

ASAP news

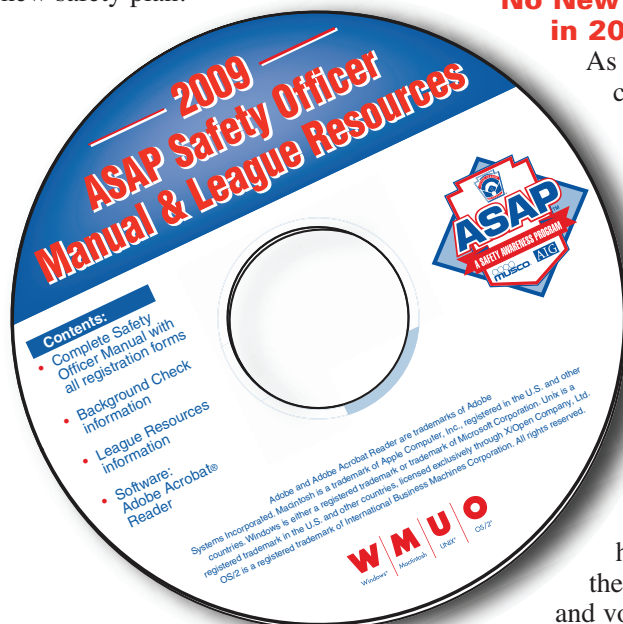


Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

2009 Safety Manual is IN!

Use this resource to improve on your safety plan to make 2009 your league's safest ever!

The updated 2009 Safety Officer Manual on CD has been distributed to all leagues across the country, and safety officers are beginning to put together their league's new safety plan.



A main function of the league safety officer is to review the safety plan annually with the board of directors and make any needed updates to improve the safety or safety awareness of the league. Your league's safety plan isn't a static document that should remain the same from year to year. As conditions change, make updates to increase your league's preparedness in case of any emergency.

The new Safety Officer Manual provides many ideas for your league to consider as you prepare for the new season. It includes the "A Little

Common Sense . . . From a Million Little League Volunteers" section, that includes the good ideas of hundreds of leagues just like yours going back to the beginning of the ASAP program. Review this material, as well as the winning safety plan included on the CD, for ideas your league could implement.

No New Requirements in 2009

As in the past, the new manual contains the registration form, facility survey, and checklist of requirements for a qualified safety plan. While the 13 minimum requirements have not changed, leagues interested in growing their safety plan should review the "Highly Recommended" ideas on page four of the registration form for ways other leagues have heightened their safety of their players, spectators, and volunteers.

Remember, even if your league had a qualified plan in 2008, your league must **again** submit a printed copy of your plan to Little League no later than **May 1, 2009**. Leagues wishing to help their Districts earn the Early Bird Incentive need to have their plans submitted **AND APPROVED** by **April 1, 2009**. It normally takes at least one week for a plan to be reviewed and approved after it has been submitted, if it has no problems. Additional time should be allowed to resolve questions for plans seeking the Early Incentive.

Facility Survey Update

Again this year, the Facility Survey Online contains the updated facility information for every league that submitted their facility survey in 2008. This allows you to always have the prior year's information as you prepare to complete your fields' surveys. It is critical to review your facilities prior to beginning play every year, to find and address any concerns before practices and games begin. The facility survey gives you a planning tool to find and address concerns before a player, volunteer, or spectator is hurt.

To access the material, go to: <http://facilitysurvey.musco.com>.

The league ID uses the dashed form of your league ID (example: 115-04-17, not 01150417), and the password is different than the Data Center, as well. Look for the email with your league's specific information sent out in mid-January to the league president and safety officer.

Incentives for Safety

The 2009 Disney® character collector's pin "Backstop" the catcher will be sent to every safety officer who submits a qualified safety plan. All qualified leagues who take the Little League Insurance will also receive a cash award, based on the number of teams participating in their program who are covered by the safety plan.

The top two leagues judged to have the best safety plans from their region will each earn a \$500 award. Each region's first place winning league will also earn a trip to the Little League World Series held at Little League International in Williamsport, Penn., in August 2009 for their league president and league safety officer.

**Be an
Early Bird!!!**

Now 125 Free ChoicePoint Background Checks

Little League increases number of free ChoicePoint background checks to every league and district, for better assurance of volunteers' pasts

This season, when you decide what form of background check you will conduct on your volunteers, consider this: Little League thinks so highly of the ChoicePoint background checks they have increased the number they will provide to your league to 125.

