



# Safety INSIGHTS

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

Volume 2 - Issue #2

## *Become a Safety Leader*

Developing safety leaders can mean the difference between marginal and world-class results. It has long been accepted that successful programs push the responsibility for safety down into the organization, utilizing the power of many to foster a safe work environment. In most cases, this approach requires supervisors and all employees to take on additional responsibility.

With additional responsibilities, supervisors and employees struggle to prioritize and complete safety tasks. Without the proper understanding of how and why it is important to become a safety leader, a gap in management expectations and employee perceptions develops. In many cases, this gap between management expectations and employee perception develops into placing blame instead of growing leadership abilities. If you want to develop successful safety leaders, consider the following key concepts.

### **Serve the Customer**

Leadership begins at an early age. When we are children, we learn to follow as our parents set rules or correct misbehavior. As teenagers, we feel the influences of peer pressure and tend to follow others. In adulthood, we have to make decisions to follow others or lead them in a positive manner. Great leaders learn to move their teammates and customers toward a common goal. In safety, the common goal is no injuries and it takes an entire team of safety leaders to achieve it.

### **Talk Safety**

Imagine you have been asked to address all employees at a group meeting and discuss how the team can improve the site's safety record. You just were informed of the meeting 5 minutes ago and have no time to prepare. What do you say? Safety leaders know they have to address employees all the time about safety and are prepared in advance. One way to make sure you have a consistent, positive message is to develop a one-liner and an elevator speech. One-Liner – "We need to work together to reach our common safety goal. Can I count on you to work in a safe manner?" Elevator Speech – "We are coming off a strong year where the team has done an excellent job watching out for each other and reducing accidents."

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## **Monthly Themes in Risk Management**

YMCA of the USA hosts 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. Resources for managing risks are also posted and exchanged through the Board.

The Board is changing its format to include monthly themes with guest experts contributing to the discussions. The first monthly topic in March will be Child Abuse Prevention. Dr. Richard Dangel from Praesidium Inc. will be contributing to March's topic. Dr. Dangel is a leader in abuse prevention for non-profit organizations. Praesidium works with a number of YMCAs in abuse prevention and staff training.

Upcoming monthly themes will include Camp Safety and Aquatic Safety as YMCAs prepare for the summer program season. Please look for more in the next issue of *Safety Insights*.

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." ♦

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The road is long, but with everyone's help and support we can reach our safety goals." Your personal one-liner and elevator speech ensure safety is on your mind and can be communicated consistently and positively even on short notice. Talk positively about safety at every opportunity. The more safety is talked about, the more it is on people's minds.

**Walk Safety**

In the winter time, many organizations work diligently to remove ice from walkways and entrances. Ice easily can be missed and can re-form quickly, exposing employees to slip-and-fall hazards. A facility recently had three slip-and-fall incidents on the same morning, in the same area. A bucket of salt was readily available but no one took action to put the salt down. When asked why, the response was, "That's not my job." It is easy to turn a blind eye when you see unsafe conditions or actions. When you walk safety, you have to do it through your actions. Every time you turn a blind eye you lose your focus of serving others and expose others to the potential of injury.

**Do Safety**

Plan ahead and know how you are going to integrate safety into your daily routine. Maybe you set time aside every morning and start each meeting with safety or make a commitment to not turn a blind eye. Keep it simple and start out slowly so it is an easy transition. Making safety easy and creating value in being a safety leader are critical steps in successfully "doing safety." Often, the actions employees take go unnoticed, leaving many to feel unappreciated for the contributions they make. Building positive relationships, saying thank you and showing appreciation can promote safe behaviors and help ensure employees feel valued.

**Team Effort**

Safety is a team game that takes involvement from everyone. Developing employees into safety leaders and fostering a safety culture while pushing responsibility for safety down into an organization creates a team-based approach that results in superior performance. This approach allows all employees to be players on the field and not just bench warmers.

This article is adapted from one published in *Occupational Hazards* and written by Joe Tavenner CSP, CFPS. It is used with permission from *Occupational Hazards* magazine; copyright 2007 by Penton Media Inc. Mr. Tavenner has a bachelors and a Masters degree in Occupational Safety Management and an MBA in Management. He may be contacted at joseph-tavenner@yahoo.com or visit [www.occupationalhazards.com](http://www.occupationalhazards.com). ♦

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## Y Risk Management Network Meeting

The 2008 YMCA Risk Management Network Meeting is being hosted by the YMCA of San Francisco from March 15 –17, 2008.

The primary purpose of the meeting is to provide YMCA risk managers with a time to come together and share ideas, information and resources. Along with this professional sharing, guest speakers will update YMCA staff on best practices for child abuse prevention and aquatic safety. Guest experts include Dr. Richard Dangel, President and CEO of Praesidium, Inc., and Dr. Tom Griffiths of Penn State University and founder of the Aquatic Safety Research Group. Both Dr. Dangel and Dr. Griffiths are recognized nationally as leaders in their fields.

The conference agenda will include roundtable discussions on critical risk management topics developed by conference attendees and an expert panel discussion on aquatic safety. Local YMCA visitations to observe strong risk management practices in action will round out the offerings for the conference.

More information about the Network Meeting is available on [YMCAexchange.org](http://YMCAexchange.org) or by contacting Jean-Ann Balassi at [jbalassi@ymcasf.org](mailto:jbalassi@ymcasf.org). ♦



## *Control the Ins and Outs of Theft*

Thefts at YMCAs are nothing new; theft rates seem to go up and down. Recent incidents across the country show that thefts occur both in locker rooms and in parking lots with some regularity. Many Ys have successfully reduced the number of thefts in their facilities only to see those in parking lots increase.

