

# Year-Round Tips for Sports/Recreation Programs

#### Resource Type: Risk eNews

Topic: Facility, Program and Transportation Safety

Sample waivers, check lists and practical help with topics identified here can be found in *Playing to Win, A Risk Management Guide for Nonprofit Sports and Recreation Programs*. The book aims to help the program administrator and leader, whether in a sports organization or other nonprofit, determine effective, practical methods for understanding and managing the inherent risks.

# Site Safety

- Select facilities providing proper playing conditions.
- Examine facilities for hazards for safety prior to game time.
- Police up facilities before and after the game.
- Don't lock doors that are needed for an emergency exit or rent facilities that do so. Hire security to monitor and limit entrance.

#### **Finances**

- Lock in a drawer or safe anything that equals cash: stamps, blank checks, credit card account numbers, extra door keys, passwords for computers, equipment, uniforms.
- Provide risk financing to cover property loss; accidents and injury to staff, volunteers and participants; and event cancellation.

# **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Create and enforce a policy that PPE must be sport- age- and skill appropriate; certified by the appropriate agency; properly fitted to the player wearing it; and worn consistently during play.
- Establish requirements for the use and inspection of PPE.

# **Participant Safety**

- Implement rules focused on participant safety.
- Provide a code of conduct for players, coaches and spectators.
- Insist that referees provide proof of training/certification; retain a copy for your records
- Create a policy for handling inappropriate coach-participant interaction.
- Create a schedule of sponsored events/matches and provide it to parents or guardians of minors at the beginning of the season.

### **Transportation Safety**

- Require staff/volunteers that use a personal vehicle as part of their duties to provide a copy of their drivers' licenses and insurance cards.
- When hiring a transportation company to transport participants, make certain:

a. the company has adequate insurance coverage

b. the company's drivers are trained and licensed to drive the size and type vehicle you are renting c. to inquire about the company's accident and safety record.

### **Medical Care**

- Establish a medical response plan.
- Enforce a procedure for monitoring the physical condition of athletes, especially in extremely hot or cold conditions.
- Create a policy to deal with emergency situations, including weather, earthquake, fire or violent actions.
- Provide emergency medical-response training for coaches: injury and illness awareness; first-aid and first-response techniques; and CPR.
- Require that participants sign a "Permission to Render Emergency Medical Assistance" form and coaches have copies.
- Carry a well-stocked first-aid kit to all events.

#### Waivers

- Be aware that a waiver is a contract, but it will not prevent a lawsuit.
- Never use a waiver without first having it reviewed by a lawyer with experience representing nonprofits.
- Make certain waivers contain a clear description of the potential harm associated with an activity.
- Construct a waiver as a stand-alone document properly titled as a "Waiver" or "Waiver of Liability."

# Regulations

- Make certain your policies and procedures conform to state and federal employment laws (employee vs. volunteer; payments reimbursements, benefits and awards for volunteers; state vs. federal minimum wage laws; independent contractors vs. employees; and reporting compensation).
- If you run sports camps or clinics for minors, you get into the employment risks areas involved with screening and supervision. You would also have more medical issues [who can dispense medicine: staff, nurse practitioner, kids?]

The Nonprofit Risk Management Center welcomes questions and comments at <u>info@nonprofitrisk.org</u> or 703.777.3504.