And Little League International's Risk Management Director Dan Kirby wants leagues to understand this is an important consideration.

If you conduct five checks per team, about the number Little League feels is average, you can now check 25 teams without ever having to pay a cent. If your league goes over the 125 free checks, it will only cost your league \$1 per additional check. Since 2003, Little League has promoted the low-cost **nationwide** background checks offered through ChoicePoint, changing the requirements to a nationwide check of all state sex offender registries.

The kind of check you do is important, and the news continues

to highlight just how important. Coaches are just people and just as apt to commit crimes. Recent news stories tell of coaches being arrested for sexual abuse, physical abuse, and selling drugs.

As an example, in York, Penn., a man – who had been a volunteer coach of a local basketball program – was charged in mid-January with selling crack cocaine. The program where he had been a coach was reported to have said they conduct child abuse checks on their

volunteers but not criminal background checks. The man had previously been arrested in 2003 for the crime of intent to deliver cocaine but was convicted of the lesser charge of possession of cocaine and marijuana.

While sex offenders are a high-profile concern, leagues face a higher probability risk of a person with a criminal history being involved with their league either because the league didn't check for anything but sex crimes or just didn't do their required checks at all, and that is a real concern for Little League, Kirby points out. "This is a serious issue, and that's why Little League International put

the mandatory background check regulation in place. You need to go back to your leagues and talk about this.

"After the 125 checks, these are just a buck to do; so it's not a monetary issue," Kirby stressed. "The league is still responsible, even if a school district or city park department works with the league. The league is responsible for checking all umpires, coaches, ANYONE who has repetitive contact with players or regular services to the league.

Each league is required to make its own evaluation of the crimes found and determine what is allowed."

Also, league boards of directors need to follow up and ensure

the checks have been carried out by whomever has that responsibility, no matter what method is used.

"ChoicePoint has the ability to print out a list of all the names of people who have been checked with them, and this should be shared with the entire board to show the list was completed," Kirby concluded.

The 125 free checks underscore the importance Little League places on doing criminal background checks on volunteers, not just the minimum mandatory nationwide sex offender check. Your league needs to consider the importance of these checks when your board decides which type of checks to conduct this year.



A LexisNexis® Company

Add to Your Safety Plan **ANNUALLY**

Make sure new safety practices are included in your plan, for future boards' use

A safety plan should be constantly improving, but don't leave out those improvements you make from your written plan. Specific approaches are often developed to fix an issue, but with board turnover and changing responsibilities, those remedies can be forgotten if not documented in your safety plan when implemented.

Just ask Debbie Murray, the new safety officer at Lewis Little League in Weston, West Virginia.

Their league has had a safety plan for several years, even receiving honorable mention in the South Region in 2008, but updates were sometimes included in the written plan and sometimes not. "I am a stickler when it comes to documentation! Record keeping is a must for any organization and especially Little League. Board members change and . . . you wind up starting from scratch," Debbie explained in an email to ASAP.

"I am currently working on the safety manual and adding materials and information to last year's safety plan," the new safety officer explained. "I am also making sure that many of the safety features that have been instituted in the past eight years are included in this year's safety manual. I do not understand

how these were left out, but I am sure that everything will be included this year."

A safety plan not only helps make sure your league is safer this year, but it helps

document what SHOULD be done next year, to keep your league implementing its safety program and not dropping out any crucial components. The situation is actually the reverse for Lewis Little League, but Debbie is working to fix that. "It is a shame that this 2009 manual will actually have many changes listed that have never been included in our safety plan formally," she noted. "While we practiced these safety [procedures], they just were never added to the manual."

**Remember:
creating and
following a
safety plan is for
the KIDS.
Don't drop the ball!**



FOLLOW YOUR PLAN or Don't Claim To

As safety plans grow in popularity, don't make the mistake of putting together a plan that your league isn't going to follow

With four out of every five leagues now submitting a safety plan, Little League International Risk Management Director Dan Kirby wants to make sure leagues are following their written plans.

"I don't want *anyone* to put out a plan they are not doing," Kirby stressed to a group of District Administrator recently at a regional training session. "The main point of safety plans is to make it safer for everyone." With over 4,800 leagues participating in the ASAP program, the temptation can be strong for a league to put material into a safety program they are not actually doing, to allow the plan to be approved or to make it stand out during judging.

