

# LOCKER ROOM CARE & CONTROL

## SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES

### Introduction

Recreation facility locker rooms are areas that can be considered to be both public and private. Locker rooms are places for changing attire, team building, motivational speaking, and at times, regrettably, areas that breach societies set expectation for public behaviour and trust! The role of facility management and front-line staff to maintain these areas in a safe manner requires clear policy, set procedure and a positive relationship with those who use these areas.



There are an estimated 3200 ice surfaces to be found across Canada – given that each surface requires at least (4) four dressing room areas would then suggest that there are a minimum of 12,800 change room areas (3000 in Ontario) for ice pads in Canada. While no estimation for aquatic facilities, sport fields or dry-sport floors can be given, it would not be unreasonable to estimate that 50,000+ sport locker rooms exist across Canada!

### Emerging Issues

Hockey Canada's Action Bulletin # A0753 dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 on Dressing Room Violence/Locker Boxing (see page 8) is a reminder to the joint roles and responsibilities of the owner of a facility and those who are granted privilege of use of these public amenities. Other emerging issues include an increase in female use, needs for persons with disabilities, family change rooms, banning of photograph equipment, an increase in personal equipment storage bag size, a higher expectation for sanitization and housekeeping and a potential

focal point for mould growth and toxic air collection.



It is the role of facility management to consider the needs of all users while providing basic housekeeping and security of all facility dressing room areas. This responsibility is non-transferable! A set expectation for use, conduct and behaviour can be made of all user groups but ultimately, it is the facilities responsibility to maintain the set standard of operations.

### Open Communication

Many organized sporting groups have responded to the potential for poor behaviour by creating dressing room codes of conduct and protocols for use, abuse and harassment. Although these may be deemed as positive organizational tools they cannot be considered effective unless they are shared with facility



staff. Further, such organizational activities must conform to facility operational policies – **never** are any organizations

internal policies or best practices to supersede facility policies, directives or best practices.

## Facility Contracts

Facility contracts set out the expected relationship between user and owner. These documents will contain written guidelines to the relationship – the content of these contracts must be shared with front-line staff as they will be the persons responsible to monitor, enforce and report breaches of the terms and conditions of the contract.

Facility management should leave no portion of facility contracts open for interpretation by front-line staff! Operational expectations should be clearly defined and supported by management with front-line staff.



In respect to dressing/locker room use and behaviour, the following items should be considered as industry best practice and as such included as part of all facility operational policies and contract documents.

- Dressing/locker room use is a privilege not an expected right of all users – breaches of policy and/or standard of use expectations may result in the loss of such privilege;
- Facility staff are in a relationship of trust with those who enter and use public recreation centres – misbehavior, inappropriate conduct and/or vandalism is everyone's responsibility to be reported;
- Dressing/locker room areas are an extension of one's home – cleanliness and upkeep of these areas is a joint responsibility of users and facility staff;
- Use of any dressing/locker room area beyond 30-minutes prior to or upon the conclusion of use of the sporting venue activity should not be expected; unless

prearranged through contract with the facility manager;



- Alcohol and tobacco use in dressing/locker room areas must meet legislative requirements
- Long-term storage of personal or organizational equipment must be reviewed with set terms and conditions being in place; organizations not controlled by the facility should not expect any level of insurance coverage for lost or damaged items; storing of personal or organizational items outside of a standard operating season should not occur unless under contract between both parties;
- Dressing room access protocol needs to be considered, defined and implemented; it should not be unreasonable to limit the care and control to a dressing/locker room to persons who have reached the "age of majority"; current legislation suggests that no contract can be entered into by a minor; all facility use is governed by contract and as such must be executed by a person who meets the set legal expectation of such relationships.

## Alcohol Consumption

Facility management and frontline staff are reminded that the consuming of alcohol in any public area not controlled under a Special Occasion Permit is illegal!

Management will have adopted clear policy to guide, control and discipline such breaches. All too often such policies are left not enforced by front-line staff or reported by front-line staff



with no or little follow-up by management occurring. Be clear, when staff fails to monitor and control breaches of any facility policy it is staff who will be called to defend their action or lack of action on any such matters!

