

Emergency Action Planning

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“It is a good thing, to write for the amusement of the public, but it is a far higher and nobler thing to write for their instruction, their profit, their actual and tangible benefit. The latter is the sole object of this article.”

Mark Twain ‘Curing a Cold’

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY TO PREPARE FOR TOMORROW?

The first thing I’ll readily admit is I don’t have all the answers. Yet, I do have a lot of questions and the question I use most is: Why!

It’s been over 5 years since I left the day-to-day topsy-turvy responsibility of managing clubs and started my own business. With my new vocation, I haven’t really left the club environment; I now facilitate health and safety education.

The two service areas I have adopted are food safety and health & safety regulations. It seems every time I tell someone I conduct OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) education; it seems their eyes roll back into their head. Is it because the regulations are so voluminous, the print in the rule books too small or is it that there’s just too much work to do to even attempt to comply? Or is it that there’s no easy way to learn what you are supposed to be doing until it’s too late?

Another thought is that a manager already has a full serving of work in the 40 plus hour workweek that there’s no time to plan for the future. It is true that we all learn over time, with a new manager learning a bit at a time and the seasoned manager having learned many a lesson the hard way.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In this day and time of incomprehensible acts of violence and accidents just happening, can you await the questions of all the “Monday Morning Quarterbacks”? If one was to contemplate all the calamities that could occur in the work or personal arena five years ago, the majority of items could have readily been committed to paper. Now you need a spin-doctor, a Hollywood producer and the input from 1000 others and even then you’d leave something off the list.

I have to say I'm not an alarmist, yet more of a realist. One can not pick up the paper and not see that there's a lot happening. Bombs, terrorist activities, food safety outbreaks, the threat of chemical and/or biological warfare, and the list goes on and on.... Sure my scope of experience has been primarily the warm, comfortable club environment, yet my readings have taken me far and wide. Some of my related readings in the past year include:

The Jungle Book	Upton Sinclair
Fast Food Nation	Eric Schlosser
Typhoid Mary- Kitchen Confidential	A. Bourdain ibid.
Secret Agents: Menace of Emerging ...	Drexler
A Job to Die For	Lisa Cullen

SAFETY TEAMS: WHY AREN'T CLUBS IN THE BIG LEAGUES?

Is it necessary to even think of the things that should be done? What central source is there to guide you to what should be done? What I would recommend to every club executive is, if you have not done so, to develop a safety team. I am a firm believer in the old adage that whatever you want to do, DO. Everything else should be delegated.

Who do you want on the safety team? I recommend at least one representative from every department. Personally, I do not believe that the team should be solely comprised of management staff as the line employees have a better working knowledge of the way the club actually works!

So now the safety team has been formed, what do you want them to do? They should be charged with one question: Why? Why are we doing things this way? Why did this accident happen? Why did we have this many injuries (as listed on your OSHA 300 log)? Why didn't we start this safety team years ago?

Then challenge them to look at all the current practices, policies and procedures. Are you buying first aid supplies from an outside vendor? What are the prices for this service? Is \$.50 for two aspirin acceptable? Or would it be a better practice to delegate the purchasing of all safety purchases to one person and ensure all first aid materials for the entire facility are under their control? You might want to consider reviewing the cost of last year's medical purchases and return this year's savings to all the employees.

Many years back the management books recommended MBWA (Management By Walking Around) and this is a practice that the safety team should adopt. In

numerous past articles I have espoused the adage: The staff doesn't do what you expect, they do what you inspect! And this is applicable for the safety team. Another facet of their duties might include accident near misses. I would recommend you share the copies of your OSHA 200 & 300 logs from the past 5 years and allow them to see what illnesses/injuries are recorded. Also challenge the safety team to find in any injury patterns that are emerging and then determine how to reduce and eliminate these events.

What if you haven't been doing the OSHA 200 & 300 logs? It is time to start. The 300, 300A and 301 forms are readily available for download at www.ohsa.gov and you can contact me for the old 200 form. Backdating the information is fine (in my estimation) the important part is doing the required work.

EATING AN ELEPHANT

There is an old management question: How do you eat an elephant? The answer is one bite at a time. Complying with OSHA is similar to eating an elephant. As long as you realize that it will take time, you can also comply with OSHA. Where do you start? I would recommend that you start with your emergency action plan. Recent events now have everyone thinking of personal safety and it's time to dedicate the financial resources and brainpower necessary.

The most important item is to give your staff the required funds to pursue this effort. In Lisa Cullen's book (listed above), she mentions numerous times that for every dollar spent on safety the return is \$4.00 to \$6.00. The saving arise from both the direct and indirect cost of injuries and illnesses: medical costs, increased worker's compensation premiums, training and paying replacement workers, managing the claim, investigating the accident....

With safety teams and any other special committee, it is sometimes difficult to quantify a return on investment yet a sense of security is more important than dollars spent!

RESOURCES

With potential disaster preparations approaching epic spending levels it seems all municipalities are bemoaning the fact that the federal government is not giving them enough money to purchase the necessary equipment. An interesting parallel is that clubs are in a similar situation. The recent decline in club usage, the decline in revenues and the subsequent belt tightening budgetary procedures have also necessitated a line by line expenditure review. Is your club ready to step up to the plate when it comes to member/guest and/or employee safety?

Kraig Kanitz, CCM shares the concept that you have to start with the basics that he calls: Blocking & Tackling. To stimulate staff discussion you may want to use the following health and Safety assessment form.

Additionally there is no need to recreate the wheel. Some excellent resources for safety planning are available from OSHA's web site www.osha.gov click on the Etools section. Another great source is the Federal Emergency Management Agency www.fema.gov.

Utilizing another football analogy is that practice, practice, practice. There is no way to win unless you are practicing. We all remember the required fire drills during our school days. We knew what to do when the alarm sounded: where to go, where to amass and how to act. Is this the case for your operation?

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Clubs are and have always been a special sanctuary for our members, guests and employees. Now that national attention has been focused on safety and how we can protect our loved ones; I would recommend you open the dialogue on safety with the board & staff and be prepared to dedicate the time and resources necessary.

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