

Five Steps toward controlling insurance costs:

- 1) Make safety and risk management a part of your club's internal operations. As part of a regular staff meeting, club owners should also discuss risk management issues. Some sample topics of discussion would be; equipment maintenance, problem wet areas, and child care procedures.
- 2) Use a separate waiver document. The problem with most waivers is that they are buried within all of the other wording in a membership agreement form. Some waivers are even printed on the back of an agreement or are written so poorly that they wouldn't hold up no matter how conspicuous it looks. By having a separate Waiver & Release Form for members to sign, the club can demonstrate that they have warned their clients of the possible dangers of working out. The form is then simply stapled to the club's membership agreement and kept as a permanent record.
- 3) Go above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that if a member is injured at your club, that you (the owner), personally follows up with that individual to make sure they are O.K. Offer to freeze their membership, send flowers, offer a free personal training session, extend their agreement by two months...whatever it takes to make them happy. Offering to pay for their deductible or medical co-pay does not implicate you in any way. Be sure to document every conversation, act of kindness, and follow up call. Send in an incident report to your agent and let them know your opinion as to client's disposition during and after the incident.
- 4) Fix the small stuff at your club. Roof leaks are a particular problem that can affect your ability to maintain competitive property insurance rates. A club that has backup of sewer & drains, clogged gutters that cause interior damage and roofs that need to be updated, may result in the club's ability to even buy property insurance. Do not use your insurance policy as a "maintenance" policy. Save it for the big stuff.
- 5) Get rid of your "museum" pieces of equipment. Keep your equipment fresh, your cables updated, and your flooring (especially the wet areas) safe. A simple thing like stenciling your club's logo on all of your treadmills can help eliminate the problem of a member stepping on a moving belt because they couldn't see if it was running or not.
- 6) When shopping for a new insurance company or even if you are renewing with your existing agent, be sure to provide a complete application along with your existing membership agreement, club brochure, website, waiver, newsletter, and whatever else you currently utilize at your club. This will not only give the underwriter an accurate picture of the "risk", but it will demonstrate that you are organized and that you have great pride of ownership.