

Recreational Camp Emergency Plans for Incidents and Natural Disasters

All Recreational Camps are required to have policies and procedures in place for various emergencies that may occur. Below are sample plans for various natural disasters, emergencies and other life-threatening events. Each camp is unique in character and operation which should be reflected in these plans. Please make appropriate modifications to ensure the plans are useful for your camp including adding site specific facilities, buildings, directions for proper egress, designated meeting areas, communication systems (e.g., intercoms, etc.) and emergency response numbers.

Note: These plans are very general. They are intended to assist the camp operator in developing a comprehensive plan that is appropriate for their individual facility and applicable situations.

Additionally, all appropriate staff must be advised of the procedures in the plans.

Please review regulations 105 CMR 430.159(B), 105 CMR 430.190(E), 105 CMR 430.210, and 105 CMR 430.215 regarding emergency plans.

Each camp should have plans for events including, but not limited to:

Contingency Plans for Day Camp	Lightning	Emergency Plan for the Evacuation of the Program or Facility
Disaster/Emergency Plan	Wildfire	Fire Evacuation Plan
Tornado or High Winds	Medical Policies / Plans	Unrecognized Person(s)
Flash Floods	Lost Camper Plan	
	Lost Swimmer Plan	

Below are examples of plans for some such event:

1. Contingency Plans for Day Camps

All day camps must have written contingency plans in accordance with 105 CMR 430.211 to address the following situations:

- A child who is registered for camp and on the morning roll call fails to arrive for a day's activities.
 - double check attendance and/or roll call
 - call parents/guardians or other contact name provided on the camper's application form
- A child fails to arrive at the point of pickup at the end of the day.
 - double check attendance and/or roll call
 - check with Main Office to see if camper was picked up early by parents/guardians
 - check campgrounds in accordance with your lost camper plan
- A child comes to camp without being registered or without notifying the camp.
 - check with the child's parents/guardians if still on site
 - find out which camper the child arrived with: friend, brother/sister, etc. – obtain contact information from forms
 - call the child's parent/guardian if the child's phone number is obtained

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2. Disaster/Emergency Plans (e.g. – Lightning, Flash Floods, Wildfire, etc.)

All recreational camps for children must have a written disaster/emergency plan, in accordance with 105 CMR 430.210(B).

- If advised by authorities to evacuate an area, do so immediately.
- Explain all means of notifying occupants to evacuate or retreat to shelter, e.g., intercom, alarms, etc.
- Describe arrangements for transporting individuals from the camp to emergency or other facilities, including, but not limited to, emergency shelters.

3. Tornado or High Winds

The plans should include:

- Go to a basement (if available) or to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor.
- Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide-span roofs, such as an auditorium or lodge.
- Crouch down against the floor and cover the back of your head and neck with your hands.
- If no suitable structure is nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head.

4. Emergency Plan for the Evacuation of the Program or Facility

- Are separate evacuation plans posted for each activity area and next to each exit?
- Who leads children out of the building?
- Who checks for stragglers?
- Who is responsible for ensuring the number of children in attendance equals the number of children safely evacuated?
- When are practice evacuation drills conducted?
- Who documents date, time, and effectiveness of each drill?

5. Applicable Health Care Policies and Plans

- Describe plan for administering medication (prescription and non-prescription). Include location, instructions for storage and staff members approved to administer.
- Describe plan for returning or destroying unused medication when no longer needed.
- Describe and include copies of training and tests of competency for staff members administering medication.
- Describe plan for the care of mildly ill campers.
- Describe procedures for identifying and protecting children with allergies and/or other emergency medical information.
- Describe exclusion policy for serious illnesses, contagious disease and reportable diseases to Board of Health.
- Describe procedure when children refuse their medication or are not administered their medication in accordance with instructions signed off by Health Care Consultant and parent/guardian.

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6. Lost Camper Plan

All recreational camps for children must have a written lost camper plan kept on file in accordance with 105 CMR 430.210(C).

During a lost camper search, one person must be in charge of the entire search to avoid confusion and wasted time (time is a critical factor in a search for a missing person). This should be the most senior-trained person, such as a head counselor or camp operator.

- Report the missing camper to the main office, including the following information:
 - Camper's name and age
 - Last place the camper was seen
 - What the camper was wearing
 - Other information that could be helpful
- Use a predetermined signal to alert all staff that a person is missing. Lifeguards must clear the swimming areas.
- Using a communication system, if available, ask the camper to report to a designated area.
- Conduct a search of bathrooms, showers, locker rooms, missing camper's cabin or tent and other camp areas.
- A common practice is to move all campers to one central location to do an accurate head count or roll call.
- Camp staff should search assigned areas to ensure the camp and surrounding areas are searched.
- If the camper was last seen near water, lifeguards must search the entire waterfront
- Check office records to determine if the camper was picked up by parents/guardian or made other special arrangements. If not, contact the parents/guardian to determine if the child was picked up without notifying the camp office.
- Notify emergency personnel (911, if available) if the camper is not found immediately or if the camper requires emergency medical intervention. The search must continue until all campers are accounted for.

