



Risk Management Considerations for Paintball at Summer Camp

There are a number of Canadian summer camps offering paintball as an activity and a growing number of camps specifically designed for paintball. There are many things to consider when looking at offering paintball.

Contracting it out to a Third Party

One option that some camps consider is contracting the activity out to a third party that will come to the camp and run the activity. If you decide to use a third party, make sure that the contract includes all of the necessary clauses including: commercial general liability on an occurrence form, be added as an additional insured, have a provision for cross liability in respect to the named insured, include a cancellation or material change notification requirement of it least 30 days, and an indemnification/ hold harmless agreement. Be sure to have your legal counsel review the verbiage.

Ensure that your camp receives a certificate of insurance at least 10 days before any paintball activities begin. This will allow you time to review the contract against the certificate of insurance.

Don't forget that if the people you contract out to are putting up any structures for the game, look into the property coverage for those structures.

Waivers

Whether you decide to contract out the activity or do it yourself, make sure that all participants sign a waiver before any paintball begins. The waiver should always be drawn up by your legal counsel. For more information on waivers, see our article Risk Management Considerations for Waivers of Liability.

Safety First

The camp should ensure that proper safety measures are in place. Consider the following:

1. Appropriate equipment being used that meets approved standards.
2. Participants are outfitted properly in equipment that is appropriate for their age and size.
3. The fit of the eye protection and face mask is particularly important.
4. Close supervision is required – it appears that a lot of camps that offer this activity will have a 1:5-10 instructor: camper ratio.
5. Campers need to be well trained in safety measures and proper play (ie. NO TAKING OFF FACE MASKS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL PLAY IS OVER AND ALL BARREL PLUGS HAVE BEEN PLACED BACK ON ALL GUNS – THIS APPLIES EVEN TO THE 'DEAD ZONE' IF IT IS WITHIN RANGE OF THE FIELD).

6. Make rules about blind firing and have 'surrender' rules in place to mitigate the risk of close range shots (it is customary to offer surrender to any opposing player within 20 feet).
7. Camp counselors should not allow any children to play that are taking prescription medication.
8. The camp should make sure that the paintball operator is using an appropriate paintball velocity – under 280 FPS.

Let the Fun Begin

Paintball can be a great activity to help promote active living and team camaraderie. With proper polices and procedures in place, everyone can have a good time.

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