



## **Guidance Document for a Board-Led Safety Committee at Boys & Girls Clubs**

### **Why Is Forming a Board-Led Safety Committee Important?**

The Board of Directors of a local Boys & Girls Club bears a considerable legal and ethical responsibility in the area of safety. It is ultimately the responsibility of the board to have an up-to-date plan in place to ensure that reasonable and prudent steps are taken to protect Club members and all persons who utilize Club facilities or participate in Club-sponsored activities. This expectation applies to all Club sites, whether or not the organization owns and manages them.

Clubs face many safety concerns, such as preventing sexual abuse, bullying, physical injuries and being prepared for an emergency. When major accidents or incidents do occur, the board should be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Did you anticipate this problem?
- Did you identify the best practices to help prevent it?
- Did you make a plan to prevent it from happening?
- Did you put adequate resources toward it?
- Did you check to make sure the plan was working and make corrections?

It is critical that each local Board of Directors have in place a group of internal advocates with the responsibility of asking such questions to help prevent major accidents and incidents from occurring. Boys & Girls Clubs of America believes that a board-led safety committee is the best means of ensuring each organization is fully prepared to prevent serious harm to children and adults.

### **Core Function of the Board-Led Safety Committee**

The core function of the board-led safety committee is to provide the leadership necessary to ensure the reasonable protection of the youth, employees, volunteers and visitors who utilize Club facilities and participate in Club activities. The committee's role should be expanded beyond that of the traditional facilities committee to serve as the one entity that connects many separate organizational functions that affect the quality of safety, including human resources, supervision, training, emergency management, policies, programming and finances. The committee should answer many questions, including:

- Where are our highest risks? Which are most probable? Which are most severe?
- How do we know we are in compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, and with BGCA membership requirements?
- How prepared are our staff and leadership in the event of a life-threatening emergency?
- Have we reviewed each location's emergency plans with local police and other first responders?



- How do we ensure that we have a defined process to control access to each Club facility?
- Which steps should we take when screening staff and volunteers?
- Which steps are in place to ensure each reported incident is investigated and resolved?
- Which steps are in place to ensure corrective measures are taken for any policy violation?
- How frequently should our own buildings and grounds be inspected?
- How do we ensure that buildings and grounds are safe when we do not own or manage them?
- How can staff effectively monitor restrooms and other high-risk areas?
- What additional precautions should be in place for day trips?

For an organization to consistently offer a safe place for children and adults alike, one group within the organization must be given the authority to ask difficult questions and provide leadership in the area of safety. It is the responsibility of the safety committee to forge a realistic “business plan” for safety that ensures up-to-date policies, consistent screening of staff and volunteers, training, supervision, corrective measures and feedback loops are in place and functioning properly. It is through these fundamental business practices that the expectations and behaviors of all stakeholders are shaped, resulting in a true culture of safety.

### Sample Safety Committee Charter

A sample safety committee charter may look something like this:

*Boys & Girls Clubs of \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Committee shall assist the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer on all matters related to child protection and Club safety. The committee shall meet regularly to oversee and make recommendations on all aspects of safety affecting Club members, staff, volunteers and visitors, such as assessments, inspections, planning, cost estimating, training and measurement. The safety committee shall consist of at least three active board members and shall report to the Board of Directors at each regularly scheduled board meeting.*

*Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Board Safety Committee Charter is provided on the last page of this document as an appendix for review.*

### Recommended Safety Committee Responsibilities

- Safety planning – Identify the goals, objectives and outcomes of the organization’s Safety Improvement Plan.
- Safety policies and safety handbooks – Develop and keep current the organization's safety policies and procedures, and other relevant documents, like handbooks.
- Safety management, evaluation and review – Ensure comprehensive safety practices are in place, implemented consistently and reviewed annually with a clear measurement strategy to evaluate progress, set goals and ensure accountability.



- Safety communication – Facilitate and encourage open communication throughout the organization in the area of safety.
- Safety training — Support Club management’s efforts to deliver appropriate, ongoing safety training to all staff and volunteers, and ensure all staff and volunteers receive adequate training prior to access to members.
- Safety meetings – Hold regular meetings in advance of each Board of Director’s meeting and support the efforts of Club managers to systematically discuss safety issues with staff and volunteers.
- Hazard identification, safety auditing and inspection – Systematically participate in safety inspections of all Club sites.
- Hazard mitigation – Develop strategies for immediately eliminating or reducing hazards that have been identified through inspections or reported to the organization.
- Safety motivation and incentive programs – Establish and support a safety incentive program to acknowledge staff who take an active role in prevention.
- Safety conscience – Serve as the official watchdog of the organization, ensuring that plans and programs are carried through, accidents are investigated, and complaints and suggestions are followed up.

