

What are your Safety Resolutions for 2005?

I can't believe the end of the year is upon us. This typically is a good time to start outlining your business plan for the coming year. You will probably be setting your sales goals, equipment purchases, or even considering an expansion or acquisition of another club. This is also a very good time to review your existing risk management procedures and safety protocol. I have highlighted a few areas that you should consider as part of your New Year's resolutions.

- 1) Review your employee manual: Most of us have not updated our employee manuals in some time. There are also several new club owners who have never gotten around to developing an employee manual. A well written manual sets a foundation for staff training and can help eliminate employee liability issues before they start. Your employee manual should clearly outline what is expected of the employee and address your rights as employer to terminate the relationship. Your manual should also contain your Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Sexual Harassment policies.
- 2) AED's: Many states have already passed legislation that will require health clubs to have an Automated External Defibrillator in 2005 and it is just a matter of time before AED's are the industry standard. Many insurance companies are already developing endorsements that will exclude liability protection for those clubs that do not comply with mandated AED legislation. Even if you are in a state that has not yet addressed the AED issue, it is still a good idea to have one. They are a proven device for saving lives.
- 3) Electronic Video Surveillance Systems: Digital video surveillance is an excellent tool to help reduce crime in your parking lot and mysterious disappearance of your inventory. However, it is an even better tool for staff training and capturing incidents that occur at your club. Since most accidents that occur at a health club are caused by "member malfunction", a video that captures the event is an invaluable tool to help curb your liability. A good surveillance system should have cameras placed on all workout areas, front counter, parking lots and common walk areas. The cost of these systems are reasonable (around \$10,000 for a typical 20,000 square foot club) and will allow a club owner to monitor his/her club(s) from anywhere in the world.