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# CAMP STAFF ORIENTATION TRAINING

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Westchester County Department of Health  
Camp Workshop Program

**April 21, 2016**



County Executive Robert P. Astorino uses three guideposts (The Three P's) to manage Westchester County:

- **Protect Taxpayers**
- **Preserve Essential Services**
- **Promote Economic Growth**

# Importance of Staff Orientation

- You have gone through the difficult process of selecting great staff members for camp (including verifying two of their references!). You want to ensure they are trained and completely understand their responsibilities.
- Staff orientation must occur prior to the arrival of the first session of campers.
- Certain staff may require additional or specialized training depending on their job title or the activity they will be in charge of supervising.
  - ▣ Be sure to document this training!

# Importance of Staff Orientation

- Orientation training will aid camp staff by:
  - ▣ Providing needed knowledge on the daily routine of camp, camp rules, expectations, etc.
  - ▣ Providing confidence in their ability to adequately supervise campers and handle daily events.
  - ▣ Providing an opportunity to ask questions.
  
- In addition to orientation, continuous training throughout the camp season is important to keep staff informed of changes or other topics of importance.
  
- Many fellow camp operators have found it beneficial to pair a seasoned staff member with a new staff member.
  - ▣ Allows for one-on-one mentoring and allows for additional guidance throughout the camp season.
  - ▣ Provides a peer to go to with questions they may not feel comfortable asking a senior staff member.

# Staff Orientation

- There is a lot of information to review with your staff and a short amount of time in which to do it.
  - ▣ Decide which information is most valuable for your staff to know, i.e. goals and expectations, DOH requirements, etc.
  - ▣ Interactive orientation training can help keep staff interested and attentive to subjects reviewed.
  - ▣ Instead of reviewing the material in one large group, have seasoned staff members review the information in smaller groups to provide a more comfortable environment which could promote more interaction and encourage questions.
  
- In addition to topics relevant to your camp, the following slide lists staff training topics which **MUST** be reviewed during your camp staff orientation as per NYSSC.
  
- Red item violations/public health hazards is any condition which could be expected to be responsible for illness, physical injury or death.
  - ▣ Red item violations must be corrected at the time of observance.
    - Camp or specific activity may need to be closed until the red item violation can be corrected.
    - Camp operator must notify parents/guardians of the public health hazard observed at their camp. A summons could be issued as well.

# Code Required Topics For Staff Orientation

- Training curriculum outline
- Tour of the camp
- Description of camp hazards
- Chain of command
- Procedures for camper supervision & discipline
- Child abuse recognition & reporting
- Provisions for first aid & emergency medical assistance
- Lost camper plan
- Reporting of camper injury, illness & other incidents
- Buddy system & lost swimmer plan (if applicable)
- Lightning plan
- Fire safety & fire drills
- Camp evacuation procedures
- Activity specific training for assigned activities
- Camp Trips (if applicable)
- Process to document training attendance

# Staff Orientation Documentation

- Be sure to document your staff orientation training!
- Include the following:
  - Date of orientation
  - Topics covered
  - Staff who were in attendance the day of training
    - **Note:** For staff who were absent during the original orientation, be sure to document separately their attendance and date of their orientation.
- Documentation of staff orientation must be available and on-site, for review during a Health Department inspection.

# Tour of the Camp

- Touring the facility will:
  - ▣ Familiarize new staff with the layout of the grounds
  - ▣ Show locations that can be used by campers and those areas which are off limits
  - ▣ Identify where to go in case of an emergency (i.e. Camp health office location)

# Hazards at Camp

- While touring the facility it may be an opportune time to point out hazards which may be inherent at your camp.
- Is your camp located in an area which has walking paths through wooded areas which could have poison ivy growing along the paths or large dead tree limbs?
- Does your camp have small structures utilized for daily or rainy day activities which could house a bat?

# Chain of Command

- A staff member can at any time come across a hazard at the camp or may need to report a problem/situation.
- It is important for the staff member to know who to report these issues to.
- The chain of command provides direction to report potential problems and establishes an order of succession of responsibility/authority when that staff member may be unavailable or unable to perform their duties.