Members get in the habit of leaving valuables in their cars before entering the Y and thus providing an opportunity for thefts in parking lots. Police in many areas respond to dozens of vehicular break-ins at YMCAs and health clubs every year. Ys need to remember that just because they've not experienced any thefts in their lots, it doesn't mean the threat is not there. The Police Department in St. Petersburg, Florida, suggests the following deterrents to vehicular break-ins in YMCA parking lots:

**Installing security cameras** can provide valuable information to police and also deter would-be thieves. The costs of cameras have become more reasonable and the technology has improved. Ys can ask their local police department for suggestions on camera placement and coverage.

**Increased lighting** is the most inexpensive way to deter thieves. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a concept that ensures that intruders are easily observable in parking lots and walkways.

**Educate members** to avoid thefts. Post signs to remind members about securing their valuables by stowing them in car trunks. Suggest that members try to leave anything more than their wallet and keys at home or work. And of course remind them to lock their car doors every time they leave the vehicle. Members can assist one another by reporting suspicious behavior to YMCA staff upon entering the facility. Staff must be prepared to react proactively to this information by contacting authorities.

Police suggest that prevention of thefts in parking lots is about common sense and a little effort. If it is difficult to find open cars, see valuables through car windows and hide in the shadows, thieves may move on. YMCAs should contact their local crime prevention agency further for assistance in preventing thefts. ♦

## **Prevention Linked to Education**

The International Life Saving Federation (ILS) has worked for a number of years to collate the evidence necessary to clearly demonstrate the link between drowning prevention and swimming and water safety education.

The ILS has recently announced a new position statement to demonstrate the importance of swimming and water safety education in drowning prevention. According to Chris Brewster, ILS Lifesaving Commissioner, the position statement will make a difference where there has been some reluctance to support swimming and water safety education. The position statement identifies the World Health Organization's Global Burden of Death study as a key piece of evidence because its research found drowning to be one of the most common causes of death. This fact certainly provides powerful support for YMCA programs that target this major public health problem through prevention and education.

Kay Smiley, Y-USA Specialty Consultant for Aquatics and Scuba, hopes that the information in the ILS Position Statement will help Ys focus on aquatic safety, education and safer pools. YMCA of the USA is a member of ILS. Ms. Smiley may be contacted at [kay.smiley@ymca.net](mailto:kay.smiley@ymca.net); the position statement is located at [www.ilsf.org/about/statements\\_05.htm](http://www.ilsf.org/about/statements_05.htm). ♦

## Risk Management Resources

Praesidium Inc. publishes a free quarterly *Safety Bulletin* containing valuable information, safety tips and **child abuse prevention** resources. The February 2008 issue spotlights child abuse prevention training. Please visit [www.praesidiuminc.com/whats\\_new.php](http://www.praesidiuminc.com/whats_new.php) to subscribe.

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) publishes a number of resources for the prevention of **Recreational Waterborne Illnesses (RWI)**. RWI have become more frequent in recent years with significant outbreaks reported particularly in the summer months. The Healthy Swimming Fact Sheets available at [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/fact\\_sheets.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/fact_sheets.htm) can help Ys prevent RWI and educate both parents and swimmers.

Price Chopper offers a number of cost effective options for wristbands that can be used for **swim testing** and group identification. For more information, please visit [www.pchopper.com](http://www.pchopper.com).

Aquatic staff can always use current and new information on **managing pools and aquatic safety**. Aquatics International publishes a monthly free magazine that focuses on industry news and good practices. The January 2008 issue has information on Crypto outbreaks, controlling risks with diving, equipment resources and a lifeguard motivation program. To learn more or to subscribe please visit [www.ameda.com/aqi](http://www.ameda.com/aqi).

The National Spa and Pool Foundation (NSPF) has recently launched a new **online training program for pool and spa operators**. Pool Operator Primer (POP) is designed to engage students wishing to learn the basics of pool operation and is offered in both English and Spanish. POP is one of 23 training programs, some certification-bearing, that are available at the NSPF inline training center. Please visit the NSPF at [www.nspf.com](http://www.nspf.com) to learn more.

Fingersafe® is a **door hinge guard** that prevents fingers from being pinched, crushed or amputated at the hinged end of doors. Each year it is estimated that there are nearly 300,000 door-related finger injuries world wide. Many include serious injuries such as broken bones and amputation. With an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approval and a 4-hour fire rating, Fingersafe® is ideal for Y facilities and child care centers. More information about this innovative device is available at [www.fingersafeusa.com](http://www.fingersafeusa.com). ♦

## How to Be a Safety Leader

- Be a positive influence on others.
- Be proactive and take action.
- Work toward common goals.
- Practice the “talk, walk and do” safety model.
- Don't take chances.
- Tactfully confront co-workers who are not working safely and get their “buy in” for safety.
- Don't leave it for the next person.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Serve to better others and not yourself.
- Concentrate on what you can do.

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

The information in this material are recommendations and should be used as a resource for managing safety risks. These guidelines and suggestions are for informational purposes only. This material is not intended to be a substitute for professional risk management advice and evaluation.

YMCA volunteers and staff may subscribe to the newsletter by sending a 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) ♦