

# Safety Checklist

## Hammer/Weight

### Inspection routine

1. Inspect the surface of the ring for any protrusions or indentations. These can cause the athlete to lose their balance and potentially fall, causing injury
  - never throw the hammer or weight from a shot circle when the toe board is still in place
2. Make sure that the ring is swept and free of any grass, dirt or other material that may affect the traction of the competitors' shoes
3. Make sure that the red area is flagged off or otherwise partitioned so that non-competitors cannot wander into it
4. Make sure that the landing area will not create unusual bounces or ricochets.
  - don't allow anything foreign in the sector that may cause a bounce (i.e. markers)
  - large stones can be a problem as well, especially with the smaller hammers (5K and under)
  - make officials, workers and others aware of wet grass that will cause the hammer to skid
  - very hard ground can cause the hammer to bounce
5. Inspect the cage and netting at least once per week, and as needed if the implement comes in contact with the cage or its supports
  - Net cages are preferable to "cyclone fence" cages, since the netting will absorb much of the energy of the implement.
  - In the hammer, a double layer net cage, with the layers at least 2 feet apart, allows for greater energy dissipation.
  - Make sure that the doors work properly and can be moved.
  - Make sure that any gaps between the cage and the doors are covered with netting.
6. Consider replacing the netting as per the manufacturers recommendation
  - netting on outdoor cages will deteriorate more quickly than on indoor cages
7. Inspect the implement
  - Weight:
    - inspect the harness for frayed or torn straps
      - remember: repairs may only be made with manufacturer supplied parts
      - replace or repair torn straps BEFORE the next practice session or competition with that implement
      - duct tape, athletic tape, electrical tape - are not manufacturer supplied parts
  - Both: inspect the handles for cracks or burrs
  - Hammer:
    - tape the ends of the wires so that they will not catch on netting or clothing
    - look for nicks or kinks in the wire that may cause it to fail. Replace if necessary

### Practice Considerations

- Consider having a meeting with parents of athletes (and the athletes) to explain your safety procedures and why throwing safety is important
- Use pennants or other visual devices to indicate where the light red zone is
  - As much as possible, keep ALL athletes out of the light red zone
- Remember: the netting is used to retard the momentum of the ball - NOT stop it!
  - The hammer head can still penetrate the netting
  - The broken hammer wire can penetrate a hole in the netting
  - The cage should be sufficiently slack so that the implement will not bounce back toward the athlete in the circle
  - The red zone should be expanded to reflect this slackness. Use this procedure to determine the red zone around the cage:
    1. Pull on the netting (with a good amount of force) to see how far it is displaced toward the outside of the cage.
    2. Add an additional 3 feet to that point and mark the ground with a red line or stripe. This is a clear indicator to everyone that this is a potential danger area
- Practice/warm-up with implements does not begin until the coach is present
- Inspect any implement that has come in contact with any hard surface (ring, cage support, etc.) for damage

- Depending on the number of throwers and the number of implements, consider using "salvo throwing"
  - Assume that you have 5 implements and 10 throwers. Have the 1st 5 throwers each take a throw, then have the second five throwers retrieve them and takes their throws.
  - No one enters the red zone until all of the implements have been thrown.
  - Never allow athletes to throw anywhere other than into the landing sector.
- When practice is over, all implements should be put away.
- Have a set time for practice.
- Never allow unsupervised practice. You may be liable for negligence if you allow the athlete to practice outside of direct supervision.
  - check with your school solicitor for more information
  - consider private liability insurance
  - organize a "throwing club" with USATF membership to provide an additional level of indemnity
  - understand how your state views the terms "negligence" and "reasonable care"

## Competition Considerations

### Coaches:

- Identify the head official so that if problems arise, you know who to address
- Don't advocate or allow an athlete to warm-up in an unapproved area.
  - even taking "dry turns" with the implement can lead to danger - a slip, a loose wire, someone not paying attention, etc.
- If you see a potentially hazardous situation, bring it to the attention of the head official IMMEDIATELY.
  - This is also true if a situation becomes hazardous during the course of competition.
- Don't assume that the head official sees the potential hazard and has corrected it.
- If the situation is not corrected, and you feel that there is potential for injury to your athlete or another athlete, seek out the head field judge and point out the hazard, and the fact that you have asked the chief judge to address it.
- If not satisfied, make the tough call - do you want your athlete to continue with the potential for harm?
- Document the hazard through a formal protest.
  - documentation is key should there be any situation that would arise

### Officials:

- When the circle is closed from further warm-ups, place a cone in the center of the circle. This provides a strong visual reminder for the athlete that the circle is closed.
- During warm-ups, have an official at the cage door to regulate the entry of athletes.
  - Be observant and conscious of officials in the impact area, and give them enough time to retrieve the implement and remove it from the impact area.
- When the competition is completed, if possible, close the cage doors and secure them, if this is the conclusion of throwing from that facility for the day.
- Carry all implements back to the designated return area - never throw them back.
- If at all possible, ask meet management to do any mowing around the circle at least 2 days in advance of the competition, and to clear any grass clippings from the circle.
- Do not allow athletes or coaches into the impact area during warm-ups or competition.
- Refer to the inspection routine guidelines above.

## Supplies

- broom and or squeegee
  - circles can get wet and slippery
- towels
  - not only for the shoes, but also for the implements
- leaf blower
  - effective, fast and efficient way to keep a circle or runway clear of water, leaves, grass clippings, etc.
- extra hammer wires
- tape for securing hammer wire ends
- gloves for protection of the hands