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Risk Management Observation Assignment

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HPER 3100
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On March 5th 2005, I returned home to Fort Frances Ontario for a weekend visit. While home I chose to complete my Risk Management Observation Assignment. The reason I completed this assignment at home is because I was interested on how Canadian facilities compare to American risk management standards. Also, I will most likely be moving back to Canada to begin my career so that is another reason I should educate myself at Canadian facilities. The following is a summary of my observations and analysis of the Fort Frances Memorial Sports Centre.

Site Description:

The Fort Frances Memorial Sports Centre is a multi-use facility for our small town of 9,000 people. This building contains two indoor ice surfaces, a competitive swimming pool, weightlifting room, cardiovascular fitness room, two squash courts (similar to racquetball), and one banquet room. Although this was primarily a hockey rink, it has been converted over the years into a multi-use sports centre. Because there are so many different components to this building I chose to focus on the section that includes the swimming pool, the weight and fitness rooms, and the two squash courts. This is the area of the building I am most familiar with, seeing as I am a member there. It's interesting to look objectively at a facility regarding risk management when you are a frequent user, you notice things wouldn't normally.

Inherent Risks:

In examining the major inherent risks in the pool area they are similar to what you would expect at any swimming area. Risk of drowning for various reasons is probably the most serious risk because it can lead to death. Possible spinal injuries may occur if a swimmer slips on the deck or dives into the shallow end. There is a diving board in the deep end but it is not difficult to reach the slope of the bottom when diving deep, therefore, another risk for a spinal or drowning occurrence. Cuts, scrapes, and minor injuries may occur from falling on the deck as well. As for the fitness and weight rooms there are inherent risks involved with the specific exercise you are performing. Dropping a weight on yourself, falling off of the treadmill, or pulling a muscle are all possible risks of using that equipment. A risk of heart attack may be possible when using cardio equipment. When using the squash courts players assume the risk of being hit with the ball or the other player's racquet. Because of the fast pace style of the sport ankle or knee injuries may also result.

Good Risk Management Practices:

In taking a closer look at the health centre I am so familiar with gave me the opportunity to find some good and bad risk management practices. But first, I'll start by noting some positive practices. In order to reduce risk of injury or death in the pool area the organization has taken steps toward addressing the inherent risks I listed above. There is a senior lifeguard on duty at all times, meaning they have the appropriate experience and qualifications. This helps keep an eye on the swimmers to reduce the chance of drowning. The lifeguard(s) on duty also enforces the 'pool rules' which are posted on a large sign close to the pool. Rules such as no running and no horseplay help

reduce the risk of possible injuries. Full first aid materials, a back board, and floatation devices are within accessible distance to the staff in the pool area. An emergency and in-house phone line is also available if an emergency was to occur. I believe this is the section of the building that has the highest potential for serious injury, therefore, the pool area has the most emergency equipment and procedures. As for the weight and fitness rooms, good points include doors that close to both rooms to keep out small children that may be passing through the hallway towards the pool, weight room rules, membership requirement, fire extinguisher, and safe looking equipment. As for the squash courts all players are required to wear eye protection, wear proper footwear, follow the game rules, and own a membership. The courts are new and always clean eliminating risk of injury. Because the weight, fitness, and squash areas are not constantly supervised, all the member kind of look out for each other. Because it is the only workout facility in our town, everyone pretty much knows each other which provides a family-like environment. This factor adds to the 'culture of safety' idea.

Bad Risk Management Practices / Recommendations:

Because this assignment was designed to take an exterior look at the risk management practices of this facility I do not know it to the fullest extent in the administrative sense. Through my observations it seems as though a sound risk management plan is present. I am aware of a few bad practices though, not only through my observation but also through my own personal experiences at the club. Firstly, although it is good that a membership is required to use the facility, I think it's bad that they don't have their members sign any type of waiver or assumption of risk upon registering. This could eliminate possible lawsuits if a serious injury did occur. In the

defence of the facility, although they do not require legal documentation to avoid lawsuits, I do know that lawsuits are less common in Canada and our legal system works a little different as well. So before I recommend that they implement those documents I would first have to understand the law better, because maybe they aren't necessary. Along with that, children do not need parental permission to swim during 'dollar swim' days nor are they required memberships. This could be risky especially since kids as young as 10 may enter alone. Another possible bad risk is that there is no first aid kit or emergency phone near the weight, fitness, or squash courts in case of an emergency. Also, it would be a good idea for them to invest into a defibrillator machine, which are becoming common in facilities in case of heart failure. One more recommendation I would offer to this facility is to remove the diving board. Removing diving boards is becoming a common trend in public facilities in order to reduce risk of injury, besides it's strictly for recreational purpose, there is no diving program. I do not have any further recommendations for the Sports Centre, overall I am happy and impressed with their risk management procedures.