

**Meet Director's Workshop
Michigan Swimming, Inc.**

September 22, 2000

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Resources:

American Red Cross, Detroit Michigan, (313) 576-4101
USA Swimming, Risk Management and Safety, Colorado Springs, Colorado, (719) 578-4578

References:

American Red Cross, Lifeguarding, LGI, STSC, used by permission
USA Swimming, Safety Quarterly, V.2, I.1
USA Swimming, Safety Quarterly, V.5, I.1
USA Swimming Risk Management and Safety Manual.
USA Swimming Insurance Coverage, revised September 2000

EMERGENCY PLANNING

I. Operational and Facility Planning

Who is responsible for developing and executing the plans and response?

- USA Swimming and the Safety Education Committee, a standing committee function to determine the best method to develop and monitor a risk management plan.
- The Local Swimming Committee (LSC) and its Safety Chair play a role in risk management planning and execution.
- The club coach, club Safety Coordinator, Meet Director, Referee and Safety Marshals are required to address safety where events and/or practice occur.
- The swimmers are responsible for following safety regulations, policies and procedures during practice and events.

What should be included in a risk management plan for your event?

- Prevention
- Care of victims
- Supervision of the facility

Prevention is the key to reducing potential injuries. Policies and procedures developed by USA Swimming, the facility and the LSC provide guidelines to prevent or reduce injuries. They also provide these guidelines to reduce the vulnerability to litigation over an incident or injury. These include policies for:

- Warm up Procedure Guidelines
- Pool Depth and Facility Standards
- Starting Platforms
- Electrical Safety
- Starting Procedures
- Flags and Lane lines
- Conduct and Officiating
- Coaches Safety Training
- Safety Marshals and Meet Personnel
- Athlete Registration

Foreseeability:

A term widely used due to the proliferation of sport injury litigation
Foreseeability is a key element in determining negligence

Administrators, teachers, instructors and coaches have a duty to foresee potentially dangerous circumstances and situations that would be likely to cause injury. If ignored, tort liability may apply.

Foreseeability as it relates to four special areas:

- I. Supervision and instruction
- II. Care of facilities
- III. Care of Equipment
- IV. Medical care in case of injury

The elements of tort liability are simple. If any one of the four is missing, there is no liability.

1. Duty. We in USA Swimming are obliged to provide as safe an environment for the conduct of our sport as we reasonably can.
2. Breach of that Duty. IF you breach your duty, you have taken the second step toward liability.
3. Proximate Cause. If the fact that you breached your duty results in injuries to the person or property of another (i.e., it is the "proximate cause " of the injuries), then liability for those injuries attach.
4. Damages. Swimmers may violate the warm-up rules all day, just as drivers may run stop signs all day, but if there are no damages there can be no liability; but if there are, no matter how much or how little, you and USA Swimming, like you as a driver, are responsible.

It is your responsibility to cut those risks as much as you can. The law does not require you to do more than is reasonable and prudent, and if what your have done is reasonable under the circumstances and about as best as can be done-this is as good a defense as any possible.

II. Facility Audits and Safety Inspections

These are an important part of event management.

Remember to include the following points in your planning:

- Safety Rules and Regulations; facility rules and regulations, facility signage, USA Swimming policies. Make sure they are adequate and meet current regulations.
- Supervision: Coaches, meet marshalls (4), club safety coordinator, facility manager, meet director
- Training and Certification: Coaches, Officials, Lifeguards, Safety personnel
- Safety Inspections: Inspections, Identify potential hazards, Checklists, audits and reports, know the swimming venue

"The swimming venue is the area located on the sides and ends of the pool, spectator areas, team areas within the pool facility (e.g., portion of the building designated for teams and swimmers, or fenced around the pool), locker rooms and such other areas as may be specifically designated by the host club or organization, meet director or referee."

An inspection report may include but not be limited to:

- Locker rooms
- Pool Deck
- Pool Bottom
- Ladders and Steps
- Safety Equipment
- Concessions Area
- Parking Lot
- Supervision
- Storage Areas
- Chemical areas

Your particular venue may have unique conditions that should be considered when developing your inspection report. Document each night/morning you inspect the facility. Keep duplicate copies of inspections, incident reports, etc. Store duplicates in area other than where the originals are stored.

Other considerations should include:

- Size of the Event
Seating
Ushers/Attendants
Access/Egress; Disabled access
- Facility
Signage, pool area, deck, spectator areas, halls, locker rooms, cafeteria, parking lots, etc.
Condition of Spectator area
Lighting
Stairs/Hallway surfaces
- Support services
Parking; proximity to venue, amount of parking available, parking area lighting, shuttle, shuttle driver license and insurance
Weather; ice, snow, fog; condition of sidewalks, parking lots
Insurance for facility
Lost and Found

III. Facility Policies

Facility policies are a preventive and educational means to reduce the likelihood of injuries. Facility policies should be provided by the facility manager and should be enforced by safety staff and may be a part of your meet information. They can include the following

- Pool rules and methods of enforcement
- State and local health department ordinances
- Institutional policies
- Chain of command

IV. Facility Procedures

- Emergency response plans (fire, tornado, power outage, bomb threat, violent incidents, severe weather, building emergencies i.e., gas leak, communication system, EMS, response team, chain of command)
- Emergency action plans (first aid, safety equipment, communication system, evacuation, EMS, emergency team, chain of command)

Every type of emergency that could occur should be considered when planning for an event. The plan should be put in writing and thoroughly reviewed and practiced by all members involved.

Creating an Emergency Response Plan or an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Your response plan(s) and your EAP should include the following:

- Emergency procedures
- Positions and Job Descriptions
- Communications Systems
- Rescue Equipment
- Accessibility of the Facility
- Emergency Support Personnel (team, facility, municipality, government)
- Procedures for handling different types of emergencies; i.e., snow, bomb threat, gas leak
- Chain of Command
- Incident Reporting
- Follow up and Debriefing

Emergencies: Response Plans and Emergency Action Plans

- Accessing local EMS; include local ordinance or operations (make sure you are familiar with them)
- Response and treatment of minor first aid incident; including first aid area
- Response and treatment of serious first aid incident
- Response and treatment of spinal injury; include equipment
- Response and treatment of a swimmer in distress
- Response and treatment of a near drowning/drowning
- Response in the event of a fire; including building access/egress, crowd control
- Response in the event of a tornado; include communication and building safe areas
- Response in the event of severe weather; include communication and safe areas
- Response in the event of power outage; include alternate communication and illumination
- Response in the event of bomb threat; include alternate communication (no radios), emergency numbers and evacuation plans
- Response in the event of a crisis (gun, hostage, aggressive patron); include law enforcement and personnel
- Response in the event of chemical emergencies; consider wind direction, hazmat crew
- Response in the event of a gas leak; include emergency numbers, safe areas, building egress/access

V. Documentation

Report of Occurrence forms; See USA Swimming's Insurance coverage booklet or MS, Inc., Policy and Procedure Manual, or USA Swimming's web site for forms and contacts.

Facility accident or incident reports; should be supplied by facility operator, may be completed by facility staff in addition to USA Swimming's Report of Occurrence forms.

VI. Job Descriptions Responsibilities of workers (safety marshals, meet manager, meet directors, referee, lifeguards, first aid/emergency support personnel, safety support personnel, chain of command)

Job descriptions for every event position should be put in writing and reviewed thoroughly with each event staff member.