Kirby noted leagues "have already been sued for not having a safety program" even though it is a voluntary program. A league that states they provide or maintain safety measures they really do not is asking to be sued if an injury occurs due to the false information. He urged leagues to work at improving the safety measures they do offer their players, volunteers, and spectators, and include that material in their safety plan. But don't risk falsifying the plan with material that is not being carried out.

Basics of Creating an Emergency Plan

Whether creating a new safety plan or updating an existing plan, follow these suggestions to help your league create a safer environment

Every year safety officers take on the responsibility of improving the local league's safety. But many new safety officers have no clear idea of how to accomplish that goal.

Every league is different, with unique safety concerns, but the nature of Little League's program means leagues have a fundamental need to address common playing injuries in their safety plan. These injuries might be to players, volunteers, or spectators, but leagues must prepare a plan in advance for handling them, even the injuries they hope never happen. That should be the basis of every safety plan.

Creating an Emergency Plan

Planning for proper handling of injuries starts before the season begins, with an outline of volunteers' responsibilities and the role each will play if an injury occurs. Your emergency plan should state who will take action during an injury: list the volunteers' positions, or the level of training provided, but also leave room for more advanced care. Reducing confusion among volunteers will speed attention to the injured person. As an example: "The team manager or coach of the injured player who attended first aid training this year, unless a medical professional is available, should assess the injury and determine the level of care required."

Acute Injury Emergency Response

While the majority of injuries will be handled with ice or a bandage by the coach, leagues should have procedures for the rare, but more complicated and severe cases, such as bone fractures, spinal injuries, cardiac arrests, or other life-threatening illnesses and injuries. Immediate recognition of these kinds of injuries is critical, to begin the proper steps for an acute injury response. The plan still begins with assessment by a trained volunteer of the injured person.

Volunteers must have access to a telephone to contact emergency services, whether cell or landline phone, and

a phone list of emergency contact numbers. These numbers should be provided to every volunteer, either on a separate card or as part of the full safety manual. If needed, provide change for a pay phone, if that is all that can be assured of being available. Ambulance services, police, fire, and utilities contacts are some of the numbers leagues should provide on their emergency numbers list. Many times 9-1-1 will suffice, but talk to your local emergency services providers to be sure this number is correct for all situations.

When calling, have the adult give a description as detailed as possible of the injury to the emergency services dispatcher. Provide directions in your plan to the field, or to the nearest intersection to a complex of fields, so volunteers can give a specific identification of the field in case of an emergency. If needed, plan for an adult to guide emergency vehicles from the park entrance to the specific field.

Stabilize the Injury

After emergency services have been called, the volunteer in charge should begin providing the care needed, up to the level of care their experience and training allows. For a heart or breathing concern, begin CPR or use an AED, or rescue breathing may be required. For a severe injury to a bone or body part, it may be necessary to immobilize the area with a splint, or simply keep the victim as still as



Little League® Facilities Survey

ASAP
A SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM
MUSCO

Log In

Little League ID:
(Example: 113-01-01)

Password:
[Forgot Your Password?](#)

This survey can assist in finding areas of focus for your safety plan. During your annual field inspections, please complete this form and return along with your qualified safety plan. In return, we'll send you the 2009 Disney® character collector's pin shown above featuring Backstop the catcher.

1-800-811-7443 | [Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [Help](#)

possible until professional medical help arrives. For an unconscious person or someone who has a suspected neck/spinal injury, unless necessary to provide CPR for a person who has no breathing or pulse, do NOT move the person until trained medical professionals arrive.

Continue to monitor the injured person until help arrives. If the injured person lost consciousness, or is exhibiting signs of concussion (confusion, vacant stare, delayed verbal or motor responses, disorientation, etc.) after a collision or head injury, it may be necessary to frequently check on the person's mental state to make sure the head injury is not worsening. This is especially important if the injury was not deemed serious enough to warrant calling an ambulance.

Finally, don't forget about the other players. Make sure coaches understand that if they are not rendering first aid, they should stay with the team, move them away from the injured person, and calm any fears.