7. Lost Swimmer Plan

All recreational camps for children which include swimming in the camp activities must have a written lost swimmer plan kept on file in accordance with 105 CMR 430.210(C).

During a lost swimmer search, one person must be in charge of the entire search to avoid confusion and wasted time (time is a critical factor in a search for a missing swimmer). This should be the most senior trained person (preferably someone trained in open water rescue, such as the aquatics director).

- Use a predetermined signal to alert all staff that a person is missing. Lifeguards must clear the swimming areas. Using a communication system, ask the camper to report to the main lifeguard area, since the camper may have left the area.
- Contact emergency personnel, such as the local fire department, police or search and rescue squad. Notify the dispatcher that you have a possible lost swimmer. Delays in contacting emergency numbers (911, if available) must be avoided. It is better to cancel an emergency call once the swimmer is safe than to delay a call that might save the swimmer.
- Adult counselors may help search shallow areas; trained lifeguards should search deeper areas. Other staff should check bathrooms, showers, locker rooms, missing camper's cabin or tent and other camp areas.
- A common practice is to move all campers to one central location to do an accurate head count or roll call.

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- Lifeguards must continue to search the entire waterfront.
- The search must continue until all campers are accounted for.
- The person in charge of the search should have a list of staff conducting searches in assigned areas. Account for the staff to avoid the need for a double rescue. Staff conducting the search (including lifeguards) should use the buddy system.
- The person in charge of the rescue should interview the person who reported the missing swimmer; information about the swimmer's last known location, etc. is used to direct the search.
- All lifeguards search the swimming area, starting where the missing camper was last seen. Make sure to look under docks, piers, rafts, and other potentially dangerous locations.
- At waterfront facilities such as state parks, staff may have to check other playgrounds, campsites, and wooded areas.

Searching Shallow-Water Areas:

- To search shallow-water areas with pool water clarity, adult volunteers or non-lifeguarding staff members should link arms or hold hands and form a line in the water.
- One lifeguard should serve as a lookout standing above the water level (on a dock, raft, etc.) with rescue equipment in case a searcher gets in trouble or the missing swimmer is found.
- The shortest person should be in the shallowest water, and the tallest person should be in water that is no more than chest deep.
- The whole line slowly moves across the area together. Start where the lost camper was last seen. One lifeguard should be assigned to oversee this part of the search.
- As the search line moves forward, the searchers gently sweep their feet across the bottom with each step.
- The searchers must not go deeper than chest-deep water. Only trained lifeguards should search deeper areas.

For More Information:

https://con2.classes.redcross.org/learningcontent/PHSS/Lifeguarding/Lifeguarding_032112/media/pdf/LG_PM_CH6_Skill_Sheet_RESCUING_SUBMERGED_VICTIM.pdf

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Searching Deep Water Areas:

Use the American Red Cross "deep water line search" method is recommended to search for lost swimmers in water that is greater than chest deep.

It is outlined below:

- Several lifeguards, wearing masks and fins, form a straight line, no more than an arm's length from each other. One lifeguard serves as a lookout standing above the water level (on a dock, raft, etc.) with rescue equipment in case a searcher gets in trouble or the missing swimmer is found.
- On command from the lead lifeguard, all searchers do the same surface dive (either feet first or headfirst) to the bottom and swim forward a set number of strokes (usually three).
- If the water is murky, the searchers search the bottom by sweeping their hands back and forth in front of them, making sure to cover the entire area.
- Return to the surface as straight up as possible. At the surface, the line backs up, the lead lifeguard checks to make sure all searchers are accounted for, the line reforms, and on command from the lead lifeguard, dives again.
- Repeat this procedure until the entire swimming and diving area has been searched in one direction. Make sure not to miss any areas on the bottom when you dive and resurface.
- The searchers then repeat the pattern at a 90-degree angle to the first search pattern.
- If the missing swimmer is not found in the swimming and diving areas, expand the search to nearby areas. Consider the effects of any currents.
- Continue to search until the missing person is found or until emergency personnel arrive.

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8. Fire Evacuation Plan

All recreational camps for children must have a written fire evacuation plan. The plan must be approved by the local fire department in accordance with 105 CMR 430.210(A).

- The plan must indicate the frequency of fire drills to be held during the camping session. Fire drills must be held within the first 24 hours of the beginning of each camping session.
- The plan shall identify the number of staff and the number of children. The plan should assign staff to be in charge of specific areas. Staff and counselors will, under no circumstances, leave the campers that are under their direct care.
- Identify all means of egress.
- Explain all means of notifying occupants to evacuate, e.g., intercom, alarms, etc.
- Provide detailed instructions for contacting emergency personnel (fire department).
- Designate an outside area for campers and staff to gather. This area should be far enough away from buildings not to interfere with fire department operations. At the designated area, assigned staff should conduct a roll call. Campers must remain in designated areas until the fire drill/alarm has ended.
- Include a narrative of occupant response to a fire, i.e., how should staff respond in a fire condition?

