



Risk Management *Tips*

Does Your Martial Arts Program Have an Emergency Action Plan?

Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) help speed your response to emergency situations, reduce injury severity, mitigate damages associated with a catastrophic event, and save lives. An EAP is not an emergency evacuation plan. For assistance in developing an emergency evacuation plan, consult your local fire and police departments for help.

When you create your EAP, assign specific responsibilities to staff members and cross-train key personnel. You can use injuries and emergencies experienced in the martial arts industry to create various scenarios, and practice responding to them. Make sure staff know where emergency equipment is located and how to use it. Post emergency contact numbers prominently by telephones for easy reference.



If a student receives a blow to the head, for example, it is imperative to assess for a concussion promptly, and it may be necessary to activate your EAP. Your plan requires pre- and post-incident guidelines, along with procedures for third-party intervention. Pre-planning involves gaining an understanding of concussions, how to evaluate a student's condition, and any legal requirements for a concussion management program. Post-incident planning may involve contacting emergency services, removing a student from practice or competition, and working with a physician to determine when it is safe for a student to return. Learn more about concussion management at www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm#.

Documentation, such as an incident report, is instrumental for improving your response. It is important to maintain thorough records for communicating with emergency responders, insurance adjusters, and others. Keep your documentation factual. Don't express your opinion regarding negligence or what you can do in the future to avoid a similar incident.

Documentation is critical if you need to communicate to the media. Designate one spokesperson—typically the owner or facility manager—and train employees to direct all media inquiries to this contact. Consult your attorney before releasing any information to the press.

Periodically review your EAP to help staff gain an understanding of their role and to help identify areas that need modification. Should an emergency situation occur, contact your insurance company as soon as is practical.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.