Before the Season

Help your volunteers understand the league's safety plan by reviewing it at least annually during your first aid training. Ask coaches to discuss the plan with parents at an initial meeting, and ask about medical training any of them might have, so everyone understand the roles they will be asked to play if an injury occurs. All teams should have a basic first aid kit to at least treat injuries like scrapes, bumps, and bruises.

A league with a qualified safety program must, at a minimum, provide basic first aid training each year,

The *National Athletic Trainers' Association* as part of their **Coach Emergency Action Card** suggests the:

Coaches' Role in Emergency: CHECK – CALL – CARE

1. Approach, but do not move, injured person – maintain position.
2. Immediate **CHECK** of athlete or spectator (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Bleeding).
3. **CALL** emergency phone number and give proper directions to site.
4. Make sure you have someone in charge of directing emergency vehicles to field.
5. **CARE** for injured person (CPR, Rescue Breathing, Control Bleeding, Immobilize).
6. NEVER leave an injured person alone. Stay until EMS arrives to the scene.
7. EMERGENCY SUPPLY NEEDS: First Aid Kit, Phone, Blanket for Warming, AED Unit.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** All athletic league coaches should be required to be trained and certified in CPR and First Aid. AED training should be required for those athletic leagues with AED units on property.*

(For full card, see April 2008 ASAP News issue, or visit <http://www.nata.org/consumer/docs/coachescard.pdf>)

with one coach from each team attending annually and **all** coaches attending at least once every three years. This will provide your volunteers with the ability to handle basic first aid concerns. Many leagues are now offering CPR training as well, and AED training if they have an AED unit, to increase the immediate care possible by its volunteers. Running mock injury drills for the coaches will make them more confident in a real injury situation.

Facility Survey Online is Open!

If you haven't tried the Facility Survey Online for your league, you've been missing out! Leagues annually use the Little League National Facility Survey to plan facility upgrades and check for changes in fields as part of their overall safety program. The online version offers all this and contains the data from the printed versions submitted in 2008 with leagues' safety plans.

League presidents and safety officers should have received an email with the link to the site with their league ID and password to see the facility survey information for their league. The Facility Survey Online is located at <http://facilitysurvey.musco.com>.



Free Online Training Helps Educate About Child Abuse

Pass on this website to your volunteers, and help give them the training to recognize the signs of abuse and know what to do to report it

This spring, give your volunteers some free training to recognize the signs of an abused child. Remember, abuse isn't restricted to sexual abuse, and the signs aren't posted in four-inch letters for all to see. But they are there.

A District Administrator in Oregon recommended a free online training program that all teachers and school employees in that state must review every year. It states the concern clearly and in terms that apply no matter where you live: "While our formal focus is on children's education, our commitment is to their safety, which includes their physical, emotional, and mental health. Child abuse and neglect remain critical issues . . ."

Raleen Hockenberry, DA, Oregon District 9, explains she is an educational assistant at a local school in Oregon, where all staff are mandatory reporters of suspected abuse. Now in Oregon, new legislation has created an online training resource for educators to help in identifying abuse in any form. The course takes about an hour to complete and is available to anyone who wants to spend the time to take it. "The first time I took the training – while I was still taking it – I thought, 'This could really be a help to Little League volunteers,'" she recalled. So she sent an email to



The website is: <http://courses.orvsd.org/moodle/course/view.php?id=254>

Little League International with the suggestion.

Recognizing signs of abuse, in any form, and knowing what to do about whether and how to report it are all important parts of this training, which takes the volunteer through examples and short quizzes to test their comprehension of what has been presented.

This is something close to Hockenberry's heart, as she was abused as a child and later in life was foster parent to an abused child. "If I hadn't been an abuse victim, I wouldn't have recognized the signs of what he was going through," trying to get past prior abuse, she explained. That's why she's passionate on this subject and understands the need for as many people as possible to take this type of training.

She checked with the school's administration, and they thought the

idea of sharing the training was "a great idea. The site does not require a 'membership,' thus anyone in the world can take the training and revisit the site any time" to review the material, she noted. It is directed at teachers and school employees, so people taking the training will have to adapt the terms to Little League and their volunteer work.

"If any ONE adult takes this training and can intercede for ONE child, it falls right in line with my favorite reference that is most appropriate in our child development program and has oft times been modified for schools, churches, neighborhoods: 'Fifty years from now, it won't matter who struck out, who caught the fly ball or had a home run. But the world will be a better place because YOU took the time to make a difference in the life of one child, your own or someone else's.'"

