

RockwallCPR.com



CPR & First Aid Classes

**Safety and Risk Management Guide for
Fitness, Sports, and Recreation
Facilities and Trainers**

The scenario:

"Imagine teaching an everyday, normal class with no crazy cardio demands or dangerous drills. Suddenly a seemingly healthy [person] collapses and passes out cold. You call 911. They arrive 11-minutes later (national average response time). The student dies on the way to the hospital.

What did you do during that 11-minute wait? Comfort mom? Take his pulse. CPR? Call your insurance company?

Maybe a better question is, "What could you do?" While you don't have to be trained to perform CPR, training would certainly help. What if you weren't even present? What could your assistant instructor do?

Even though you did nothing to cause the collapse, your liability will be in your response to the collapse. I don't have to tell you that an aggressive personal injury attorney is going to come after you or that no family with an attorney believes in "accidental death." Without good insurance to pay for the defense of your school, this could be your accidental death.

In a case like this where you did nothing to create the damage, the lawsuit will claim you did nothing to mitigate or reduce it." From [How 2 Schools Got Sued For Over \\$1-million](#)

"preparing for the worst is typically just that: preparing. Rarely does a worst-case scenario play out. But rarely doesn't mean never, and a life-or-death situation can change your very vision of what worst-case can really mean."

From THE Box: [Don't Skip a Beat](#)

Causes of Injuries in Fitness Facilities and Programs

“The most common are due to inherent risks, negligence, and product liability. Inherent risks are those that happen simply as a result of participation in physical activity—they are no one’s fault and are inherent in (or inseparable from) the activity. Almost everyone who has participated in physical activity or sport has experienced an injury due to inherent risks. Injuries caused by negligence are due to fault—the fault of a participant (e. g., the participant is careless while lifting weights) or of a fitness professional or facility (e. g., the failure to properly instruct and supervise participants, inspect and maintain exercise.” From [Causes of Injury and Negligence](#)

Here is a [PDF](#) of negligence lawsuits filed against fitness facilities and staff. The issues involve:

- Employment policies
- Pre-activity health screening
- Exercise prescription
- Exercise instruction and supervision
- Exercise equipment
- Facility
- Emergency Action Plan

Six Steps to Safety and Risk Management

1. Develop a Written Safety Management Statement
2. Create a Safety Committee
3. Take an Inventory of your organization/facility Operations and Hazards
4. Establish a Member PAR-Q and Orientation
5. Create an Incident Reporting Form
6. Emergency Action Plan

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The information in this guide is for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to address the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.

1. Written Safety Statement

(On organization stationery - to be posted in prominent locations)

TO: Club Members and All Employees

SUBJECT: Safety and Loss Control

A top priority at (name of organization) is to provide all our members and employees with the safest possible environment. This includes all aspects of the facility's physical structure, as well as its equipment and supplies.

In order to reach and maintain this goal, we need your help and support. If a member sees an unsafe condition, hazard or exposure, or a situation that might lead to an accident or injury ... please bring it to the attention of one of our staff immediately.

All employees should be on the alert for any unsafe conditions ... bring these matters to the immediate attention of your supervisor.

We are totally committed to do all that is necessary to eliminate those hazards that might cause an accident or injury. With your active involvement ... and by working together ... we know **WE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

Thank you for your response and cooperation,

Very Truly Yours,

2. Create a Safety Committee and Staff Safety Training

- Assign the duty of safety and risk management to a staff member who will be responsible to see that all aspects of the program are up to date and in compliance.
- A monthly written review is recommended with the leadership of the organization.
- Create a staff safety training policy. At minimum, ensure every staff member has a current training certification and current CPR/AED certification.
- [Injury Care Training](#)

3. Take an Inventory of your organization/facility Operations and Hazards

Create a spreadsheet of all exercise equipment and facility accommodations (bathrooms, etc.)

Staff

- If possible, ensure that no staff member is working alone late at night or early in the morning.
- Ensure parking lots are well lit.

Equipment

- Ensure that all equipment is in good condition including exercise and weight machines, steps, balls, bars, weights, mats. etc.)
- Ensure that equipment is serviced on a regular basis by qualified personnel as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Ensure equipment is returned to its proper storage area before opening and at the end of day.
- Ensure storage is designed to minimize bending & reaching.
- Conduct a weekly inspection of all exercise equipment to ensure that it is operating properly. Fitness businesses should have a checklist in place for what to look for on each product.
- Investigate any reports of defective equipment as soon as possible.
- Remove/disable and clearly mark any defective equipment to prevent its use.
- Ensure that there is a reporting and documentation procedure for faulty equipment.

Facility

- Ensure adequate space between pieces of equipment

- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Ensure adequate ventilation and environment control (heat/AC).
- Provide adequate storage to eliminate storage on floor.
- Ensure carpets and floors are in a good condition.
- Ensure walkways clear of obstructions and floor surfaces even. Identify and identify any abrupt changes in floor level.
- Where possible, install closer power outlets to minimize the need for extended power cords.
- Secure any electrical cabling so they do not extend into walkways.
- Regularly monitor trip hazards through informal and scheduled inspections.
- Ensure that an adequate number of change rooms, showers, etc. are provided, they conform to appropriate building standards and are well maintained.
- Provide a checklist for employees to complete when checking/cleaning /replenishing change room/toilet facilities. Record the date, time and initials of employee on the checklist.
- Ensure outdoor training areas are safe.
 - Vehicle access
 - Surface
 - Weather
 - Equipment

Clients

- Have a clear footwear policy.
- Have a clear policy on returning equipment to its proper storage area after use.
- Have a clear policy on minors.
 - Access to training area

4. PAR-Q (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire)

Click [here](#).

5. Injury Incident Report

Click [here](#)

6. Emergency Action Plan

Click [here](#) for a fillable Emergency Action Plan for your facility.

Should your facility have an AED?

“Would a couple thousand dollars be a reasonable price to pay to save someone’s life? This seemingly innocent question continues to be debated in response to whether health clubs, hotels, shopping centers, and other similar businesses should be required to have AEDs available on their premises in the event of a cardiac emergency.”

“Various theories have been advanced to defeat any proposed law that requires mandatory installation, but the bottom line seems to be a liability concern.”

From [The Heartbreak of Not Making Automated External Defibrillators Available For Public Use](#)

Resources:

[Health and Fitness Risk Management Guidebook](#)

[A Work Health and Safety Guide for Fitness Businesses](#)

[CrossFit Health & Safety A Primer for CrossFit Trainers](#)