

The Shared Responsibility of an Effective Risk Management Plan for a Children's Aid Society

Risk management cannot simply be imposed. It must be viewed as a collaborative venture that involves all roles within a Children's Aid Society. Each person in a different role must understand and take responsibility for their part in making it a meaningful exercise that becomes a continuous endeavour on at least a yearly basis. Although the suggested roles below encompass all aspects of agency risk, caseload neglect and scrutiny cannot be seen in isolation from the numerous other aspects of agency risk that could also precipitate claims or public relations calamities. These various roles were articulated a number of years ago but are worth repeating due to both administrative and staff turnovers in agencies. Those less senior in an agency have more of a direct responsibility in ensuring competent standard of care approaches to actual case management. Those in the upper echelon have more diverse responsibilities with risk management in general (other than case management) although these areas can sometimes be the subject of litigation as well.

Board of Directors:

- Sets risk management goals, and adopts annual operating objectives and budget including risk management strategies.
- Adopts annual capital budget with risk management considerations.
- Reviews operational reports to determine compliance and future priorities.
- Ensures compliance with policies and standards imposed by government, professional organizations or accrediting organizations.
- Adopts and establishes policies and procedures.
- Reviews the organization's insurance coverage.
- Reviews the annual executive limitation report on risk management.

- Conducts evaluation of the risk management plan with external expertise as necessary.
- Ensures due diligence.

Executive Director:

- Champions organization-wide efforts to protect the vital assets of the agency and engages key stakeholders in risk management activities.
- Assigns staff to design and carry out safety and risk management activities.
- Assigns staff to perform annual reviews of the safety and risk management activities and submit a report to the Board.
- Oversees the development, implementation and monitoring of loss prevention programs.
- Executes contractual obligations.
- Keeps the Board apprised of emerging threats and opportunities facing the organization.
- Develops, implements and monitors public relations risk management strategies and activities related to protecting the corporate reputation from harm.
- Coordinates organizational efforts to protect the vital assets of the agency and engages key stakeholders in risk management activities.
- Assists the Board in overseeing risk management strategies for the organization.
- Ensures the conduct of contract reviews; development of indemnity agreements, hold-harmless agreements and consent forms, and coordinates the purchase of insurance.
- Purchases, monitors and evaluates the insurance program, appropriate financial plan, accurate loss forecasting, claims management, loss prevention and cost containment programs.
- Integrates risk management throughout the organization's programs.

Directors of Service:

- Develop, implement and monitor clinical risk management strategies and activities related to direct client care.

Human Resources Staff:

- Develop, implement and monitor employment standards risk management strategies and activities related to organizational compliance with human rights and employment law.

All Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and Co-ordinators:

- Ensure that appropriate and effective risk management processes are in place within their designated area(s) and scope of responsibilities.
- Prepare specific departmental policies and procedures to ensure all necessary risk assessments are carried out within their area of responsibility, with staff input and in liaison with relevant advisors where necessary.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the risks within their work environment and of their personal responsibilities and have proper training to deal with the identified risks.
- Raise the issues with the senior management and/ or the Board in situations where significant risks have been identified and where local control measures are considered to be potentially inadequate.

Staff, Volunteers and Foster Parents:

- Have a duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of all others that may be affected by their actions or inactions.
- Assess and act on risks.
- Comply with all agency policies, procedures, regulations, and instructions to protect the health, safety and welfare of anyone affected by the agency's business.
- Report incidents/accidents, near misses and unsafe occurrences using the agency Incident Reporting System.
- Be aware of emergency procedures (for example, evacuation and fire precaution procedures etc. relating to their locations).

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