# Procedures for Camper Supervision & Discipline

- Camp counselors can have a few different responsibilities in the camp setting and may, in a way, feel an underlying pressure to ensure the campers have fun and enjoy themselves while at camp.
- But while trying to make sure the campers have as much fun as possible it should be stressed to them that the most important responsibility they have is **adequately** supervising the campers. This should never be forgotten as they interact with the campers and attend to any other responsibilities they may have.

# “Adequate” Supervision

- Adequate supervision means being protected from any unreasonable risk to the camper’s health and safety, this includes physical or sexual abuse or any public health hazard.
  
- Is there visual supervision or verbal communication (depending on the situation) existing between the campers and their counselors at all times from the moment campers arrive until they depart?
  - Counselors must understand this is not the place to come to socialize with other counselors!
  
- Do you review with staff the camp’s method of accounting for campers whereabouts at all times (during activities, travel between activities, etc.)?

# Procedures for Camper Supervision & Discipline

- Staff must be aware of the maximum ratios permitted between staff and campers, depending on the activity they are doing.
  - ▣ Passive activities are activities which take place in a defined area, where the campers are spectators or have limited mobility and do not use tools or equipment (excluding computers).
    - Ratio of counselors to campers cannot be greater than 1:25
    - Passive activities include storytelling, coloring, viewing movies, board games, etc.
  - ▣ General activities, such as baseball, soccer, etc., require a counselor to camper ratio which can be no greater than 1:12
  - ▣ Specialized activities, such as boating, require even stricter ratios and may even require an activity leader competent in the activity being conducted.
    - Counselor to camper ratios for specialized activities cannot exceed 1:8 and if the camper is less than 6 years of age cannot exceed 1:6

# Procedures for Camper Supervision & Discipline

- Review with staff supervisory skills and emphasize specific duties for staff in specialized positions.
  
- Staff must know what is expected of them when supervising campers in different situations.
  - Is the counselor given the responsibility to either cancel or curtail strenuous activities due to different weather conditions or is that the responsibility of the senior counselor?
  
  - Are the counselors able to modify ratios during passive activities?

# Procedures for Camper Supervision & Discipline

- What is your camp's discipline policy?
- As much as we hope to have smooth sailing through the summer without any behavioral issues, counselors must be prepared to handle unruly campers or any negative camper behavior.
- Staff must know how to set limits with the campers and convey the camp rules to them. Counselors should know what options they have to deal with campers who are out of line.
  - ▣ What actions are prohibited?
  - ▣ When should they seek assistance from a senior staff member when dealing with a disruptive camper?
- Some camps will role play different scenarios to aid in preparing counselors to deal with different situations they may encounter.

# Counselors as Role Models

- Counselors should always keep in mind they are role models to the campers!
  - ▣ Rules must be established regarding a counselors own behavior.
  - ▣ Does your camp have a staff dress code?
  - ▣ Campers' minds can be very impressionable. Staff's words and actions could be mimicked or repeated.
    - Is certain language prohibited at camp?
  
- Many camps provide a staff manual that includes information relevant for staff such as code of conduct, dress code, etc. which can be used for reference throughout the camp season.

# Child Abuse Recognition & Reporting

- It is a great skill to teach counselors how to manage negative camper behavior but they should always be mindful of a camper who has a behavior change, whether it be acting out or being more withdrawn.
- Behavioral issues may be a sign for a greater issue that the camper has not been forthcoming about.
- Staff must be knowledgeable recognizing signs of abuse.
- If abuse is suspected, be sure staff are trained how to respond/who they are to report an allegation of suspected physical or sexual abuse to.
- **The next slide identifies physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect.**

**Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect**

	<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	<p>Unexplained Bruises and Welts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On face, lips, mouth</li> <li>• On torso, back, buttocks, thighs</li> <li>• In various stages of healing</li> <li>• Clustered, forming regular patterns (i.e. grab marks)</li> <li>• Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle)</li> <li>• On several different surface areas</li> <li>• Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation</li> </ul> <p>Unexplained Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks</li> <li>• Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, donut shaped on buttocks or genitalia)</li> <li>• Patterned like an electric burner, iron, etc.</li> <li>• Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso</li> </ul> <p>Unexplained Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To skull, nose, facial structure</li> <li>• In various stages of healing</li> <li>• Multiple or spiral fractures</li> </ul> <p>Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To mouth, lips, gums, eyes</li> <li>• To external genitalia</li> </ul>	<p>Wary of adult contacts</p> <p>Apprehensive when other children cry</p> <p>Behavioral Extremes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressiveness, or</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> </ul> <p>Frightened of parents</p> <p>Afraid to go home</p> <p>Reports injury by parents</p>
<b>Physical Neglect</b>	<p>Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress</p> <p>Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods</p> <p>Unattended physical problems or medical needs</p> <p>Abandonment/child left unattended or without supervision</p>	<p>Begging, stealing food</p> <p>Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure)/frequent absence from or tardiness to school</p> <p>Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class</p> <p>Alcohol or drug abuse</p> <p>Delinquency (e.g. thefts)</p> <p>States there is no caretaker</p>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<p>Difficulty in walking or sitting</p> <p>Torn, stained or bloody underclothing</p> <p>Pain or itching in genital area</p> <p>Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas</p> <p>Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens</p> <p>Pregnancy</p>	<p>Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class</p> <p>Withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior</p> <p>Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge</p> <p>Poor peer relationships</p> <p>Sexual victimization of other children</p> <p>Delinquent or run away</p> <p>Reports sexual assault by caretaker</p> <p>Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)</p>
<b>Emotional Maltreatment</b>	<p>Speech disorders</p> <p>Lags in physical development</p> <p>Failure-to-thrive</p>	<p>Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.)</p> <p>Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</p> <p>Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria)</p> <p>Behavior Extremes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliant, passive</li> <li>• Aggressive, demanding</li> </ul> <p>Overly Adaptive Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriately adult</li> <li>• Inappropriately infant</li> </ul> <p>Developmental lags (mental, emotional)</p> <p>Attempted suicide</p>

# Provisions for First Aid & Emergency Medical Assistance

- Implementation of the camp's medical plan is the camp's health director **and/or on-site designee's** responsibility.
- Staff must be aware of the location of the health office/area and the method to contact the health director or designee.

# Provisions for First Aid & Emergency Medical Assistance

- The camp health director must not only review the camper's medical history but ensure all the required information is provided prior to the camper starting camp.
  - ▣ This includes a record of immunization history, proper documents for medications, etc.
- The health director/designee must properly document every injury, illness and medication dispensation in a bound log book.
- Failure to have the required information for campers, improper medication procedures, and not maintaining the medical log has been the top cited violation for the past 3 years!

# Reporting of Camper Injury/Illness

- Injuries can be controlled when appropriate interventions occur.
  - ▣ The bound medical log book should be reviewed routinely.
    - Patterns of injury/illness may be discovered.
      - Are injuries occurring at one activity, in one location, or under the supervision of a particular counselor?
- Be sure staff are informed on what to do if campers they are in charge of become injured or ill.
- Camp staff must be aware of who to report injuries/illnesses to and senior staff must know the procedure for reporting injuries/illnesses to the local health department.
- The following slide lists reportable injuries and illnesses.
  - ▣ These listed injuries/illnesses must be reported within 24 hours.



# CHILDREN'S CAMP PROGRAM

## REQUIRED REPORTING FOR INJURY AND ILLNESS

Children's camp operators must notify the local health department within 24 hours of the following occurrences:

- Camper and staff injuries or illnesses which result in death or require resuscitation, admission to a hospital or the administration of epinephrine.
- Camper or staff exposures to animals potentially infected with rabies.
- Camper injuries to the eye, head, neck or spine which require referral to a hospital or other facility for medical treatment.
- Injuries where the camper sustains second or third degree burns to 5 percent or more of the body.
- Camper injuries that involve bone fractures or dislocations.
- Lacerations sustained by a camper which require sutures, staples or medical glue.
- Camper physical or sexual abuse allegations.
- Camper and staff illnesses suspected of being water-, food- or air-borne or spread by contact.

Contact the local health department at ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_  
between \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. and \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. weekdays, or call  
( ) - \_\_\_\_\_ after hours, weekends and holidays.

# Lost Camper Plan

- It is important for the camp to have a procedure in place when a camper becomes unaccounted for.
  - ▣ Staff must know how to react in this type of situation and must do so quickly.
  - ▣ Who must be notified first at camp?
  
