

Safety For Camp Employees

Introduction

The camp has been opened, cleaned from top to bottom. Mattresses have been aired and all the damage from winter storms has been repaired. The loose handrail has been fixed and that broken step to the Recreation Hall has been replaced. All is ready for the influx of smiling and sometimes apprehensive faces. But is everything really ready? What about the safety of your employees?

- Are you sure that the right persons have been selected for the various jobs?
- Are they properly trained and in physical condition to accomplish the tasks?
- Do they have the correct tools and equipment?
- Have you eliminated or minimized all hazards?
- Is the work area properly prepared?
- Do your employees have-and know how to use-any personal protective devices they need?

It's true that by making the camp safe for campers, you also provide a safer workplace for the staff. But camp staff are involved in a number of additional activities that present increased exposures, such as maintenance, grounds keeping, cooking, and even athletics. Here are some things that you can and should do to protect your camp's staffers from injury.

Maintenance

Maintenance employees should be selected for their experience, alertness to hazards, and mechanical knowledge and abilities. In many ways, they should have more training than others in recognizing job hazards and in investigating accidents. That's because they are often in a position to effect changes that can prevent future accidents, not only to themselves but to other employees and campers. Their training should include first aid and life-saving techniques, and specific training with regard to any irritating, corrosive, or toxic substances that may be used at the camp. These may include de-greasers, lubricants, swimming pool chemicals, heating fuels, paints, solvents, adhesives, and battery acids.

Clothing Dos and Don'ts

All maintenance staff should be dressed properly. This includes snug-fitting clothes with few breast pockets where items can fall into machinery when employees lean over. Workers should not wear neckties, rings, wristwatches, or jewelry. Workers should not carry tools in their pockets but should use a tool belt with pouch to the side, so that if a worker falls, the tools will not impale the torso.

LOSS CONTROL TIPS

When handling sharp objects, workers should wear gloves. When welding, wear welding gloves; when working with electricity, use insulated rubber gloves; and when working with acid or corrosives, wear chemical-resistant gloves.

If there is danger from overhead exposures, the worker should wear a hard hat. If there is any possibility of flying objects or splash from chemicals, proper safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield should be worn. Safety glasses resting on the top of the workers' heads do no good.

Properly label all piping as to its contents and the direction of flow. An emergency is no time to be tracing out lines and looking for the nearest valve. Label it now!

Establish and Follow Safety Procedures

- Whenever employees are working around any type of power machinery, electrical equipment or boilers, there *must* be a procedure in place to lock out and tag out the equipment that is under repair.
- Never enter a confined space until it has been tested and found to be safe to enter, free of explosive gases, and found to contain sufficient oxygen. Once an employee is inside a tank or vessel, keep another person on watch outside. The person on watch should never enter the vessel if an emergency arises. He or she should go for help. You don't need two casualties.
- Always ensure that ladders are in good repair and secured properly prior to ascending them. Check for safety feet, and tie them off when possible.
- Never lift more than you are capable of handling comfortably. Get help or use mechanical assistance.

In the Kitchen

A camp kitchen is often underrated when it comes to safety, given the many hazards found there (such as sharp knives, warm environment, open flames, hot liquids, heavy containers, and slippery floors). In a study completed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupational injuries in eating and drinking establishments were more prevalent than those in construction, mining, and a host of jobs normally associated with high hazards. Sprains and strains were the top culprit, while cuts came in second, and burns followed as number three.

The key to a safe kitchen is proper training. Provide detailed instructions for preparing each item, including directions for cleaning and operating every piece of equipment.

Store all heavy pots and heavy containers of food on lower shelves so they are not subject to falling, yet are easily accessible. If it's too heavy, get help. Don't risk a back injury or a broken foot from a dropped pot.

Stand with your head in line over your legs and feet, facing the load. Then bend at the knees. Lift slowly, keeping the load close to your body. Do not twist your torso at any time. Set the load down smoothly on one corner, to allow you to remove your hand and fingers. Do it right!

Regularly clean kitchen hoods over stoves and deep fat fryers, use a qualified contractor. Have a local extinguishing system installed and checked often for operation. In the event of a small pan fire, keep covers readily available to smother the flames. Teach employees how to use hand-held extinguishing units and make sure they know where they're kept.

To prevent slips and falls:

- Walk, never run.
- Wear shoes with grease-resistant soles.
- Keep floors clean of food, liquid or grease.
- Runners and mats should be flat, smooth and free of tears.
- Keep aisles and walkways clear.

To prevent cuts:

- Keep knives sharp. There is an old saying that no one ever gets cut with a sharp knife.
- Cut away from, not toward, your body.
- Never leave a knife in soapy water. Clean, rinse and place it in storage immediately after use.
- Never try to catch a falling knife.
- Wear cut-resistant gloves when possible.
- Never pick up broken glass with your bare hands. Use a broom and pan.

To prevent burns:

- Wear long-sleeved coats and keep them buttoned.
- Set burner flames to cover only the bottom of the pot.
- Use hand protectors or oven mitts.
- Ask for help with heavy, hot items.
- Keep the area clean and clear.
- Forbid horseplay.
- Do not set pot handles over burners.

Order and cleanliness in the kitchen contributes to a healthier, tastier product, and fewer injuries!

Sports and Rigorous Activity

Coaches and camp counselors must stay physically fit to supervise activities for which they are responsible. Eat right, exercise, and get adequate rest. Set an example for the campers. Don't try to "prove" yourself by trying to out-do the kids. Be a leader by knowing and setting your own limits. Older staffers, like new campers, take more time to warm up. Preparation and inspiration are often 90% of the game. Be inspirational, not perspirational! Pace yourself. You may have to coach four or five classes of tennis in a day, where the camper only takes one class!

Recreation Dos and Don'ts

- Keep playing fields free of trash and debris.
- Don't allow glass containers in the area of activity. If glass or other sharp items are found, pick them up with a towel or glove and dispose of them properly.
- Don't allow the use of defective or worn equipment (cracked bats, helmets with missing straps, etc.).
- Don't allow horseplay.
- Know first aid and how to handle all the equipment. You are not only the first line of defense against injuries to your campers and staffers, but to yourself as well!

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