Example:

- Notify anyone in the immediate area of danger
- Close doors to confine fire/smoke, but do not lock them
- Activate or request that someone else activate the fire alarm
- Evacuate the building, assist campers and other staff under your direction
- Call the fire department (911 or other emergency number) and give them the following information:
 - Building name and address
 - Nearest cross street
 - Location of fire in the building
 - Known information about the fire/smoke
 - Call-back telephone number
 - Do not hang up until the emergency services operator does so
- Use a fire drill/prevention checklist (see attached example) to assist you in the process and to document that fire drills have been performed.

NOTE:

This document includes a checklist to assist you in reviewing your camp to assess potential fire hazards. Also included is a form that may be used in recording and documenting the history of all required fire drills. This form may be duplicated for future use. Use of these documents does not substitute for the fire department's inspection/written statement of compliance required by 105 CMR 430.215.

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Fire Prevention Inspection Checklist:

Housekeeping and Maintenance:

1. "No Smoking" signs posted.	Yes	No
2. "No Smoking" regulations observed.	Yes	No
3. Flammable liquid safely stored in approved containers away from combustibles.	Yes	No
4. Trash/rubbish removal done on a regular basis.	Yes	No
5. All electrical plugs, switches and cords legal and in good repair.	Yes	No
6. Cords are not to be run across doorways or under carpets or mats where they may be stepped on.	Yes	No
7. No extensive use of cords from outlets (octopus).	Yes	No
8. Heat-producing appliances well-ventilated.	Yes	No
9. Electrical equipment turned off when not in use.	Yes	No
10. Malfunctioning electrical equipment immediately reported or taken out of service.	Yes	No
11. Areas kept as clean and neat as possible.	Yes	No
12. Materials stacked so as not to tip or fall.	Yes	No
13. Corridors and doorways kept free and clear of obstructions.	Yes	No

Fire and Life Protection Systems:

1. Adequate lighting in corridors, exits, and stairwells.	Yes	No
2. Exit signs illuminate as required (all lights working).	Yes	No
3. Evacuation routes adequately posted.	Yes	No
4. Evacuation signs maintained-none defaced or missing.	Yes	No
5. Fire doors not wedged or blocked open, especially stairwells.	Yes	No
6. Stairwells free of obstacles, storage, debris, etc.	Yes	No
7. Corridors and exits unobstructed (no storage of files, furniture, etc.).	Yes	No
8. Stairwells, corridors, and exits free of trip and slip hazards.	Yes	No
9. Fire detection and alarm systems tested regularly.	Yes	No
10. Fire sprinkler connections and shut off valves visible and accessible.	Yes	No
11. Fire sprinkler heads clean and unobstructed.	Yes	No
12. Adequate clearance (3 feet) for all fire extinguishers and hoses.	Yes	No
13. Fire equipment in proper locations and undamaged.	Yes	No
14. Fire evacuations director and assistant positions updated and fully staffed.	Yes	No
15. All occupants instructed on evacuation plan	Yes	No

CAMP LOCATION _____

INSPECTION DATE _____

INSPECTED BY _____

OFFICIAL TITLE _____

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FIRE DRILL CHECKLIST:

Name of Building: _____

Building Address: _____

Name of Camp: _____

Drill Monitor: _____ Title/Position: _____

Fire Drill Location: _____

Floor/Location to which occupants relocated: _____

Method of activation of fire alarm: _____

Time fire alarm activated: _____ Time occupants vacated fire drill floor: _____

Floor Response Personnel:

1. Evacuation Director present	No	OK	Unobserved
2. Assistant Evacuation Director (s) present	No	OK	Unobserved
3. Stair well monitors	No	OK	Unobserved
4. Elevator monitors	No	OK	Unobserved
5. Search monitors	No	OK	Unobserved
6. Assistants to the physically disabled and non-ambulatory	No	OK	Unobserved
7. Interior doors closed but not locked after searched	No	OK	Unobserved
8. Evacuation assistants checked rest rooms	No	OK	Unobserved
Over all response of floor response team	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory

Occupant Response:

1. Occupant initial response on sounding of alarm	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory
2. Occupant noise level	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory
3. Occupants aware of location of stairwell	Yes	No	Unobserved
4. Did evacuation proceed in smooth and orderly manner?	Yes	No	Unobserved
5. Did visitors to building participate in drill?	Yes	No	Unobserved
6. Overall response of occupants	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory

Drill Monitor Signature: _____

Date of Fire Drill: _____