Empty liquor bottles that are left in the facility are by law property of the facility. Removal of such items by any staff member for refund may be treated as theft by management.

**Front-line staff must** continually report all breaches under Ontario's liquor laws and **management must** be prepared to deal directly with the issue!

### **Referee Rooms**

Referee rooms should be considered an extension to the facilities dressing/locker room inventory. The use of public facilities by the general public for sport and recreation versus a private business that operates in a public facility that generates revenue has an impact on municipal tax transfer responsibilities. Historically, many facility managers disregard the care and control of referee rooms, leaving use, housekeeping and maintenance of these rooms to these groups of sporting authorities.

Annually - clearly defined rules of conduct, user expectation and terms of the relationship should also be set out through contractual arrangement for referee locker rooms.

It should not be considered unreasonable to collect a user fee for the exclusive use of these areas by organizations that are often compensated for their participation in the facility.

### **Breaches of the Relationship**

As previously discussed, front-line staff is the operations authority in the absence of actual facility management. These ambassadors must be provided with adequate training in customer service while understanding the potential for workplace violence through enforcement of facility expectations and contractual responsibilities.

Management must provide this training to all who will be expected to control a public facility. Staff must be given clear direction and limits to their role in maintaining a safe facility environment.

Direction may include but not limited to:

- Verbal warnings to users in respect to behaviour;
- Reporting breaches by users to senior management;
- Contacting the appropriate authorities if activity warrants such involvement.

A caution is extended to consider the current attitude to such requirements by both front-line and senior staff. Front-line staff must continue to report breaches regardless of any perceived lack of action by senior management to correct the breaches; while senior staff must be prepared to correct breaches when identified and support front-line staff in their efforts to meet the set internal expectations for conduct and behaviour.

### **Public Health Regulations, Building and Fire Codes**

Facility dressing/locker rooms are required to meet and be maintained to various legislative responsibilities.



Public health regulations set minimum expectation for hot water temperatures, washroom closet privacy and amenities, as well as sanitization and housekeeping requirements. An increase in concern for mould has prompted a reminder for all facility janitorial staff to use cleaning chemicals that will help reduce mould outbreak while being able to table a clearly defined housekeeping and maintenance plan that is backed-up with a reporting system. It is each facility manager's responsibility to understand and meet the set expectations for the buildings under their care and control! The ORFA strongly recommends that all facility managers develop a strong working relationship with their local health officials.



Recreation facilities are primarily constructed from concrete and steel. These building products serve several purposes. First they provide an extended life-cycle for the structure while reducing the potential for the spread of fire. Regrettably, most public recreation facilities inherit two distinct construction flaws (1) a lack of storage space (2) undersized user areas. Both flaws may at times challenge facility owners and users which results in breaches of building and fire laws by adding construction projects that do not conform to local building or fire code requirements. Storage areas are constructed from poor building materials that may increase the potential for fire! As any fire department official will advise – most often fire does not kill people – smoke does! Materials that are added to any public facility which do not meet building and fire codes increase the potential for human risk accordingly. Ultimately, it is the facility manager's responsibility to ensure that structure remains sound and safe through its entire life expectancy.

Any changes or additions to an original structure must be approved through a local building permit. Changes to any original washroom area must have further review and approval by local health officials!

### **Air Quality**

Dressing/locker room areas may be areas for concern for the potential collection of toxic air levels. Monitoring air quality levels of dressing/locker room areas must be part of a proactive facility air quality monitoring plan.

Maintaining and use of dressing/locker room ventilation systems is vital to user safety.

### **Energy Management**

Dressing/locker room design and operations must be considered as part of the facilities effort to reduce energy consumption. Obvious high energy users include heat, light and water. On demand hot water systems are the most cost effective systems to be considered. Failing that, regular maintenance and inspection of the current hot water system is required to ensure it is maintained at a safe and acceptable temperature.

Controlling heating levels in these areas is at times difficult. Persons arriving at the facility to prepare for the sporting event may find room temperature uncomfortable, while at the conclusion of the activity the room is too warm! Facility management must develop and maintain a reasonable heat level either through a manual adjustment procedure or by using technological advanced controls.

