

RISK MANAGEMENT


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DID YOU KNOW?

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS

 **DID YOU KNOW** that there is risk involved in everything we do? In fact there is one way - and only one way - to guarantee that nothing bad will ever happen in our programs. And that is to shut down completely! The alternative is to take steps to minimize every risk.

An important part of running any program is to do all you can to prevent problems from occurring - this is called risk management. The following are the steps to take in a risk management process:

1. Identify potential risks and possible losses.

Recognize what dangers are present, and what risks are predictable.

Establish what could go wrong and what harm may be done by considering the nature of the activity, the participants, the setting, and the supervision.

2. Determine the likelihood of the risks, and the consequences.

Identify how likely it is that harm will be done and what the consequences will be as a result of the activity, but also as a result of not carrying out the activity. Look at the consequences in terms of the clients and the members (bodily harm, personal injury, abuse, property loss, etc) and in terms of St. John Ambulance (reputation, financial, loss of members, etc.)

3. Act to control the risk.

There are four possible choices to manage risk: eliminate it altogether, reduce it, transfer the liability for it to someone else, or assume the risk. Decide which of the four possible choices best fit your situation. (see box below)

4. Implement this decision.

Carry out the agreed-upon action to control the risk.

5. Review the strategy of your decision, and change it if necessary.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your decision by monitoring what took place as a result of it. There may be consequences that were not foreseen. Change your strategy if appropriate.

There are four possible choices when faced with any risk:

- 1. Eliminate the risk** - what things are you doing that are too dangerous and should be removed from the program?
- 2. Reduce the risk** - is there a way to modify the activity to make it safer?
- 3. Transfer liability** - is there someone else who can do this activity in a better or safer way?
- 4. Assume risk** - carry out the activity, knowing the level of risk and the consequences.

St. John Ambulance has already been practising risk management in many areas. Some examples are:

- A screening process during recruitment of Brigade members
- A stringent evaluation system for the Therapy Dog Program, as well as policies that stipulate the use of leashes and only one dog per handler
- Parental consent forms to be signed for young members
- Orientation of Board members so they know their responsibilities and limitations
- Comprehensive insurance coverage for all members and programs
- Certification in training programs

Check the Youth Leader's Manual for more detailed information on managing risks.