

Introduction

Another artificial ice season is now upon us. The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc. encourages all members to consider the following 10-point season reminder (in no particular order) of industry best practices and legal requirements for a safe and enjoyable operating season. How current are you in each of the following operational responsibilities as you begin another season?

Mould Management

As an organism that requires basic elements to survive and flourish, mould can be best controlled by reducing the available food and water supply. A clean building that has all water leakage corrected is a first step in reducing a mould outbreak.

Maintaining Indoor Air Quality

Toxic air in ice arenas is real. Ensuring that all ventilation systems are in proper working order, along with a comprehensive tune-up of all fossil fuelled equipment that is to be operated indoors, will significantly reduce the potential for a toxic air situation. Training staff to be able to identify toxic air conditions while having a comprehensive, ongoing air testing program is vital to managing indoor air quality.

Dressing Room Care and Control

The use of any facility dressing room area is a privilege, not a right. Allowing persons under the age of majority to access these areas unsupervised, places their safety in the hands of facility staff. Activities such as the consumption of alcohol in any public area is *illegal unless under the approval of a Special Occasion Permit*. The use of tobacco products in or outside of any public facility maybe illegal or may require careful consideration.

Protective Netting Management

Protective netting that surrounds an ice rink will only be effective if it is in proper working order. It is important to conduct a pre-season comprehensive check of the entire nets condition as well as all connection points. Arena net protection has a life cycle and will need to be replaced.

Emergency Preparedness

As required under the Fire Code, all public facilities must have a variety of equipment and systems in place. Fire extinguishers, bull horn, alarms, fire safety plans, all must be checked and serviced. All fire doors must be fully operable. Removing clutter and debris will help reduce the potential for fire. Remember that emergency preparedness includes more than fire. Noxious gases, bomb threat, lost persons, all have been experienced by facility staff. Preparing staff by conducting appropriate training and drills as required under the Fire Code will help ensure they are ready for any emergency situation.

Ice Management

Skater safety begins at the “ice-in” phase. A clean floor, a good bond and ice that is built by applying small layers of water that freeze quickly is key to quality ice. All paint, logos and sport markings require that no less than 1.91cm (3/4in.) of ice be in place to protect a skater from a trip hazard. The historical recommendation of 3.18-3.81cm (1.25-1.50in) continues to be acceptable for most community ice arenas. Facilities that host high caliber skating events may need to consider additional ice to ensure user safety. Conducting weekly ice depth checks that are recorded is standard, however checks should be conducted anytime there is an identified ice issue. Corrective action should also be stated in the ice log. It is important to note that safe ice depth is facility specific and must be set by management. Once set, ice depth must be managed so that the stated

thickness is found at the end of the event – not the start.

Registered Refrigeration Plant Room Safety

The Operating Engineer Regulation sets minimum requirements for all plant room operations. A qualified refrigeration mechanic must attend the plant room no less than once per-year. It is important to note that it is the owner's responsibility to identify what work is to be performed during this visit. Persons who are granted access to these areas must be adequately trained to do so. Having and maintaining a plant room operational manual, log book while ensuring that the housekeeping and security of these areas are also outlined in the Regulation.

Safe Ice Resurfacers Operations

An ice resurfacers is a large bulky piece of equipment with many moving parts and operational risks. As set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) it is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure worker competency when using any piece of equipment or conducting any task. It is strongly recommended that all drivers undertake a comprehensive training session prior to operating this equipment for the first time. Training should include, but not limited to, a review of the owner's manual, manufacturers videos, bulletins, incident/accident reports, industry alerts and a comprehensive workplace specific (hands-on) session under the guidance of a "competent person". This initial training must be followed by ongoing training as set out in the OHSA.

Public Skating

Public skating sessions are programs that must be carefully planned and supervised. Setting maximum skater loads that are controlled by properly trained staff is essential to user safety. Taking care and control of these open events is the owner's responsibility under the Occupiers Liability Act.

Staff Training

Facility staff are afforded a variety of rights under the OHSA. One of the primary privileges under the

Act is to be safe through education and training. It is the employer's obligation to meet this obligation, while it is the workers responsibility to identify shortcomings in their ability to safely conduct the work. Safety starts by reading and observing the expectations of not only the OHSA, but all applicable legislation that guides each specific workplace.

Benefits of Membership

The ORFA offers a variety of training opportunities to assist all workplace parties in meeting their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It further provides guidelines and best practices that will assist in better understanding what is legally required and what is at stake in non-compliance. Should you require any additional information on any of these topics, please feel free to contact the ORFA at info@orfa.com or 1.800.661.6732.

Have another safe and enjoyable skating season!

Disclaimer

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