

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 info@nonprofitrisk.org or 703.777.3504.