

Placement of Treadmills – Consult Industry Standards

In the last article posted on this site, I provided some analysis as to why the placement of exercise equipment within fitness facilities was important for client safety and for the avoidance of relevant claims and suits against fitness professionals.^[1] I suggested that fitness professionals evaluate manufacturers' recommendations as well as industry standards when dealing with the placement of exercise equipment, particularly treadmills, within their facilities.

Aside from manufacturers' recommendations, industry standards can be a valuable resource for fitness professionals charged with the responsibility of exercise equipment placement. ASTM International fka the American Society for Testing and Materials published a new standard in 2012 entitled "Standard Specifications for Motorized Treadmills" designated as F2115-12, approved March 1, 2012. This latest standard, originally approved in a different form in 2001, modifies the prior ASTM standard adopted in 2005, F2115-05.

The 2005 version of the standard provided for a minimum clearance of 1 meter (39 inches) "behind the rearward most portion of the usable moving surface of the treadmill or 2 meters (78 inches) behind the furthest rearward obstruction for emergency egress from the treadmill." The 2012 ASTM standard changed that requirement somewhat to provide for an emergency dismount from the device of at least a two meter distance behind the treadmill. The 2012 standard recommends minimum clearances around treadmills to a minimum of 0.5 m (19.7 inches) on each side of the treadmill and 2 m (78 inches) behind treadmills.

Fitness professionals should review the current ASTM standard as well as manufacturers' recommendations as to the placement of treadmills and adhere to the safety recommendations contained in such statements. In the event of a conflict between manufacturers' recommendations and the ASTM standard, the greater recommended distance behind a treadmill should probably be followed since it would represent the most prudent approach for creating an obstruction free zone in the space behind a treadmill. The entire standard is available from the ASTM at <http://www.astm.org/>.

[1] Herbert, D.L., Proper Placement of Exercise Equipment is Important for Client Safety and to Avoid Suit, **CPH & Associates, Avoiding Liability Bulletin**, September, 2015, <http://www.cphins.com/proper-placement-of-exercise-equipment-is-important-for-client-safety-and-to-avoid-suit/>

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