

Managing the Loss of Key Employees

Last year, a Boys & Girls Club Executive Director committed suicide. Last month, a camp director's son who was involved with the camp's leadership staff died in a vehicle accident. When most programs think of crisis management plans, they don't consider how the loss of a key employee can affect their program. While there is some insurance coverage available for some of these instances, this article isn't about trying to sell more insurance (though you should talk to your agent). It's about thinking ahead about responses that you may need to make in the event various key staff are unable to work for a period of time for whatever reason.

Here are some of the issues to address in your crisis management plan:

- Who are your key employees, the ones whose loss would make operating your regular program difficult, if not unsafe?
- Would the replacement of a key employee require finding someone with special skills, training, or certifications?
- What is the availability of such a person and where would you find him or her?
- How would you best integrate new people into your program to bring them up to speed as quickly as possible?
- What changes to your program would have to be made if you could not find this person? • What are the emotional and public relations impacts of losing a key employee and how will you help your staff deal with them?
- What resources from outside your organization might be brought in to assist?

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.