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Joan Dove, CPCU

Area Executive Vice President
San Francisco, California

800.877.9300
joan_dove@ajg.com
CA License #0726293

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Day-to-Day Supervision of Staff—Preventing Child Abuse

Day-to-day supervision of staff and volunteers—it sounds easy enough. But it's the most challenging component of your abuse prevention program. Why? Because it needs to be done every day.

Conducting criminal background searches, obtaining signed job applications, interviewing applicants and giving orientations are one-time deals (or every few years for criminal checks). Abuse prevention training is periodic. Good hiring practices and training are key elements of an effective abuse prevention program. However, your job does not end there.

Negligent supervision is alleged in most child abuse claims against the YMCA. The Y failed to provide adequate supervision of staff, thereby resulting in a child being harmed. What is proper supervision?

Every manager needs to know what their employees/volunteers are doing. No one is above supervision and scrutiny in how they perform their role for the Y.

Tips managers can use to supervise staff/volunteers:

- **Daily check-ins with staff** — What did you do today? What issues arose?

- **Observe what staff are doing** — How are they interacting with the kids? Coworkers? Parents?
- **Verify paperwork periodically** — Audit what staff/volunteers are filling out, confirm they did what they said they did.
- **Adequately staff your programs.**
- **Walk through your facility or program site** — Note the environment and neighborhood; ask staff about any unusual behavior you observe.
- **Evaluate incident reports or behavioral issues** — Dig beneath the obvious; is there more to the issue than meets the eye?
- **Be attentive** — You are responsible for children; be alert and aware.
- **Who is supervising the supervisor?** How are they checking on staff/volunteers?
- **Enforce the YMCA code of conduct** — How do you handle violations?
- **Take inappropriate comments or complaints seriously** — Investigate them.
- **Follow your gut instinct** — If something seems wrong, it usually is.
- **Speak up**—The conspiracy of silence could harm a child.

Quality supervision enhances your programs and prevents abuse at the Y.