Lighting levels for security and safety must be met while considering energy efficiency. Users should not be expected to be left in the dark even momentarily when an electronic lighting device shuts-off! Energy efficiency should never overshadow public safety!

### **Dressing/Locker Room Design**

As previously indicated size of player equipment bags – and actual size of players has all too often not kept pace with facility dressing/locker room design and construction.

It may be hard for some to imagine but dressing/locker room construction has been at times part of a teams approach to a winning edge! Home team advantage may at times

include the size and comfort of the visiting team's dressing/locker room area.

Teams change rooms have been so small on occasion that it has forced them to split into two separate rooms or use the hallway. A practice that is not supported by any facility based organization.

## **EXCERPTS FROM THE ORFA GUIDELINES FOR FACILITY PLANNING**

### **Dressing Rooms**

It is recommended that a minimum of six change rooms be constructed and larger arenas have eight to ten. One major factor in the need for extra space is the fact that one room is normally occupied at all times by the senior local team. Most municipalities now cater to an extremely active minor hockey league that imposes heavy demand on dressing room facilities.

- Ideally these dressing rooms should be approximately 20' x 20', or the very minimum of 18' x 16' exclusive of shower and washroom area. The dressing room should be large enough to allow twenty players, coaches, trainers and other team personal. Ideally the room will hold up to twenty-four people comfortably.
- If you are supplying a barrier free dressing room then you should be supplying lots of GFI plugs. All plugs should be GFI. The barrier-free room should be a minimum 500 square feet excluding the washroom/shower space.
- This space should be another 200 square feet. All basins, toilet paper dispensers, hand dryers should be barrier free installed. A support bar should also be mounted to the wall near the toilet and another one added to the shower area.
- All dressing rooms should have a rink chalk board installed in a location that is accessible to the coach and the players.
- All dressing rooms should include a stick rack.
- A water bib outlet should be installed to be hooked up to a ½" hose for easy cleaning. The water bib should be located under each washroom sink away from the public's eye.
- Plexiglas mirror should be installed over the washbasin.
- Each dressing room should have a minimum of two floor drains, one in the dressing room and the other in the washroom area; both drains should be 6" in diameter. It is Recommended a floor drain be installed just outside the shower entrance.
- The ideal shower set up will have two showers in each room, both having there own push button and shower head. Their shower box should be of stainless steel. No piping should be exposed with the exception of the head and tap. These shower boxes have a 30-second or longer control tap to save water. Tempered water of about 110 degrees Fahrenheit assists in providing sufficient warm water for everyone.
- The shower area should have the floor and walls tiled. Having an open ceiling to the dressing rooms saves on moisture and condensation on the walls and ceilings of the shower area.
- Other options for the shower area are the use of plastic tiling, painted concrete walls, or the use of spray-on epoxy paint. These options are cheaper in the short term, but are not recommended to use if a ceramic tile is in budget.
- The use of an exhaust fan to the exterior will help provide adequate air ventilation by removing air moisture.
- Separating or dividing the shower room from the dressing room can provide a much-appreciated drying area. The complete shower room and drying area should have a minimum of 140 sq. ft.
- One toilet and washbasin, separate from the shower room, are sufficient for each dressing room.
- A water bottle fill up station over the washbasin is a nice luxury to have. If you are installing one of these stations, the tap should be a push button tap, hooked directly to cold water and should be located high enough to ensure the water spillage remains in the basin.
- If your arena is committed to supplying a barrier free dressing room, then the washroom/shower area should be wheel chair accessible. The shower area should have a wash chair. The showerhead should be on an extended hose to allow a long reach.

- Each washroom/shower area should have an emergency switch, which should be hooked to a flashing light outside the dressing room area to notify staff that someone in the rooms requires assistance.

