

## Chapter 8: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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### Chapter 8 DEVELOPING A RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The following 16 Key Considerations for a Risk Management Program have been adapted from the *Managing Mountain Biking, IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding*, 2007. It will work for all types of trails, both motorized and nonmotorized.

1. Write a philosophy statement
  - The Spearhead Regional Recreation Authority should demonstrate their commitment to risk management by writing an official position on safety and risk.
2. Create a Risk Management Team and Designate a Leader
  - Create a safety team to make sure a risk management program is developed, and implemented.
3. Establish Trail Design and Construction Guidelines
  - Do not be too restrictive. It is best to recommend a range of ideal trail widths and add a statement that allows for other widths according to specific situations and in accordance with commonly accepted best practices.
  - Stay away from using the words “always”, “shall”, “must”, or “never”.
  - Guidelines should allow for design flexibility to fit the situation.
4. Establish a Trail Inspection and Maintenance Policy
  - Get clubs and volunteer groups to inspect the trails every time they ride and report (or correct) any issues or areas of concern that may arise.
  - Address maintenance problems as soon as possible.
5. Maintain the Trail System consistent with the policy but understand that in many cases one will be utilizing trails that already exist. It may or may not be sensible to try to adapt all trails to meet the recommended standards. But recommendations alterations or improvement could be included in the long-term work plan and changes made as time, funds and workforce become available.
6. Eliminate hazards whenever possible or post warning signs.
7. Develop an Effective Sign System to
  - Warn riders of hazardous terrain, steep grades, sharp curves, limited sight distance etc.
  - Indicate trail difficulty
  - Provide location indicators or mile markers
  - Remind people of trail rules
  - Encourage responsible riding
  - Provide emergency numbers in case of accident
8. Implement a Trail Difficulty Rating System
  - The most universal system is green for easy trails, blue for intermediate trails, black for more difficult trails and black diamond (or red) for most difficult trails which are only used by those who have considerable experience and would consider themselves experts. This system can be used for both motorized and nonmotorized trails.

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9. Institute Rules and Advise Visitors.  
Below is a list of rules posted at the trailhead of the Sprain Ridge Park Mountain Bike Trails portions of which could be incorporated into signage along the Spearhead Trail System.

- Ride to Your Ability
- All cyclists must wear helmets
- Ride on open trails only
- Do not spook animals
- Control your bicycle
- Always yield trail
- Do not ride wet trails
- Leave no trace

**In case of an emergency, call (phone number)**

*\*Please note:*

*Be sure to include area codes for all emergency phone numbers for those out of town guests who may be using their cell phones to make the call.*

10. Develop an Emergency Plan
- An action plan for emergencies should be developed.
- Recommendation:** *Local fire departments are an excellent resource and may have an interest in developing the plan themselves since, in many cases, it will be them who will be called in during an emergency situation.*
11. Purchase or Review an Insurance Policy
12. Create a Record Keeping System
13. Develop an Incident-Reporting and Analysis System
- Tracking incidents that occur on a trail will help create an awareness of problem areas which may need to be addressed by additional signage or changes in both the use pattern of the trail and/or design of the trail itself.
14. Deploy a Trail Patrol
- From trail inspection and hazard identification to incident reporting and on-the-spot maintenance, a volunteer patrol can address many of the issues. They are also wonderful stewards for the trails and can enhance a visitor's experience by their knowledge of both the trail and the area.
15. Recruit Outside Advisors
- Adding a risk management consultant or professional recreation manager with risk management experience is an excellent idea. Even a one-time consultation can expose potential liabilities you may have missed and could help avoid problems and issues in the future if addressed from the very beginning.
16. Perform Periodic Reviews of the Program