

EMERGENCY MEDICAL INTERVENTION GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES



The British Judo Association (BJA) takes the health and safety of its members seriously, especially those participating in the competition environment. The BJA has a duty of care and the safety of the players is at all times the first priority.

The following guidelines are provided for medical professionals who are referees and who find themselves in a situation where they may be required to intervene by their professional regulatory body if it could save harm. The general rule in BJA competitions is that only the appointed first aid team should administer aid to an injured player. The referee has the primary responsibility to recognise that medical aid is required, to stop the contest and summon medical assistance. Even if the referee is qualified to administer aid, it is generally not appropriate for them to do so, as this is the role of the first aid team.

On the rare occasion when an injury occurs that is suspected of being serious or life-changing and the official medical team does not have a currently fully qualified paramedic or doctor in the team, or where the medically qualified referee deems it necessary to intervene instantly to prevent further harm, it will be permissible for a referee possessing the qualifications to attend to the injured person, should they deem it appropriate.

The medically qualified referee, in an emergency, may be requested by the medical team to assist in an emergency while they are at the time refereeing a different contest. In this instance the referee should call 'matte' and the contest put 'on hold' until one of the judges or resting referees can take the place of the referee to continue the contest.

Medical professionals are not obliged to attend an accident or injury and the BJA cannot decide the issue of whether the individual would be in breach of their profession's rules and cannot define situations in which intervention of this nature would be necessary or appropriate. That is a matter for the professional judgement of the referee. If however they fail to intervene acting as a "bystander" when not employed in their capacity as a medical professional it would be a matter for the relevant regulator to determine whether that could be a breach of any professional responsibility.

There are a number of regulated and unregulated medical professionals attending judo events. Each one will have a code of conduct, and it must be up to every regulated professional to take personal responsibility to abide by the codes which apply to them. The decision of whether it is reasonable to intervene has to be up to the individual, depending on the circumstances, if they failed to intervene, or intervened unreasonably, or in contravention of their Regulatory Body's code, that is for their regulator to decide.

The law only requires a person to act reasonably and that they act only to their own level of competency and not be expected to do things for which they are not trained. For example it would not be reasonable for the lay person who does not have the appropriate medical knowledge to intervene, but if it was a medical professional with the appropriate qualifications, it would be reasonable for them to intervene if it could save harm. While the BJA does not require them to intervene, the BJA would support them if they acted reasonably.

The BJA insurance policy will protect a referee if they appropriately assisted an individual in an emergency situation and then were sued as a result of their intervention. The UK does not have litigious culture and there is little yet to suggest that claims of this type are being actively pursued. It is, in practice, extremely difficult to envisage (and no precedent has yet been set) how a victim could successfully sue an individual who rendered him aid in an emergency situation.

Approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting on 5th April 2016.

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Colin McIver
Sport Director
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