



# Safety INSIGHTS

SAFETY and RISK Management News & Notes  
from **YMCA OF THE USA** Consulting

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## *Conduct Quarterly Drills*

Emergency drills are an effective technique for preparing YMCAs for stressful situations and ensuring that crises are handled effectively. Many YMCAs have reduced the injuries and confusion that can accompany an emergency because they have been prepared through their drill program.

Drills should be run at least every quarter, including a full evacuation drill at least twice a year. The best times to run an evacuation drill are when the weather permits. It is also a good idea to allow enough time to pass so that people will need the training. Every October and April works well. In some areas, such as child care, the department is required by the local jurisdiction to run evacuation drills every month. Check with authorities to determine which drills must be done and how frequently.

### **Get local officials involved**

In any situation, emergency personnel should review all emergency procedures. They should also be invited to participate in and observe the drill to ensure that the staff is following standards. YMCAs that have involved their areas' emergency medical services with at least one drill annually have enhanced their emergency capabilities and fostered strong relationships in their communities. In addition, when conducting a drill the YMCA should always remember to notify the local emergency services prior to activating any alarms. All drill procedures should be documented and distributed to all staff members.

All drills should be documented for future reference and at least one person should strictly observe the drill and take notes. After the drill is conducted, the procedures should be analyzed to determine if they are effective, and procedures should be modified if necessary. During a drill, special attention must be paid to evaluating how all departments interact. It is important to evaluate how effectively written procedures reflect actual behaviors.

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## **Occupational Injury Reporting**

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to record and report occupational injury and illness. Most YMCAs are exempt from keeping OSHA injury and illness records unless they are asked in writing to do so by Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), or a state agency operating under the authority of OSHA or the BLS. However, this exemption does not excuse any YMCA from coverage by OSHA or from compliance with all applicable safety and health standards (which may include other types of record-keeping requirements).

Twenty-five states and territories operate their own OSHAs. YMCAs in the following areas should contact the state agency to determine if it has or intends to adopt the exemptions: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Virgin Islands, Washington, and Wyoming. Connecticut and New York cover state and local government employees only.

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## YMCA Security Concerns

Recent news articles about Y members having items stolen from their lockers at Ys brings to focus an important issue for facility managers; security. Members and guests expect that the YMCA is a safe place and that management is making efforts to protect them and their valuables. YMCAs should review incidents and develop a proactive plan to enhance security and reduce thefts. It is often a good idea to involve local police in discussions of how the Y can better protect its users.

### Who's coming in?

Controlling entry into the building is very important for facility security. Entrances should control flow past the reception desk to ensure that all entrants are processed through the Y's sign-in process. If the Y allows guests, they should be required to show a photo ID and complete an emergency contact form. The photo ID should be kept at the desk until the person leaves and a photocopy should be kept on file. Many Ys are utilizing security cameras, particularly outside of locker rooms and in low traffic areas. Recordings should be kept on file for at least 30 days and comply with applicable laws. Management staff or on-duty supervisors should maintain a presence in the facility by walking through all areas throughout the day. This is particularly important for low traffic areas and locker rooms. All other means of entry should be secured.

### Can I see?

Proper lighting is very important for safe and secure YMCAs. Motion activated lighting is a good option for areas such as courts and emergency stairwells where traffic may be light and when energy conservation is important. Other areas of the facility should maintain proper lighting levels at all times. Parking and perimeter areas should be properly lighted to promote safety and reduce incidents. Motion activated lighting is also helpful for outdoor playgrounds and fenced areas such as pools.

### Under lock and key

Perhaps one of the most problematic areas for thefts is the locker room, particularly when members do not lock or forget to lock their valuables. Many Ys have taken to providing small terminal-type lockers in entrance hallways or near member service desk where users can lock small items such as car keys and wallets in a very visible area.

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## **Injury Reporting** *from page 1*

YMCAs are required to post an Annual Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses for the previous calendar year. The summary must be posted no later than February 1 and must remain in place until March 1. Form No. 300A is used to meet this requirement. Authorized government officials should be provided access to these records also.

Each year BLS selects about 280,000 firms to take part in a survey used to calculate the job injury and illness rates for various industries nationwide. All employers selected for the survey are required by law to participate. As noted previously, YMCAs, which are normally exempt from OSHA record keeping, are notified of their selection for the survey prior to the calendar year to which the survey relates.

The survey is used to monitor OSHA's progress and to assist the agency in setting standards, evaluating existing standards, scheduling inspections, and evaluating the performance of states and territories which operate their own OSHA-approved safety and health programs.

More information on recording occupational injuries and illnesses may be obtained from [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or your state's agency. ♦

## *Building Boundaries*

The folks at Praesidium have developed two new resources to assist YMCAs with their child abuse prevention efforts. Praesidium is a national leader in services for the prevention of child abuse and works with many Ys throughout the US.

