

Risk Management Case Study Series

Expert Resource

Introduction

Extension professionals engage in program development discussion on a daily basis, often leading to addressing potential risks associated with events and activities. Not every situation encountered by Extension professionals will lead to immediate harm to individuals or the program. However, if not addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, it may lead to the organization suffering a loss of finances, people, property or goodwill.

This case study series provides an opportunity for Extension professionals to examine a situation that they may directly or indirectly encounter during their professional career. While the case studies are not lengthy, they do present a situation and allow the reader to further develop the situation and then offer alternatives to decisions made or strategies to manage risks identified.

Please consult the Ohio State University Extension risk management website for resources and support materials related to this particular situation.



Instructions

Please read the situation statement that is presented below and consider the following:

- (1) What is at risk for the organization and/or the individuals involved?
- (2) How would you suggest handling this situation? How do you respond to the volunteer? How do you respond to the community member?
- (3) What steps should be put in place to prevent this from happening in the future?
- (4) What action should be taken concerning the volunteers status? How do you follow-up on the allegations being made?

Situation Statement

Your Extension program engages Master Gardener volunteers who are required to volunteer 5 hours each month responding to questions on the “hotline”. All volunteers are required to participate in training and education prior to working on the “hotline” so that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including working with the public. Recently, you have been informed that one specific individual has been providing information based on personal experiences rather than research-based information. Several individuals have contacted you directly questioning the information that they have been given. In fact, some community residents have complained that their trees have died after following the advice of the master gardener.

Risk Management Website

www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~admin/handbook/riskmgt.htm