### Benches

- All benches should be supported by an angle iron that is secured by the block/brick.
- Having angle iron brackets bolted to the wall is a proven mistake to arenas, as the wall plugs lets go causing the bench to fall off the wall. Ideally, if your dressing rooms run back to back, the angle iron then can run through the wall and support both benches in each room.
- Another system, which proves to have its benefits, is the block system. This is where the bench area is blocked to the floor and the wood benches sit on top of the concrete benches. Screws secure the benches and this system makes replacement easy. Having the block system makes maintenance cleaning easier because there is no need to get under the benches. The face of the block can be painted, or you can run your rubber flooring up the face of the block, which makes your dressing rooms more attractive.

### Clothing Hooks

The type of clothing hooks is always a source of concern as they are very often pulled off the wall.

- The clothing hooks should be made of steel strapping or rods and secured to the wall directly or to a steel plate, which in turn is permanently bolted to the wall. Any other type of hook is only temporary. Normal screwed-on types or nails are unsatisfactory.
- A wooden shelf that is attached by angle iron to the wall is useful when placed above clothing hooks.
- When installing the metal rod, the hooks should be high enough to ensure children standing on the bench will not hit their heads on the rods. The rods should be high enough for children to hang up their clothes but low enough for adults to reach from the floor. The hooks

should be angled so clothes and coats do not fall off hooks.

### Floor

The floor materials for use in dressing rooms should be able to withstand skate wear. There are many manufactures of rubber flooring which can produce many different floor colours. Light coloured, good quality asphalt tile has proven to be a most economical floor Surface and is able to withstand much abuse.

- Your rubber flooring should be installed wall to wall, which would expand right into the washroom area. Some arenas are now installing the rubber flooring on the floor of their shower stalls.
- Once the rubber flooring is installed the floor should be caulked around all floor drains and the base of the wall.
- Bare concrete is unsuitable, being subject to damage, as well as being extremely damaging to skates.

### Doors, Locks and Hardware

Public facilities require heavy-duty doors, locks and hardware to handle the abuse found in this environment.



- It is recommended that the doors be of steel construction with weld less seams. The frames should be 16-gauge steel and doors are recommended at 18-gauge steel. Heavy-duty piano hinges should be installed on all change room doors and other doors in heavy used areas.
- Heavy-duty door closures should be installed.

- A common problem with new construction is the contractor not putting in the proper cylinder for locks. It is recommended that specifications state that all locks in entry sets, storerooms, etc must be capable of handling universal lock cylinders.
- All panic hardware should contain universal lock cylinders as well. Multi-door entrances should have the option of removable centre posts.
- With a high volume of traffic in and out of dressing rooms, the problem of theft is also present.
- If you are planning on installing a key system then you want to make sure that the key lock and the handle on the door does not interfere with each other. The key lock should be located over the push/pull handle on the door. The reasoning for this allows easy turning of the key and stops kids from jamming items into you key slot.
- If your arena has one dressing room that is committed to handicap accessibility then the key lock should be lower to allow someone in a wheel chair to open the door and should have the handle to the door away from the key tumbler. The door also should be on a push button.

### **Ceilings**

New rinks have the ceilings made from concrete, which can be from the arena seating area if your dressing rooms are located under the stands. Some new rinks have either a lobby, work out area, or viewing area over the dressing rooms, this allows for a concrete slab as a ceiling. Other durable material for ceilings that can be used is duro-rock and drywall, which provides adequate fire rated protection.

All ceiling lights should be flush with the ceiling and covered with a steel cage. There should be no exposed pipes, except for sprinkler pipes

### **Windows**

Many newer arena designs are using acrylic type window structures that diffuse direct sunlight but allow daylight into the arena/ice area.

The use of clear glass or skylights is not recommended in arena /ice areas due to high-energy costs and high heat transfers that this

will put on the refrigeration system, not to mention the high costs of maintenance and cleaning. When one considers that the predominant activity takes place during evening hours, there is little justification for any windows. This eliminates many repairs and reduces the opportunity for vandalism from inside or outside the building. A Plexiglas skylight has been used in the dressing room areas where these rooms are part of a one storey structure and daylight is considered essential.

Should ventilation be desired, an exhaust fan can be easily installed. In some cases, glass windows have been replaced by Plexiglas, greatly reducing breakage while still allowing light penetration.

