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When and How to Evacuate an Arena

by Jerry Krewer

In today's world it is becoming increasingly important that arena management be prepared for emergency situations. One of the most important steps in the emergency response process is to determine when, why and how to properly evacuate your facility.

Keeping the safety of all facility occupants as your primary goal, the facility should be evacuated in the event of fire, bomb threats, hazardous material leaks/spills, and structural damage to the facility. Any time the safety of occupants is threatened by remaining in the facility, evacuation should take place. All facility staff members are responsible for reporting any potential emergencies to the supervisor on duty.

The supervisor in charge of the facility determines when to evacuate the facility. All staff members are expected to assist with the evacuation until everyone is out of the facility. Any patron who refuses to leave the facility, after having been warned, should be left; staff is not obligated to, nor should they, jeopardize their own safety by remaining in an unsafe condition.

Emergency evacuation routes should be clearly marked and well lit. Maps showing evacuation routes should be posted in every interior room. If possible, staff members should be posted at all exits to direct the evacuation. Re-entry to the facility should be restricted until it is declared safe by the appropriate officials.

Staff training is critical to the safe and efficient evacuation of a facility. Each employee should be trained on his or her individual responsibilities during a building evacuation. This training should include actual evacuation drills to insure that staff is prepared for the unexpected emergency situations they may one day have to face.

With proper staff training, facility management can sleep at night knowing that if an emergency situation occurs that requires the building to be evacuated, staff is prepared to execute the evacuation safely and efficiently.

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