



Claim Case Studies & Legislation: Hidden Danger at a Drop In Centre

Drop in centres can be found in almost every community across the country. They offer a wide variety of support services to communities large and small. Drop in centres provide places for people to get together and do activities in a safe and healthy environment.

Drop in centres help youth to:

- get to know other youth
- get involved in their community
- feel like part of the community
- explore new activities
- feel safe in a comforting environment

Unfortunately, even in these well-meaning centres, preventable accidents can occur. Granted, every mishap cannot be averted, but here is an example of what can happen when proper safety procedures are not followed.

Facts

A group of children were playing at a local youth drop in centre. The centre had giant mats that could be used for tumbling and other activities. After the group was finished playing with the mats, they leaned them up against the wall and moved on to another activity. In the meantime another group entered the center and were enjoying the gym area by partaking in a game of tag. One of the children was hiding out near the wall where the large mat was propped up. At that moment the mat fell and pinned the child. His leg was broken as a result.

While Intact Public Entities Inc. does its best to provide useful general information and guidance on matters of interest to its clients, statutes, regulations and the common law continually change and evolve, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and are subject to differing interpretations and opinions. The information provided by Intact Public Entities Inc. is not intended to replace legal or other professional advice or services. The information provided by Intact Public Entities Inc. herein is provided "as is" and without any warranty, either express or implied, as to its fitness, quality, accuracy, applicability or timeliness. Before taking any action, consult an appropriate professional and satisfy yourself about the fitness, accuracy, applicability or timeliness of any information or opinions contained herein. Intact Public Entities Inc. assumes no liability whatsoever for any errors or omissions associated with the information provided herein and furthermore assumes no liability for any decision or action taken in reliance on the information contained in these materials or for any damages, losses, costs or expenses in a way connected to it. Intact Public Entities Inc. is operated by a wholly owned subsidiary of Intact Financial Corporation. Intact Design® and Risk Management Centre of Excellence® are registered trademarks of Intact Financial Corporation or its affiliates. All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners. TM & © 2021 Intact Public Entities Inc. and/or its affiliates. All Rights Reserved.

The activities described in the example above are not out of the ordinary. In fact, none of the instances would seem dangerous or out of the ordinary to most people. It is only when you take each factor and analyze it for risk exposure do you uncover the potential for damage.

Lessons Learned

From a liability perspective, if proper policies and procedures were in place for the safe use and storage of the large mat, this unfortunate incident could have been avoided. Policies and procedures for the use of all equipment should be made available to all users. Drop in centre participants who wish to use the equipment should be educated on how to avoid accidents. Staff should always monitor the equipment to ensure that it is being used in a safe manner and is being put away properly after each use.

Drop In Centre Safety Tips

- If you hear or see anyone doing anything negative or harmful, stop the behaviour right away. Record the activity in a log.
- Post drop in centre rules in a visible location. Review the rules with centre patrons, especially those visiting for the first time or those who have had an offence.
- Ask all patrons to take pride in the centre. That means keeping it clean and safe for all who use it.