



High School Drives Safety Checklist

In recent years, blood bank organizations have increasingly looked to high schools to meet our nation's blood supply needs. Donating blood is safe. But a [major study](#) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), in 2008, found that teenage donors are significantly more likely to experience donation-related medical complications. The study concluded: "The increasing dependence on recruiting and retaining young blood donors requires a committed approach to donor safety, especially at high school blood drives."

Parents, PTAs, and school administrators should take an active role, ensuring that the best safety practices are followed at your high school blood drive. Based on this medical literature, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Inspection and Observation Reports, and the recommendations of blood drive employees, the following check list may help you address safety concerns with your local blood operator.

1. **Will a Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Nurses Be Assigned to your Blood Drive?**

According to the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), assigning extra or experienced staff to high school blood drives may "[mitigate the rate and impact of donor reactions.](#)" The Workers Committee for Blood Drive Safety believes that one RN, and preferably a second licensed nurse should be present at every high school blood drive. Licensed nurses at your drive may be particularly important if the staff assigned to your drive lack adequate medical education, training, and experience. Blood drive operators vary in terms of assigning licensed nurses to high school drives. Ask your blood drive operator to make sure that at least one RN, and a second LPN is assigned to your drive. For more information, [click here](#).

2. **Adequate Staffing:** When talking to your mobile blood drive representative, review your goal for the number of people expected at your blood drive. Ask about staffing requirements, based on your projected numbers. Regardless of size, we recommend that every high school blood drive be assigned two additional staff, above the normal staffing requirement. For more information, [click here](#).

3. **Enforce Height and Weight Safety Requirements:** The medical literature has shown that gender, height and weight are key factors for assessing risk of adverse reactions. Low weight teens with less blood volume, are at greater risk of experiencing a loss of consciousness, which may result in injury.

Make sure your blood drive operator enforces height and weight requirements by measuring and weighing all teens before they donate blood. Scales should be set up at the blood drive to determine eligibility.

In addition, for 16-year olds who require parental consent, provide parents with the height and weight eligibility requirements. Parents should be aware if their child is on the borderline of meeting height and weight requirements, and may want to consider delaying consent for blood donation. For more information, [click here](#).

4. **Responses to Adverse Reactions and Injuries:** If a donor has a serious adverse reaction, ask the blood drive supervisor whether a Donor Reaction Injury Report (DRIR) has been initiated and whether documentation of the reaction has been recorded in the donor's Blood Donation Record. A review of FDA Inspection and Observation Reports lists failures to properly report, review and/or investigate donor reactions and injuries in nine Red Cross Blood Regions across the United States. For more information, [click here](#).
5. **Provide privacy for donor screening and a mat station in the canteen area:** As part of the screening process, donors are asked about their sexual and medical history. Privacy is required when these questions are asked. During the setup of your blood drive, review the layout and determine if screening areas protect the privacy of students when they are providing their donor history information. If privacy is not protected, talk to the blood drive supervisor about making changes in the setup.

If possible, set up a mat station where donors can sit down and relax for 10 to 15 minutes in, or near the canteen area. After the donor's blood is drawn, we believe it is best that students be escorted to an area where they can sit down on floor mats. If an adverse reaction occurs, injuries can be avoided that might otherwise happen if the donor is sitting up in a chair or standing in a canteen area. Directing students to sit on floor mats after donation, is a common sense approach to reducing injuries. For more information, [click here](#).

6. **Know your Blood Drive Operator's Safety Record:** Since 2003, the FDA has fined the American Red Cross \$37 million for safety compliance violations. The most recent fines occurred in June 2010, when FDA fined Red Cross \$16 million. Ask your Red Cross representative to provide you with: 1) copies of FDA Form 483 Inspection and Observation Reports issued to your blood region over the past three years; and 2) copies of the most recent FDA Adverse Determination Letters (ADLs), that list compliance violations and fines in your blood region. For more information, [click here](#).