

Risk management for Tasmanian sport and recreation organisations

2. Developing a risk management culture



This Sport and Recreation Tasmanian (SRT) information sheet is one of 10 that when combined provide a resource designed to assist sport and recreation organisations (SROs) to improve their understanding and application of risk management. The information sheets included in the resource are as follows:

1. Overview and introduction to risk management
2. Developing a risk management culture
3. Applying risk management
4. Compliance and risk management
5. Insurance and risk management
6. Risk management in practice
7. Risk management policy template
8. Risk management plan template
9. Risk management audits
10. Risk management resources.

Information sheets one to five provide background information and theory and information sheets six to ten provide practical tools and templates. All sheets discuss risk management in accordance with the Australian Standard on Risk Management AS/NZS ISO 31000:2010 and the International Standard on Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines ISO/FDIS 31000:2009.

Developing a risk management culture

This information sheet highlights that developing and enhancing a risk management culture within an SRO can benefit that SRO and its participants.

Risk management can be developed by compliance to applicable laws, legislation and standards, or the employment of risk management strategies that promote safer participation. A systematic approach that involves leadership, communication, planning, a sound governance structure, and education and training is crucial when enhancing an SRO's risk management culture.

Introduction

SROs are sometimes seen as high risk entities. This is because:

- SROs are often run by voluntary committees
- the members of the committee may have little or no direct experience in governing or managing a SRO or in conducting the activities of a SRO
- members of the committee have little or no direct knowledge of their responsibilities in governing a SRO in an environment requiring them to operate within or comply with a combination of regulations and voluntary codes
- some SRO volunteers operate with limited time and resources and without clear expectations

- the activities of SROs often involve a large number of people or a large number of activities often in a diverse range of environments, including relatively small indoor and outdoor spaces and/or temporary structures or other facilities.

All these factors taken together increase the likelihood of risk occurring.

If any of the above is correct, SROs will have a clear need to implement some formal risk management process and plans.

Successful risk management plans can result in fewer injuries and claims being made against the SRO and its insurance. This can result in happier and safer participants, staff or volunteers. It can enhance the reputation of the SRO and over time, have a positive effect on the SRO's insurance premiums.

These benefits may not occur immediately, but the time, effort and resources invested by an SRO in implementing a risk management plan is likely to be rewarded over the medium to long term.

An SRO, and its key personnel, seeking to develop or enhance a risk management culture should consider a number of common sense, practicable matters such as the following.

Leadership

Responsibility for risk management along with all matters within a SRO ultimately rests with the board or committee. The directors or committee members are elected or appointed to this leadership role by the membership and so implementing risk management in a SRO begins with the board or committee.

It is then up to the board or committee to involve other key people within the SRO as required by the SRO's risk context. For example, risk management in coaching and officiating should be addressed by coaches and persons responsible for officials within the SRO.

A possible process is as follows.

1. The SRO board or committee assumes leadership and accepts responsibility for risk management.
2. The board or committee seeks or appoints a 'risk manager' (who can be a volunteer) as the person championing or responsible for the risk management process. If possible, the board or committee should establish a risk committee (of at least two persons, which can include an external person) which is responsible for the risk management process. If an SRO is not in the position to appoint a committee, either the whole board or the person appointed as risk manager would be responsible for the process.
3. The risk manager and/or risk management committee then identifies the key people (for example, the head coach, event manager or finance director) within the SRO to be involved in, and assume some leadership role for, the risk management process.
4. The risk manager and/or risk management committee develops the SRO's risk management action plans and presents these to the board or committee for consideration, feedback and adoption.
5. The plans are communicated to all appropriate people within the SRO and to key external stakeholders, such as the facility owner or manager, or a regional or state sporting body.
6. The risk manager or risk committee regularly monitors and reviews the plans and reports to the board, at least annually.
7. Risk management remains a standing agenda item at board or committee meetings. The risk manager or risk management committee chairperson presents to the board or committee on the implementation and success of the risk management plans at these meetings.



Communication

Initial but also ongoing communication with members and other key stakeholders of the SRO is crucial to effective risk management.

Clearly explaining what the SRO is doing in risk management and why it is doing it, can improve the understanding of members and stakeholders about the importance and benefits of risk management (refer to information sheet one, *Overview and introduction to risk management*).

Communication can ensure that everyone's understanding is comprehensive and current, and can result in the SRO taking a risk management approach to its normal activities and strengthening the culture and environment within the SRO.

This could be done by employing some of the following strategies:

- communicating the SRO's risk management plan internally via a noticeboard, newsletter or website
- positioning posters or information sheets promoting safety in and around the SRO's facility
- advertising safety initiatives within the SRO via its internal communication systems, or externally via the media
- providing new or prospective members with information about the SRO's commitment to safety
- offering a reward and recognition program that encourages improvements in safety among those most directly involved.

Planning

A risk management culture can be established or enhanced by the SRO integrating the consideration of risk management into strategic and operational planning.

Governance

A sound governance structure that supports risk management and its benefits will enhance a risk management culture.

To this end, it is recommended that SROs establish and maintain:

- incorporation and an up-to-date constitution
- policies to guide organisational decision making
- appropriate and effective financial controls
- position descriptions for office bearers and staff - including key volunteers
- strategies that see these roles matched with the skills of the incumbents.

Education and training

Risk management education and training for volunteers, office bearers and officials is a particularly crucial aspect of induction programs.

In addition, an SRO should monitor and evaluate the appropriateness of the accreditation and performance of its coaches.

Compliance

SROs should adhere to all applicable legislation and standards. These might include:

- employment of personnel
- fulfilling the terms of all contracts
- the serving of alcohol
- the preparation and serving of food
- gaming
- public events
- operation and maintenance of facilities
- selling of products, merchandise or services.

Refer to information information sheet four, *Compliance and risk management* for additional information.



Participation

SROs can enhance their risk management culture and reduce the risk associated with participation, by following the appropriate rules and protocols for the activities offered.

SROs can endeavour to minimise injuries by employing strategies such as:

- safety inspections of facilities and equipment
- pre-participation screening and warm up and warm down routines
- injury surveillance and attention to fluid replacement
- modified programs and equipment for juniors
- policies related to pregnancy, infectious diseases, UV protection, alcohol and the use of personal protective equipment
- injury response procedures and suitably qualified first-aiders.

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