### **Committee Composition Recommendations**

The safety committee should be made up of five to seven individuals, including:

- One board member to serve as the chair person.
- At least two other board members with specialized expertise in the area of safety or risk management.
- One or more key Club staff with an in-depth knowledge of day-to-day operations.
- Non-board members with expertise the area of safety or risk management, such as law enforcement and/or security, medicine, law, facilities and/or risk management.

### **Possible Safety Metrics for Clubs to Consider**

It is an established principle in business that what matters gets measured, and safety is no different. It is critical that the safety committee uses metrics to both drive improvement and demonstrate the organization’s success. Below is a list of metrics that can help your organization begin the process of continuous improvement of Club safety:

- Improved scores on BGCA’s Safety Assessment.
- Decreased number Critical Incidents.
- Decreased number of complaints from parents or Club members.
- Decreased insurance claims.



- Improved National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) emotional and physical safety scores.
- Decline in accidents and other physical injuries.
- Increase of emergency drill effectiveness through motion/time studies.
- Decrease in the number of false alarms from the Club's security system.
- Number of inspections conducted at each site.
- Number and type of safety trainings for employees and volunteers.
- Number of engagements with community safety partners, such as:
  - Police, fire and EMS.
  - School safety liaisons.
  - Risk management experts.
- Decrease in negative incidents, such as:
  - Members and adults being allowed in the Club's activity area without being identified.
  - Members leaving unnoticed.
  - Unit-level staff not familiar with fire drills or other emergency procedures.
  - Incident and accident reports are not completed and filed on time.
  - Occurrence of preventable sports injuries.
  - Occurrence of preventable slip and fall accidents.
  - Occurrence of van or bus-related accidents or damage.
  - Bullying complaints.

### **Typical Meeting Requirements**

To be effective, your safety committee should:

- Meet monthly, and consider moving to quarterly meetings as the committee's work is solidified.
- Require members to attend all meetings, except in the case of emergencies.
- Follow an agenda, which is published in advance.
- Keep minutes of each meeting summarizing the issues discussed, the proposed actions to be taken and the people responsible for each item.
- Publish the minutes and provide them to each committee member.



## Appendix

### **Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Board of Governors Safety Committee Charter**

#### **Purpose**

The Safety Committee of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Board of Governors assists on all matters related to child and youth protection. It oversees the development of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's strategic initiatives for child and youth protection. The committee provides comprehensive planning and recommendations concerning child and youth protection by coordinating efforts with staff and the National Board of Governors. The committee will also work in partnership with the external child safety taskforce, which consists of industry experts, and other national committees, such as the National Area Council Committee.

#### **KEY MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide governance of the national safety initiative and advise the national staff and Child Safety Taskforce on critical matters related to child and youth protection, including approving national child protection policies and standards for BGCA and its affiliates.
- Study issues of significance related to the mandate of the committee and any other national issues that could influence local, state or federal policy, or potentially establish precedence.
- Partner with and provide consultation to key staff and the Movement as deemed necessary.
- Advise BGCA on the development of child safety goals and objectives in support of the long-range child safety strategy of the Boys & Girls Club Movement.
- Advise BGCA on funding the long-range child safety plan, and how to fulfill its goals and objectives relating to child and Club safety.
- Facilitate communication on safety issues between the Board of Governors, Trustees and BGCA Senior Leadership.
- Annually identify potential public and private programmatic and funding partners in the area of safety.
- Advise BGCA on best and promising practices for the protection of children and the reduction of enterprise-wide risks for youth serving organizations.
- Review recommendations on emerging trends in the protection of children and the reduction of risks for youth serving organizations as presented by BGCA staff and other external experts (i.e., Child Safety Taskforce).
- Advise and guide BGCA on its response to emerging legislation and case law trends that could affect the operation of local organizations and the Movement as a whole.
- Conduct an annual review of critical incidences and trends to inform and guide the development of annual performance goals and metrics.
- Develop annual targets on how the safety committee will partner with other Board of Governors' committees and BGCA departments to ensure we safeguard Boys & Girls Clubs' reputation and brand.

#### **KEY MISSION RELATIONSHIPS**

- Board of Governors and National Trustees.



- BGCA's Sr. Team Members (Sr. Vice President, Organizational & Executive Development Services, Sr. VP and General Counsel).
- BGCA's Child & Club Safety Team.
- BGCA's Child Safety Taskforce (external to BGCA).