### **Building Boundaries**<sup>TM</sup> - For grades K - 5

Teaching children self-protection skills is essential to any abuse prevention program. Based in the most recent knowledge of child development and learning theory, Building Boundaries teaches children in grades K-5 boundary skills they can understand and use. The program incorporates age-appropriate information in lesson plans that are easy for teachers, child care workers and parents to present.

### **Your Boundaries. Your Call**<sup>TM</sup> - For grades 6 - 12

Your Boundaries. Your Call! is a program specifically designed to teach middle and high school youths how to protect themselves from sexual predators, recognize their personal boundaries, respond if someone tries to violate their boundaries, and what to do if someone is sexually abusing them or someone they know.

For information on these programs and other services contact Praesidium at 800.743.6354 or visit [www.praesidiuminc.com](http://www.praesidiuminc.com). ♦

## *Quick Steps for Tire Safety*

### **Inflate**

Check your tire pressure at least monthly and ensure that tires are inflated in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

### **Rotate**

Rotate and balance your tires every 5,000 miles to ensure proper tread wear.

### **Evaluate**

Check for signs of tread wear or tire damage as part of your daily pre-trip and post-trip inspections.

More tire safety tips are available at [www.safercar.gov/Tires/Index.htm](http://www.safercar.gov/Tires/Index.htm). ♦

## **Quarterly Drills** *from page 1*

Drills should be performed for situations that may occur at a particular YMCA. Some examples include:

- Aquatic emergency
- Bomb threats
- Chemical reaction
- Custody issues with children
- Earthquake
- Fire – general evacuation
- Heart attack
- Missing child
- Robbery attempt
- Spinal injury
- Weather emergency
- Workplace violence
- Locally relevant emergency scenario

### **To surprise or not to surprise?**

Drills may be conducted at times when the YMCA is not busy, or members may be notified in advance that drills are to be conducted during certain intervals. Members may resist taking part in the drills, but they should be informed of the drills ahead of time. The YMCA may want to conduct the drill as a surprise to everyone (except a few people) to more effectively evaluate the level of preparedness.

More information about emergency procedures can be found at [www.ymcaexchange.org](http://www.ymcaexchange.org); click on the "Operations" tab and scroll to the Legal & Risk Management page. ♦

## *Lower the Boom in the Boxes*

The use of music in YMCAs is common practice. However, in many cases Ys are playing music in areas where acoustics are not ideal. Also, group exercise instructors often play music at high volume levels as part of the “environment” of some classes. These situations mean that Ys may play music at levels that can be damaging to the ear. Because hearing loss is a slow, cumulative process, group exercise instructors need to be aware that the intensity of their music may be putting them and their students at risk without causing any apparent symptoms.

### **Meter the music**

Extended exposure to sound levels at 85 to 90 decibels and above can eventually damage hearing. The YMCA of the USA Medical Advisory Committee recommends that Ys:

- Evaluate the noise and music levels of facilities and programs.
- Set and enforce the standard that music volume levels must be kept under 85 decibels in any area of the facility.
- Educate members about the safe levels of music used in headsets during exercise.
- Educate employees about the use of ear protection, paying special attention to exercise instructors.
- Become familiar with OSHA noise level standards and the penalties for non-compliance with them.

The Y-USA Medical Advisory Committee recommendations are available at [www.ymcaexchange.org](http://www.ymcaexchange.org). ♦

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### **Security** *from page 2*

This eliminates the presence of valuables in locker rooms. Lockers must be well maintained and it is a good relations idea to have a number of locks available for use.

Security and safety can be greatly enhanced with reasonable care and proactive planning. For more helpful hints on facility security visit the YMCA Risk Management Discussion Board (see right) in February. ♦

## **Risk Management Discussion Board**

YMCA of the USA has a discussion board available for all those interested in safety and risk management. The board allows for timely discussion on a variety of topics related to safety and risk management efforts. Users may pose questions, share information, or simply search the board for more information. Various staff members monitor the board and assist where appropriate.

Monthly topics will be posted by selected experts starting in February. This format will help facilitate discussions and encourage the sharing of useful resources.

To join the discussion board, interested volunteers and staff may go to [www.ymcaexchange.org](http://www.ymcaexchange.org). From the home page, select “Discussions”, then “Create an Account.” ♦

Safety Insights is produced on a monthly basis for Y-USA Consulting by Safe-Wise Consulting, LLC.

YMCA staff and volunteers may subscribe to the newsletter distribution list by sending an email request to: [safety.insights@ymca.net](mailto:safety.insights@ymca.net)

Past issues are available at [www.ymcaexchange.org](http://www.ymcaexchange.org) and [www.safe-wise.com](http://www.safe-wise.com) ♦