



Risk Management Considerations for Fitness Boot Camps

Fitness boot camp popularity is on the rise, especially in the summer months when health enthusiasts don't want to be trapped inside of a gym on a nice sunny day.

Boot camps blend military-style drills and athletic sets into a high intensity workout. In some cases park benches and playground equipment are used as workout tools. Natural terrain such as hills provide a demanding workout and a change from the ordinary treadmill or trail run.

Some fitness boot camp organizers are setting up their classes on municipal property. In some cases the organizers may not have received permission from the municipality. Parks and Recreation crews are coming across divots left behind by the fitness group. Typically boot camp classes are held early in the morning or later in the evening when the summer temperature is more favourable. Because of the timing of the class, it is unlikely that crews are able to "catch them in the act".

If a boot camp organization approaches you for permission to use a school gymnasium, local park or other municipally owned property, take the following precautions:

1. Ensure that they are legitimately licensed and certified to conduct the class.
2. Enter into a contract that contains an indemnity/hold harmless clause.
3. Have your municipal Parks and Recreation department do spot checks of the property to ensure that damage is not being incurred – divots should be replaced so that other park users don't injure themselves.
4. Ensure that all park lighting is in good working order.
5. Ensure that lighting in parking lots is in good working order.
6. If the park is going to be unavailable for any reason, post signs well in advance stating the reason for the closure and when it will be reopened

Consider asking the boot camp organizer to take the following safety precautions:

1. A first aid kit should be taken to every class.
2. The instructor should carry a cell phone, particularly if the class is being held outdoors.
3. The instructor should walk around the gym or park area to look for any hazards that could cause participant injury.
4. Do not hold classes during inclement weather.
5. The instructor should document and report any and all injuries to participants on municipal property.
6. All participants should sign a waiver when they register.
7. The instructor should make sure the property left in the same condition as it was before the class.

Public safety is a municipality's number one priority. Any reputable fitness organization will look to obtain permission before using public property. By taking the necessary precautions you will help to prevent injury and mitigate risk.

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