### **Equipment Drying Rooms**

Most arena designs overlook an Equipment Drying Room. This area can be located adjacent to the locker room area, or another unused space. In modern arenas, using dehumidification systems, a small duct drop from the discharge of the system can provide warm dry air-stream to facilitate drying. This will dry the equipment before mold or odors set in. This provides good sanitary practice and promotes odor free equipment for the team. This area is also good for hockey bag storage for tournaments etc.

### **Referees Room**

The referees should have their own room. It is recommended that two rooms one for males and the other for females be constructed. Ideally, these rooms should be located in an area of the rink that is away from the change rooms. It should also be close to an exit that would head to the parking lot. The referee's room should not flow out to the lobby of the arena. The size of the dressing rooms should be a minimum of (250) two hundred and fifty square feet, excluding the washroom/shower area. The shower area should have two showers, as described in the dressing rooms shower's paragraph. The shower area should have one washbasin, water bottle fill up station and a toilet.

The referee's room should have a bank of steel lockers to allow the referee's to lock up personal items. A bench with wall hooks, a Plexiglas mirror, and a chalkboard and a writing

table should complete the requirements of the official's room.

### **Camera Phones & Pda's**

Technology advancements have allowed cell phones and PDA's (personal digital assistants) to carry new functions - such as cameras that allow users to secretly photograph objects in front of them while appearing to dial a number. The ability to snap photos without others knowing has raised significant concern. The potential exists for deviant behaviour of camera-phone users photographing other patrons undressing or showering in locker rooms.

Clear policy for the use of electronic equipment must be created and posted!

<http://orfa.com/orfaoldweb/facilityalert/Facility%20Alert%20Camera%20Phones.pdf>

### **Hockey Canada Action Bulletin Dressing Room Violence/Locker Boxing**

*A new type of violence has found its way in to amateur hockey and is cause for great concern within the minor hockey system in Canada. Locker boxing is an activity that takes place when players put their hockey helmets and hockey gloves on with the intention of punching each other in a vicious manner - often in the head area.*

*Hockey Canada does not condone this type of behaviour or any other type of fighting between players either on or off the ice. With increased awareness and education concerning concussions in sport, it is becoming more apparent that any type of blow to the head area has the potential of causing severe injury regardless of whether or not a player is wearing a helmet. Concussion injuries can cause lengthy loss of playing time, end player's careers, and recent evidence suggests that the cumulative effects of multiple concussions can have a detrimental effect on the lives of young athletes' long term.*

*Coaches and team leaders are asked to work to eliminate this type of behaviour both in the dressing room and in areas where this behaviour can potentially occur by implementing prevention plans and team rules against locker boxing and fighting and by clearly defining these to all coaches, team managers, safety people and parents throughout the season. This combined with player and parent education with respect to concussions will help to eliminate this type of behaviour.*

*Another significant component of preventing this type of behaviour in the dressing room, or during any team function is proper team supervision. Hockey Canada stresses the importance of players being supervised at all times during team activities to help to ensure a*

*safe environment. The Speak Out Program outlines in detail important steps that must be taken to ensure adequate supervision of players.*

*Hockey Canada asks all involved with the game in leadership roles to assist in ensuring that these types of behaviours are eliminated and hockey continues to offer a safe, fun, and positive experience for all involved.*

*In an effort to provide Hockey Canada Branches, Minor Hockey Associations and leadership personnel responsible for the supervisor of Minor Hockey Teams, with appropriate direction in dealing with this issue, you are reminded that there are excellent resources available in the Speak Out program curriculum.*

*Minor Hockey personnel are encouraged to visit the Minor Hockey section of the Hockey Canada website at [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca) for more information on Bullying, Harassment and abuse.*

*During the July 2007 summer training seminar for Coach, Safety, and Speakout Master Facilitators, Hockey Canada will lead sessions on this topic, with the goal of raising awareness through Branch clinic programs in the fall of 2007-2008. A second area of focus at the seminar will be the impact of concussions in sport. Branches are encouraged to insure a wide spread distribution of information on this topic when providing updated resources to Branch course conductors for the fall and winter clinic season.*

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