

GEORGIA SOCCER (GA SOCCER)
GUIDEBOOK FOR LOCAL AFFILIATE AND ALL GA SOCCER STATE PROGRAMS INCLUDING ODP
AND OTHER GEORGIA SOCCER STATE PROGRAMS' RISK MANAGEMENT COORDINATORS
(INCLUDING ADULT SOCCER PROGRAMS WITH YOUTH AGE PLAYERS)

(Revised 07/31/2018)

I. Introduction

- a. Thank you for assuming this important role within your local soccer organization. The first question usually asked by those who volunteer to take on this new responsibility is, "What am I supposed to do now"?

The Ga State Risk Management Committee (RMC) offers this Guidebook reference to help you get started as a means to better understand the role and responsibilities that comes with your new appointment as a local and/or Ga Soccer State program Risk Management Coordinator.

- b. What follows below is the GA Soccer approved RMC synopsis of the general objectives of the local or state-wide Risk Management role:

Risk Management is the actions taken by Georgia Soccer and its affiliates to minimize risk associated with the playing and administration of the game of soccer. Georgia Soccer's Risk Management Committee's role is to study the areas where risk may exist and to propose policy and education to mitigate that risk.

Risk Management addresses a number of issues which include, but are not limited to, background checks for those involved with youth players, field and game safety, and the protection of the state association and of each member organization and their assets.

Georgia Soccer's Board of Directors made it policy that all person 18 years and older who coach or referee, take part in an administrative role where players 17 and younger play must have a background check.

- c. **The GA State RMC always welcomes your inquiries to help support your local efforts to become better aware and educated on how to effectively implement a successful local risk management practice. You are not "alone" in carrying out your local responsibilities.**

II. "First Steps":

- a. **For our Georgia Youth Affiliates, the US Soccer "*Kidsafe*" program serves as the basic guide upon which we focus our priorities. Take a few minutes to read this pamphlet from US Youth Soccer. https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/assets/1/6/1_risk_management_beyond_kidsafe.pdf**
- b. **For all Affiliates, Youth or Adult, we then suggest that you next reference the GA State Risk Management Web page under the respective program link to**

see what policies are required, as well as learning about other guidelines and reference material that is available to help you with your local /state Risk Management position.

http://www.georgiasoccer.org/club/risk_management

III. Priorities for Local/State Risk Management (RM) Coordinators:

- a. First, there are currently three Ga State RM policies that every affiliate (both youth and adult) must comply with. These can be found on the Ga Soccer State RM Webpage under the respective links for Admin, Coaches, and ODP. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with these to determine how best to apply these policies within your local or state program. These policies are:
 1. **Safe Soccer Policy (Background Screening)**
Each local Affiliate is welcome to utilize your own background screening program/resource. Some have free access to local city/county law enforcement services. Others may choose to access a service for a fee. For additional help on this background policy you can contact the Ga State RMC for assistance. The State Referee Committee manages all Referee background screenings for Referees wanting to be assigned to youth soccer games.
 2. **State Harassment Policy**
 3. **Youth Policy (adopted 2013)- Guidelines on Concussion Awareness & "Return to Play".**
- b. Also, there remains a top priority among your local Risk Management duties to promote and practice responsible Goal Safety. This pertains to games and practices, as well as the safe security of goals during non-use.

CPSC Guidelines for Moveable Soccer Goal Safety
- c. Secondly, while our paramount RM priority is to protect our youth players (ages 17 and below), Risk Management equally exists to help protect our local and state-appointed/elected Coaches, Administrators, Organizations, and/or other local Affiliate parties, whether volunteer or paid employees/contractors, from unnecessary and costly legal litigation and possible final legal liability. Our Ga State RM website link offers guidelines and suggestions that provide the best RM practices to help the local Affiliate, and other Ga Soccer parties avoid such legal challenges in the future.
- d. Field and Facility Safety Audit. We suggest conducting this audit at least twice a year in advance of each playing season. Identified deficiencies and corrective action should be properly recorded and kept on file for future reference.

- e. **Ongoing local education and risk –avoidance awareness of your coaches, parents, administrators, volunteers, and referees. Records should be kept and maintained of all formal coach certification, background checks of all adult parties interacting with minors in an official role, including, but not exclusive to coach/administrator/parent/etc training and education programs.**

IV. Conclusion

- a. **Okay, we hope that we haven't scared you away already with all this reference to legal "risk", but take heart in knowing the basic legal standard for possible legal litigation of a non- profit organization. The key legal word to remember as you promote and manage your local/state risk management program is "REASONABLE". Affiliates, and their employees, contractors, volunteers, administrators, etc are required to take, or follow, "reasonable" actions/policies to protect their youth players and organization as a means to avoid future possible litigation. Also appreciate that those who are paid by your organization to perform any local service within your program may have a higher legal standard of proper due diligence to meet in performing their duties than would volunteers. However, a volunteer is still expected to know and comply with minimum state policies as well as using reasonable judgment in providing a safe environment for our soccer youth.**
- b. **Keep in mind that our state risk management policies and guidelines are not very cumbersome and easily complied with. The intent is to provide a safer, and more risk free, environment for our players, coaches, administrators, volunteers and Affiliates. Thank you again for volunteering to help make this happen.**
- c. **The Ga Soccer RM Committee remains readily available to assist you in providing guidance so you can better provide a risk-free for your local or state organization, players, and others.**

**For the Good of the Game,
Ga Soccer Risk Management Committee**