

# News & Views

## ABC's of Trail Risk Management

**A**n inspection and maintenance system will help to prevent or reduce injury and defend against liability allegations.

**B**uild the trail to suit the environment and to minimize maintenance.

**C**ontract with all adjacent property owners.

**D**efine your user groups and build the trail to accommodate their needs.

**E**stablish user guidelines and post them on signs, in brochures or on your website.

**F**or a shared use trail consult with representatives from the various trail associations. Work together to build a safe multi-use trail system.

**G**eneral rules of risk management cannot be ignored – inspect, maintain, document.

**H**azards that can be repaired should be and if they can't be repaired or repaired quickly, use signage to warn users or barriers to protect users.

**I**nternational System of Accessibility Symbols should not be used on the trail surface unless the surface meets all of the requirements.

**J**anitors don't work on trails. Remind visitors to take out what they bring in.

**K**eep records of all inspections, maintenance and incidents. Document!

**L**ocal building codes should be followed when constructing railings, fences and barriers.

**M**anuals issued by Provincial Transportation Ministries should be followed for all regulatory signs.

**N**atural drainage patterns should be maintained.

**O**ccupier's Liability Act legislates a reduced duty of care for persons using recreational trails for recreation purposes and without paying a fee.

**P**ictorial signs should be used wherever possible. All user groups can understand them.

**Q**uestion the experts when you are unsure.

**R**ecovery zones for bicyclists should be incorporated into trail designs that allow cycling.

**S**ince there is no provincial code of conduct or legislation that governs trails, you need to create your own trail standard.

**T**rail markings should be incorporated into the trail system to help direct emergency vehicles to the scene of the accident.

**U**se barriers to prevent motorized vehicles from accessing the trail. But remember the barriers should be removable to allow emergency vehicles access to accident sites.

**V**olunteers should be trained in your policies, procedures and incident reporting.

**W**arn users of dangerous conditions by posting signage that describes the danger at least 30' before the dangerous conditions begin.

**X**posures should be identified and mitigated as soon as possible. 80% of large problems were once small problems.

**Y**ou, as the Occupier, have a duty to the user and cannot allow a dangerous condition to exist.

**Z**ones, that serve as buffer zones, should have all potential safety hazards removed.