

# Pool Safety

By Gordy Van

Now that summer is here, usage of pools and lakes will increase. With increased usage comes increased potential for injuries. Providing a safe environment for the public is a top priority. Posted warning signs at member pools and lakes are important risk management efforts to adequately defend pool and lake swimming claims. In addition to drowning dangers, slip and fall injury accidents are a risk that must be managed. Warning signs regarding running and horseplay are important but even when complied with may not eliminate all slip and fall claims.

One of our members received a claim for damages after a pool patron slipped and fell on wet flooring near the showers in a locker room. She landed hard and fractured her wrist, requiring surgery. Along with her claim, she presented incident reports of other slip and falls at the pool. Some of the slip and falls were the result of horseplay among juveniles. There were several other reports of slip and falls on the pool deck and in the locker room where her fall occurred, but none in close proximity to her accident date. At the time of her fall, the member promptly investigated the accident and provided first aid. While the area outside the showers was wet, it did not appear to be any more slippery than a locker room floor normally would be.

Nonetheless, the member immediately cleaned the area to be sure there was no slippery material on the floor. The member had thorough written policies and procedures, including checklists for daily cleaning of the restrooms and pool deck which included the use of appropriate cleaners. It was determined that the member had followed the manufacturer's recommendations for use of the cleanser and that regular cleaning and maintenance had occurred. The claim was then denied.

Wet decks come with swimming pools. Slip and falls at pools and locker rooms can occur if proper care is not taken by the public using the facilities. It is important that pool staff also observe the condition of the deck to make sure that there is sufficient friction on the pool deck to discourage slip and falls. Flooring should be cleaned with an appropriate cleaner to discourage growth of mold and mildew, which can be very slippery. Maintenance records, prompt investigation and detailed incident reports assist WCIA with making determinations of liability when unfortunate accidents with injuries do occur. We appreciate your assistance in providing the information we need to make proper determinations.