

Safeguarding Children in Youth Activity Centers

One of the features found on many CLIA (Cruise Line International Association) member ships is a youth activity center where children are provided supervised activities and entertainment. CLIA member lines should be committed to adopting practices for their youth activities centers that promote a safe environment for children. This policy has been adopted by CLIA's members to help ensure that commitment is fulfilled.¹

Recruitment and vetting of staff

Members need to take reasonable steps to help ensure unsuitable persons are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks² of all applicants to positions working with children or volunteers should therefore include the following elements:

- An application that elicits information about the applicant's past employment, training, education and personal history, including self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Two references, including the most recent one, regarding previous work with children that are confirmed through direct contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo).
- Evidence of appropriate training and qualification to work directly with children.
- Consent from an applicant to seek information from the relevant Criminal Records Bureau in their home nation.
- An interview of the applicant according to company protocols for employees and volunteers working with children.
- An induction or orientation during which a check is made that the application has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures); the job requirements and responsibilities are clarified; child protection policies and procedures are explained; and the staff member acknowledges receipt of such information and any other company code of conduct or ethics.

Abuse recognition and reporting

Only qualified and trained experts and law enforcement personnel are authorized to decide whether or not a claim of child abuse is credible. Members should strive to safeguard any child from further harm by acting on any concerns or allegations of unlawful conduct and reporting these to the appropriate authorities. Members should assure all staff/volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone,

who reports a concern that a child is or may be a victim of abuse. When such a concern is raised, regardless whether against a member of staff, passenger or visitor to the vessel, there may be several different investigations including protection of the child, possible violation of criminal laws, and discipline for misconduct.

The results of the child protection and criminal investigations may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation. While all available information should be considered, the primary consideration should always be safeguarding the child.

Emergency planning and response with respect to youth activity centers

Every member with youth activity centers should ensure that emergency planning and response procedures unique to the facility are addressed, including notification of responsible parents or guardians and means of reuniting them with their child. These procedures should be included in each individual company’s emergency operation plan.

Supervision and Surveillance

Each member should maintain a policy that ensures that all times the youth activity center is in operation; children are adequately supervised by youth staff. Youth activity centers should have video surveillance cameras installed, capable of recording images in and around the youth activity center, with exception to restrooms. Youth activity centers should establish an age-appropriate check-in/check-out procedure for children. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure compliance with the company’s practices and this policy.

CLIA is the world's largest cruise industry trade association and is dedicated to the promotion of a safe and secure cruise ship environment. CLIA is composed of cruise lines serving North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australasia for whom the safety of guests and crew has no higher priority. With the advice and consent of its membership, CLIA advances policies intended to enhance shipboard safety, in some cases calling for best practices in excess of existing legal requirements.

1 Reference document: SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN ON UNITED KINGDOM REGISTERED VESSELS, Produced by: UK Association of Chief Police Officers – Maritime Planning and Operations

2 Taking into account any relevant national laws.