One of the most important aspects of the training is helping people

understand what NOT to do. As the quizzes and examples in the training underscore, there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of handling suspected abuse, and the volunteers should know the difference.

“To me, this is an awesome opportunity to get training on a really important topic,” Hokenberry explained.

“Hopefully, after they take this training, this will tug on someone’s heart to get involved in the life of a child.”

The website has some easy-to-understand instructions, and allows the trainee to enter his or her email address to receive a copy of the completion record, showing a person took the course.

“Whether we realize it or not,

the volunteers (and parents) that make up the base of Little League operations are 24/7/365 role models and potential guardians for the children in our communities. Though we don’t want to over-react, consider the potential of more damage/abuse occurring if we under-react,” she stated.

“Part of this is my history as an abuse victim, and part is my history as a foster parent of an abuse victim. But the biggest factor is my concern for the children,” Hokenberry concluded. “Fifty years from now, what will be the impact of my life on the life of a child?”

Is Safety a Priority? Maybe Your Culture Needs Redefining

If winning at all costs is a problem in your league, help coaches see the value of the Double-Goal Coach® approach.

Improving your league’s culture, through positive, character-building life lessons is the goal of the Positive Coaching Alliance, and Little League has teamed up with PCA for the fourth year to help educate coaches, parents, and players about the value of keeping the game in perspective.

As stories abound on parent and coach misconduct, PCA works to give both groups the tools needed to support and train young athletes, while allowing players to risk failure to gain success, without sacrificing the important life lessons being taught in order to win.

“Our partnership with Little League International is one of the most important initiatives we have at Positive Coaching Alliance,” stated Jim Thompson, PCA founder and executive director. “Building on the success we have had with the Little League Double-Goal Coach® Program, we will work to help Little League parents become Second-Goal Parents who focus on

life lessons for their children. That way we develop Triple-Impact Competitors, committed to improving themselves, their teammates, and the sports of baseball and softball.”

Too often leagues focus on giving coaches skills training without providing any help on creating a positive culture and quality player experience in the league. If the only measuring stick is winning, then coaches will work just on creating a winning team, with little regard to injuries or players’ emotional needs. PCA offers training to educate all three groups: coaches, parents, and players, on the double goal. First, striving to win, and second, using ball to teach life lessons. PCA stresses that the second goal, teaching life lessons, is *never* sacrificed to achieve the first goal of winning.

“This special partnership gives our program’s volunteers the tools to teach Little Leaguers much more than just the skills of hitting, throwing, and catching a ball,” said Stephen D. Keener, president and CEO for Little League Baseball and Softball. “In addition to the online course, Positive Coaching Alliance contributes coaching and sports-parenting content that complements Little League’s educational offerings.”

Common Sense Solutions from the Field

AED Certification

“We are going to certify all 15 board members at this Saturday’s AED training, and as many coaches as we could afford. We will have one person certified in using an AED at every game we play this season, due to this training. I wasn’t sure what our response would be, but we will have a full class Saturday.”

*Shawn Phillips, safety officer
Destin, Florida, Little League*

Hot Beverage Safety

“While operating the concession stand, I instituted a policy concerning the mandatory use of lids for coffee and hot chocolate. In addition, we require all concession workers to ask if a hot chocolate is for an adult or a

child. If the drink is for a child, the rule is to use ½ cup hot water and add cool tap water or ice to the hot chocolate and put a lid on it. We had so many parents and grand parents sending small children to get coffee and hot chocolate that it was an obvious safety hazard. Tight-fitting lids really help protect these young kids and it also helps protect the concession workers who are in danger – rushing around preparing food orders – from being burned by the liquid. I can’t count the number of times I have seen near-misses with a hot cup of coffee or hot chocolate before I took over the concession stand. Workers are no longer in danger of being burned. It is just common sense to use a lid and it

only costs a few pennies. Far less than medical treatment for a serious burn.”

*Debbie Murray, safety officer
Lewis Little League,
Weston, West Virginia*

Thru-way Gate

"A new gate has been installed to divide the main road through the complex. The purpose of this gate is to restrict thru-traffic and make it safer for the children and adults crossing between fields and parking areas. This gate will be closed one half hour prior to the start of games and not reopened until all players and parents have left the complex."

*Saugerties Little League
Saugerties, NY*

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