:
    - 1) Front flips and back flips from shoulder level double base stunts to a stunt, loading position, cradle or the performing surface with assistance from a base. Note that flips are not permitted from a horizontal position below shoulder level or from a single base.
    - 2) The top person is limited to one rotation and may not twist.
    - 3) A spotter is not required.
6. All leg pitch, toe pitch, walk-in, sponge, and straddle catch flips are prohibited.
7. Twisting dismounts greater than two rotations are prohibited. Exception: side facing stunts - i.e. Arabesque, Scorpion, double full twisting cradles to the front are legal.
8. Front, back and side tension drops are prohibited.

## E. Pyramids

- 1. Pyramids higher than 2 ½ body lengths are prohibited. Pyramid height is measured by body lengths as follows: chairs, thigh stands and shoulder straddles are 1 ½ body lengths; shoulder stands are 2 body lengths; extended stunts (i.e. extension, liberty, etc.) are 2 ½ body lengths. Exception: an extended stunt on top of a thigh stand is allowed.
- 2. In all pyramids, there must be at least two spotters designated for each person who is above two persons high and whose primary support does not have at least one foot on the ground. Both spotters must be in position as the top person is loading onto the pyramid. One spotter must be in the back and the other must be at front of the pyramid or at the side of the pyramid in position to get to the front. Once the pyramid shows adequate stability and just prior to the dismount, this spotter can move to the back to catch the cradle.
- 3. Cradles from pyramids over two high must use at least two catchers, one on each side of the top person.
- 4. All flips into or from pyramids are prohibited, with the exception of a forward flip dismount to a cradle and legal rewinds.
- 5. Front, back and side tension drops are prohibited.

## F. Tosses

1. Basket tosses or similar tosses may only be performed from ground level, can use no more than four bases, and must be cradled by three of the original bases, one of which must catch in a scoop under the head and shoulders.
2. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the top person.
3. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses cannot exceed one flipping and two twisting rotations.
4. **Twisting skills in basket tosses or similar tosses are only allowed in controlled environments (see definition for "controlled environments".)**
5. In flipping basket or elevator/sponge tosses (tuck, layout, or pike position) only two additional skills are allowed. One twisting rotation is considered to be one skill.

Examples:

### **Legal (two skills)**

Tuck flip, X-out, Full Twist  
Double Full-twisting Layout  
Kick, Full-twisting Layout  
Pike, Open, Double Full Twist  
Arabian Front, Full Twist

### **Illegal (three skills)**

Tuck flip, X-out, Double Full Twist  
Kick, Double Full-twisting Layout  
Kick, Full-twisting Layout, Kick  
Pike, Split, Double Full Twist  
Full-twisting Layout, Split, Full Twist

*Note: An Arabian Front followed by a 1 ½ twist is considered to be a legal skill.*

6. Basket and elevator/sponge load-ins can land in a stunt or pyramid provided that the toss does not significantly exceed the height of the intended skill. Flips into stunts or pyramids from a basket or elevator/sponge load-in are prohibited.

## G. Tumbling

1. Tumbling skills performed over, under or through partner stunts, pyramids or individuals are prohibited.
2. Tumbling skills that exceed one flipping rotation are prohibited.
3. Tumbling skills with two or more twisting rotations are prohibited.
4. Dive rolls are prohibited.
5. **Added 10/20/2009 - Airborne drops to a prone position on the performing surface are illegal. (Examples: A back flip or a jump landing in a pushup position is illegal. A handspring to a pushup position is legal as it is not airborne prior to the prone landing.)**

## H. Specific Basketball/Indoor Court Rules

1. On a basketball court surface, the following skills are prohibited except during halftime or postgame performances where the area is free of obstructions and non-cheer personnel, and all skills are performed on a matted surface. Pregame and timeouts are not exceptions to this rule and are subject to the listed restrictions.
  - a. Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses and other similar multi-based tosses.
  - b. Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person. **Exception: Cupies/awesomes are allowed with an additional spotter.**
  - c. Flips or released twists into or from partner stunts. **Exception: Front and back flips to a stunt or cradle are allowed if the top person is braced on both sides by hand/arm to hand/arm contact.**
  - d. Two and one half person high pyramids.
  - e. Inversions in stunts and pyramids. **Exception: Inversions that begin on the ground and go to an upright position where the top person is in constant contact with a base or spotter are allowed.**
  - f. Twisting tumbling skills.

The above safety rules are general in nature and are not intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics, including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, jumps and tosses should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach. The American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators makes no warranties or representations, either expressed or implied, that the above guidelines will prevent injuries to individual participants. For the most recent safety rules and information, visit <http://www.aacca.org>.