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**Youth protection is a primary risk management concern** for all youth serving agencies. Part of preparing for the fall program season includes implementing protection strategies in training, operations and programming. Key action items for protecting youth include: [thoroughly screening](#) all employed and volunteer staff, [training all employed and volunteer staff](#) in current youth protection strategies and trends, implementing a written [code of conduct](#) for staff, practicing [good supervision strategies](#) with youth such as the “Rule of Three” and/or “Two-deep Leadership”, limiting staff contact with program participants outside of programs when possible, ensuring Bullying prevention is included in training and activities, and [communicating the organization’s policies](#) to staff, youth, parents and the community.

**Playgrounds are an important program element for many youth-serving organizations.** As the busy summer program season winds down and preparations begin for the fall, facilities should be inspected for safety and security. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) publishes [Guidelines for Public Playground Safety](#), which can assist staff in properly reviewing their play ground facilities to ensure the safety of participants.

**Preparation should be the buzz-word at your organization** as the summer season winds down and we enter into fall. Preparations for programs, maintaining facilities and training staff are important at this time of year. This is also a good time to prepare for next summer and the future by reviewing recent accidents, incidents and claims data. [Establishing a safety committee](#) can help in current preparations and planning for the future. The purpose of the safety committee is to provide information to senior management about organizational and operational issues that are causing injuries and accidents. The function of the committee is to monitor the effectiveness of the safety and risk management program. Where change is necessary, the committee should provide the direction to integrate the changes into the day-to-day operation of the organization. Many organizations struggle with their safety efforts because their programs lack clear direction and support. By [forming a safety committee](#), an organization can help its employees and volunteers follow a clear path that is supported through monitoring efforts.

**Soccer goal safety continues to be an issue for many communities.** The state of Illinois recently enacted a [Soccer Goal Safety Law](#) aimed at preventing movable soccer goals from tipping over and causing death or injury. [Soccer goals should be securely anchored](#) to fields during use and stored in a manner to prevent tipping and accidently injury when not in use. Programs may consider [Goal Alert](#) to help prevent soccer goal injuries.

**Guidelines for youth sports athletes practicing in hot weather** have been revised by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP recommends that youth sports program administrators implement comprehensive strategies to safeguard against heat illness. The statement titled "[Climatic Heat Stress and Exercising Children and Adolescents](#)" published in the September 2011 issue of *Pediatrics*. Read more [HERE](#).

**YMCAs prepare for hurricane season with a new resource.** It is important to ensure your organization is prepared for a natural disaster, especially during hurricane season. YMCA of the USA's "Ready to Respond: A Guide to Assist Your YMCA's Disaster and Emergency Planning" is [available at YMCAexchange](#). This guide covers planning and collaboration, communication and securing operations. Additional planning information is available from the [National Weather Service](#) and also in the [Online Resource Library](#).

### **This Month's Topics:**

*Youth Protection*  
*Playground Safety*  
*Safety Committee*  
*Soccer Goals*  
*Preventing Heat Illness*  
*Hurricane Season*