

Recreational Camps: Guidance for Developing a Camp Safety Plan

Version: May 2022

This checklist is provided as a guide to assist recreational camp operators prepare for the seasonal opening of camps and to meet the requirements set out in [Ontario Regulation 503/17 \(Recreational Camps\)](#).

Every year, 14 days before opening or operating a recreational camp, the operator of a camp shall develop and submit a camp safety plan in writing to the medical officer of health.

Minimum requirements are included in this document as well as some recommended best-practices.

Safety Plan Requirements

The camp safety plan shall include, at a minimum:

General

- Procedures for maintaining records regarding campers, including their name, address and emergency contact.
- Procedures for maintaining a record of health and safety incidents that occur in the camp including steps to prevent further incidents. All health and safety incidents that occur in the recreational camp shall be recorded in accordance with procedures in the camp safety plan.
- Communicable disease control, outbreak management, including procedures for suspected outbreaks, handling ill campers, animal bites and when to notify Public Health.
- Fire safety and protection. If there have been any changes to the operation, capacity or number of buildings, the fire safety plan should be updated to reflect these changes.
- A description of land-based and water-based activities at the camp.
- Identification of the risks of those activities and a strategy to control and minimize those risks including supervision, if appropriate.

- Waterfront safety, including the availability of safety equipment and communication devices and procedures.
- A list of all camp staff members who have a current first aid certificate.
- The minimum ratio of camp staff members to campers ensuring that the ratio is maintained at all times while the camp is in operation.
- If the recreational camp has campers who are less than 13 years of age or campers with special needs, the operator must ensure that the campers are under continuous supervision of a staff camp member who has experience in the leadership and supervision of children.

Staff

Adequate medical staff must be provided onsite.

- Campers in the recreational camp are under the continuous supervision of at least one adult who has a current first aid certificate.
- Services of a physician must be able to be obtained immediately in case of a medical emergency.

Outbreak Management

An outbreak management plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A designated isolation area for ill or symptomatic campers or staff
- An adequate supply of personal protection equipment (PPE), for example medical masks, gloves and isolation gowns
- Isolation areas with opening windows to increase ventilation
- Isolation area suitably able to house ill or symptomatic campers until arrangements are made for returning home if required
- Isolation area stocked with cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (Health Canada approved) is accessible in isolation room and at all indoor spaces where hand washing facilities are not readily available
- Emergency phone number for medical emergencies or non-medical emergency procedures and guidelines

Recreational water safety

Every camp that has a waterfront being used for aquatic activities must be under the supervision of a lifeguard who is at least 16 years of age, and who holds a lifeguard certificate obtained within the previous two years.

- Adequate lifeguards must be provided depending on the number of campers in the water:
 - Two lifeguards for 1-25 bathers
 - Three lifeguards for 26-100 bathers
 - If more than 100 campers are in the water, one additional lifeguard is required for each additional group of 25 or less.
- A copy of all necessary lifeguard certificates onsite and available for inspection.

Recreational water safety equipment

The operator must ensure that the following equipment is easily accessible and in good condition during waterfront activities.

The following equipment is onsite and in good condition:

- One or more buoyant rescue aids attached to a shoulder loop with a six millimetre line at least 1.60 metres in length
- One or more reaching poles of three metres or greater in length
- One or more buoyant throwing aids attached to a six millimetre line at least eight metres in length
- A spine board
- A paddle board or boat when any part of the swimming area is more than 50 metres from shore
- First aid kit equipped with, but not limited to, the following supplies in sufficient quantities:
 - a current copy of a standard first aid manual
 - incident report forms
 - safety pins and tweezers
 - individually wrapped adhesive dressings
 - sterile gauze pads (50 x 50 x 75 mm and 100 x 100 mm)
 - individually wrapped sterile surgical pads suitable for pressure dressings

- waterproof adhesive tape
- triangular bandages and water-resistant, sterile bandages
- rolls of splint padding and roll up splints
- scissors, non-permeable gloves
- resuscitation pocket mask
- instant ice packs
- antiseptic solution
- blanket and pillow

Animals

- Rabies vaccination certificates for all animals on site and available for inspection.

Note: All animal bites including bats and wildlife must be reported to WDG Public Health. Visit our website [Animal Bites and Rabies](#) for more info information.

Ventilation

- Windows in sleeping areas can be opened to provide air flow
- Windows are provided with screens and screens are in good repair to prevent entry of insects and vermin

Pest control

The operator must ensure the camp buildings are kept free from pests and conditions that would harbour pests.

- Pest control measures are available on site and available if requested

Lighting

Minimum lighting intensity for specified rooms/buildings:

- Lighting is adequate. Note: A flashlight is not considered as minimum lighting in a sleeping area. Fixed lighting is required.

Drinking water supply

- Drinking water system complies with requirements of applicable legislation: [Ontario Regulation 170/03 \(Drinking Water Systems\)](#)
- Water sample(s) have been submitted and results are on site and ready for inspection.

Sanitation facilities

- Sanitation facilities are clean, sanitary, well-maintained and equipped with necessary supplies.

Food preparation

- Food preparation areas must be in compliance with [Ontario Regulation 493/17 \(Food Premises\)](#).
- Certified food handler certificates are on site and available for inspection.

Recommended Best Practices

Consistent compliance and safety are made easier when a safety plan is incorporated into the overall camp operations and management system. Consider your safety plan as the foundation for training, coaching and continuous improvement. Things to consider include:

- Keep it simple. A 6-inch operations binder sitting on a shelf serves little purpose. A simple and easy-to-read set of procedures and forms will be much easier to learn and more likely to be used.
- Include 'The Whys'. Procedures are more consistently followed when they include the purpose or rationale behind them. It's a good idea to include in each procedure or policy a brief line about its importance (for example, the rationale behind a procedure for cleaning and disinfecting an area after a sick camper vomits is to prevent infecting other campers).
- Monitoring and Verification Activities. Critical procedures and equipment should be checked routinely to make sure protocols are being followed and that equipment is present and in working order. Monitoring checklists can be created and used for daily or weekly 'checks' or 'walk-throughs'. Checklists should have space for a supervisor to sign off they've reviewed or 'verified' that the monitoring was conducted and that any issues were addressed. Having space on a checklist for comments or 'corrective action' is a good idea as it lets you document that you've corrected the item or to document how you will follow up.

- Clear accountabilities and roles. Each job or volunteer position in the camp should have a written job description that outlines that position's roles and responsibilities. Training requirements for each position should also be laid out and documented.
- Communication. Communication channels among camp staff and administration, as well as between the camp and campers/guardians should be established. Within the camp, consider daily huddles (either start of day and/or end of day) as a way to share issues or learnings from the previous day or to plan out key events or work. A weekly debrief is another good way to reinforce (and celebrate) the things that went well that week and to discuss any issues or improvement opportunities.
- Develop a **Continuous Improvement** culture. Look at each incident, error or near-miss with a mindset of preventing a similar incident from re-occurring. Most incidents are the result of a systems error so implementing a systems improvement (such as a new procedure, new equipment or new monitoring method) is the best approach. A formal review of all procedures and policies prior to camp start up and at the end of the season is a great way to make sure all procedures and policies are current and reasonable. It's also a great opportunity to adjust the wording and format of the procedures – or to even add in more photos or other changes to make the procedures easier to read and follow.

More information

For more information, please contact Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health at PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca or 519-822-2715 ext. 4753