

Recreational Camps: Guidance for Developing a Camp Safety Plan

This checklist is provided as a guide to assist recreational camp operators to 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 must submit their camp safety plan in writing to the Medical Officer of Health to phi.intake@wdgpublichealth.ca.

Minimum requirements are included in this document as well as some recommended best practices. The camp safety plan should be incorporated into all camp operations and staff training. Consider your safety plan as the foundation for training, coaching and continuous improvement.

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.
- Outbreak and increased illness 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 all 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.

- A plan to ensure the minimum ratio of camp staff to campers is always maintained 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.
- The services of a physician must be able to be obtained immediately in case of a medical emergency.

Increased Illness Management Plan (Outbreak Plan)

An increased illness plan shall include procedures to deal with ill campers or staff that may become sick or develop symptoms while at camp, including but not be limited to the following:

- A dedicated space for isolation that is suitable to house ill camper(s) until arrangements can be made for returning home. The dedicated space shall have:
 - Opened and screened windows for increased ventilation.
 - A supply of personal protection equipment (PPE), including medical masks, disposable gloves, and isolation gowns.
- 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer shall be available in dedicated isolation space and all indoor spaces where hand washing facilities are not readily available.
- A broad- spectrum cleaner/disinfectant product effective for quick cleanup and disinfection of common viral infections, for example Norovirus (common infection spread readily in community settings).
- Suitable 1-step cleaner/disinfectant products are commonly accelerated hydrogen peroxide- based products with a short contact time of less than five (5) minutes.
- A few suggestions are Virox5, Precept, Accel TB, Preempt or see Health Canada's [list of hard-surface disinfectants](#) for others.
- Cleaner/disinfectant products must **not** be expired.
- If a product was left at camp from the previous year it is likely to be outdated or has lost its efficacy and should be replaced.

- A procedure for the clean-up of bodily fluids, for example vomiting.
 - All staff shall be trained on how to safely clean-up a spill using the appropriate PPE.
 - A ready to go kit for spill clean-up including:
 - PPE
 - cleaner/disinfectant product
 - disposable towels
 - disposable garbage bags
- Emergency phone number for medical emergencies or non-medical emergency procedures and guidelines must be readily available.

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 campers 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 6mm. line at least 1.60m. in length
- One or more reaching poles of 3m. or greater
- One or more throwing aids attached to a 6mm. line and at least 8m
- A spineboard
- A paddle board or boat when any part of the swimming area is more than 50m. from shore
- First aid kit equipped with, but not limited to, the following supplies in sufficient quantities:

- 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

Tick identification and Animal bites

Your safety plan should include what to do if a tick is found on a camper or an animal bite occurs.

- Review WDGPH website <https://wdgpublichealth.ca/your-community/ticks-lyme-disease> for information on tick removal and to assist with identification procedures.
 - Download our [Tick ID card](#) (PDF, 2 pages, 288 KB)
 - Encourage campers to cover up by wearing closed footwear, light colored clothing and tucking pants into socks when exploring areas that may be prone to ticks.
 - Encourage the use of bug repellents and follow the manufacturer's directions.
 - Encourage staff and campers to [Perform full-body checks](#) daily.
- All animal bites including pets, bats and wildlife must be reported to WDGPH. More information and to report incidents at [Animal Bites and Rabies](#).
 - Rabies vaccination certificates for any animals on site must be available for inspection

Ventilation

- Windows in sleeping areas can be opened to provide airflow.
- Windows are provided with screens in good repair to prevent entry of insects

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 must be 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 and equipped with all 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. Things to consider include:

- Keep it simple. A 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 in procedures the “why”. Procedures are more consistently followed when they include the purpose behind them 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. Monitoring checklists can be created and used daily or weekly. Checklists should have space to sign off they’ve reviewed or ‘verified’ that the monitoring was conducted and that any issues were addressed.
- Clear accountabilities and roles. Each job in the camp should have a written job description, the roles, and responsibilities. Training requirements for each position should also be laid out and documented.
- Communication channels among camp staff and administration, as well as between the camp and campers/guardians should be well established.
- Consider daily ‘huddles’ to share issues or learnings from the previous day. A weekly debrief is another good way to reinforce the things which went well that week and to discuss any issues or improvement opportunities.

More information

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