- The camp must be assembled and verification of the identity of the missing camper made.
  
- Staff must be informed on what the search procedures are and who is involved in the search. Who is left to supervise the remainder of the camp population?
  
- These procedures must be in place and reviewed with staff, along with when notification is made to the DOH, law enforcement and the camper's parent/guardian, if the camper is not found.

# Waterfront Activities

- Swimming is one of the most common, high risk activities that occurs at camp.
- Waterfront violations make the Department's list of top ten cited violations every year!
- Lifeguards and **COUNSELORS** play a very important role at the waterfront.
  - As we all know, a distressed bather is not able to yell for help. It is the watchful eyeS of counselors and lifeguards that prevent tragedies at the waterfront!!

# Waterfront Activities

- All counselors must know and understand what the buddy system is (a method for bather accountability) and the purpose behind it.
  - A camper's buddy is the **first** layer of protection.
  
- Again, counselors must know this is not the place to socialize and gather together in one spot.
  - Counselors are the **second** layer of protection and are closest to the camper in the water.
  - Counselors must know what their responsibilities are at the waterfront, including how to run a buddy check, how to scan the water, etc.
  - Counselors are first in the pool area/water and last to leave the water/pool area.
  - Failure to implement a complete buddy system has been a significant contributing factor in every camper drowning since 1986.

# Waterfront Activities

- Counselors must know how swimmers and non-swimmers are identified, how buddy sheets are setup, how often a buddy check must occur and the counselor to camper ratios utilized at the waterfront.
  
- The same goes for the lifeguards, who are the **third** layer of protection.
  - Be sure lifeguards know to never be distracted while guarding!
    - Camp operators **MUST** be sure to check lifeguard certifications to make sure they are current and acceptable (use the certification fact sheet which is found on our website).
  
- If a camper is not accounted for during the buddy check, all staff must know what the camp's lost swimmer plan is, how to implement it and what their role is in the plan.
  
- Both counselors and lifeguards must enforce the pool rules (i.e. no running, no diving, etc.)

# Fire Safety & Fire Drills

- Fire drills and inadequate documentation is another violation that consistently makes the Department's list of the top ten cited violations.
- All staff must know the camp's fire drill procedure and where the designated assembly area is located.
- Fire drills must be conducted during the first 48 hours of **each** camp session.
  - Fire drills should be conducted smoothly and quickly!
- Staff must know who is responsible for overseeing the drills and who/how the fire drill is to be recorded.
  - All campers must participate in a fire drill. Attendance must be recorded and available for inspection.
    - Be sure to account for absent campers. Conduct and document their fire drill separately (this must occur within their first 48 hours at camp).

# Camp Evacuation Procedures & Lightning Plan

- A fire is probably the most likely reason to evacuate a camp building but be sure to develop plans for other disasters requiring evacuation, such as floods, storm damage, or man-made disasters.
- Staff should know who is responsible for coordinating this plan and what signal is used to alert the camp to either conduct a fire drill or initiate an evacuation sequence.
- Weather conditions must always be monitored by the camp operator/senior staff member.
  - Senior staff should be aware of an approaching thunderstorm and may need to notify counselors to either eliminate or minimize certain activities.
    - How are counselors notified of the anticipated storm?
  - Does the camp operator have an alternate area for the campers to assemble if they are not able to proceed to their regular location?

# Camp Trips

- Designate appropriate staff to be trip leaders.
  - Note: A trip leader must be at least 18 years of age and have participated in at least three similar camp trips as a camp staff member or have experience and training in the activity which is equivalent to three camp trips. If it is a specialized activity, the trip leader must be competent in the activity.
    - Additionally, if emergency medical care is not readily available or is an activity such as wilderness hiking, the trip leader or accompanied staff must have a current and acceptable CPR and first aid certificate.
- Review with staff the plans for supervision and accounting for campers, what provisions are made for routine and emergency medical care, provisions made for communication with the camp or groups on the trip.

# Camp Safety Plan

- All staff must be made aware of the camp safety plan and should be following it on a daily basis.
  - ▣ Encourage staff to review it and to ask senior staff members any questions regarding the procedures described.
- The more informed the camp staff is the more confident they will feel in handling unexpected situations.
  - ▣ Knowledge is half the battle!



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