

Safety Alert: Physical Training Injuries are UP in 2017

Annually, IRMA runs data reports on claims to identify adverse claims patterns or trends which are affecting the pool. This data is further analyzed by staff to help determine the direction of risk management, training and grant opportunities. In 2017, there was a significant increase in injuries within the Police and Fire Departments during physical training. Physical training injuries were the second highest reported workers' compensation injury and third highest in injury severity, costing the pool nearly \$800,000. These numbers are up since 2015 and will continue to grow as the 2017 claims continue to develop.

So far in 2018, there have been 30 reported workers' compensation claims caused while performing physical training activities. This type of injury is trending for another significant claims year. Training injuries *should* be viewed as preventable, however most often they are not. IRMA recommends taking these simple steps toward making your next physical training event safe for all participants:

- 1) Always have a non-participating Safety Officer or Training Supervisor present for the duration of the physical training event. This person should be able to identify the well-being of all participants and stop the training if necessary. Depending on the number of participants and training location, there may be a need to have multiple Safety Officers.
- 2) Allow all participants to STOP, without penalty, if they do not understand their assignment or feel unsafe at any time.
- 3) Prior to the start of physical training course all attendees should be provided with a training plan and safety briefing which should include the following:
 - a. Defined training outcomes and learning objectives
 - b. Expectations during the training, such as number of training evolutions, physical requirements, and required breaks
 - c. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a PPE check and review of PPE use
 - d. Level of Force or Exertion required to successfully complete the training
 - e. Any additional safety protocols based on the type of training
- 4) Participants should be instructed to inform the Safety Officer or Training Supervisor of any pre-existing conditions which could affect their performance or place him/her at a greater risk of injury *prior* to the start of the physical training course.
- 5) Participants must also be instructed to notify the Safety Officer or Training Supervisor of any injuries sustained *during* training prior to leaving the training program. The participant should complete an incident report form regardless if treatment is being



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sought. The form should include the type of activity being performed at the time of injury, any witnesses, and the contact information of the Safety or Training Officers administering the training.

- 6) If the training is off-site or managed by another organization, discuss your safety protocol with the hosting entity and provide your employees with the same expectations prior to attending.
- 7) Be sure all contracted trainers have certifications and experience in the subject they are teaching and check references.