

Safety Tip of the Month – November 2005
VSI Safety Committee
Watch Those Doors

What about the doors at a swim meet? Believe it or not, there are a significant number of injuries related to blows from a door. Most common is the locker room door. At B/C meets small children are leaving the locker room and an older swimmer or adult forcefully pushes the door open, striking the child. The blow usually is to the head, but may be to the foot or any other body part that is closest to the door.

Revolving doors have a significant injury potential. A small child could get her / his finger between an outer door panel and the circular sleeve, mashing the hand as the door revolves. Rapid exit or entrance of swimmers / parents through a revolving door increases the risk of an extremity injury.

When parents drop off their children, particularly in a van, the sliding side door of the van may catch a finger; which can result in musculoskeletal or nerve damage if the blow is fairly intense.

Finally, children may play with emergency doors in an aquatic facility. Often these doors are locked from the outside, so if the child exits through the emergency door she / he may be stranded outside the facility and have to find her / his way around the aquatic building walls to gain entrance again. Children may also set off an alarm on the emergency door, which adversely impacts the swimmers in the water at that moment, and may cause the crowd to panic.

Recommendations for Swim Meet Marshals regarding “door safety”:

1. Place a sign on one way doors to the locker room, saying “Caution: Open slowly.”
2. Have a Marshal stationed at the revolving door, during the start of warm-ups AND at the end of the session, to monitor access and throughput in the revolving door. Do not let children play in the revolving door.
3. Have 3-6 parking spots designated for drop-off of swimmers, and consider having a parent from the host team to direct traffic and monitor drop-off of swimmers. Efficient, but careful drop-off may decrease the incidence of careless door closing and swimmer hand injuries.
4. Make sure the exit lights are working over the emergency doors. Place signage on the doors stating “Do Not Exit Unless Emergency.” Marshals should routinely patrol the area near the Emergency Doors to ensure that children are not tampering with this important exit. Do not permit swimmers / adults to enter the pool venue from the emergency doors.

Just a few tips which may help improve our “Door Safety” at Swim Meets.