Risk management issues

What is risk management? Is risk management created to keep volunteers (and paid staff) safe? Maybe it’s a way to keep the organization safe from lawsuits that can result from risky behaviors or equipment. Some staff think risk management keeps them from doing their jobs correctly and that safety precautions are unnecessary. Risk management can be any or all of the items above. Managing risks keep volunteers, staff, participants, the organization and ultimately the community operating in a safe and efficient manner.

Work with your organization to develop risk management policies and procedures for the volunteers. Do you need a volunteer to have a special skill before they can participate or use equipment? Do you need proof of auto insurance before they can drive other participants? Do you need to have volunteers go through a background check before they can work with children? How will you and the organization minimize potential risks that may affect what they volunteers can do?

What you can do to minimize risks for volunteers

- Include risk management policies and procedures as part of every orientation.
- If they are going to lift, carry or transport, do they need special training, are there forms to be signed after the training.
- Go to any location where volunteers will work and make sure that potential hazards have been removed, or are posted.

Making sure volunteers know any procedures to follow if an accident or incident occurs.

Make sure every volunteer is adequately trained for all tasks they will perform.

Keeping it simple:

- Have volunteers work in pairs with children or adults in risky situations
- Keep procedures logical and write them out for everyone to know and follow
- Are volunteer claims covered by your organization? By state statute? Make sure all staff members are familiar with procedures
- Do not over-plan for problems, view risk management as common sense

Alaska Concerns:

- Risk management for volunteers who are in another location
- Financial procedures for funds and fund raising
- Working with children in other locations

Learn more about these topics at Everyone Ready

VNG-Volunteerism for the Next Generation:
- "Removing Barriers for Volunteers"

Everyone Ready:
- Volunteer-related Issues in Risk Management
- Risk Management Issues and Insurance for Involving Volunteers