

ACA Standards Related to Staff Screening, Supervision, and Training

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The health and safety of campers is of utmost importance to the American Camp Association. Because of this, there are several standards that specifically address staff screening, supervision ratios, and topics to be covered during staff training. While there is no “silver bullet” to protect campers from abuse, ACA believes a systematic, multi-prong approach produces the desired outcome of camper protection. The following list is only a partial list of the ACA standards a camp must meet in order to be accredited.

The standards listed below are found in the *Accreditation Process Guide, 2012 Edition*, to include January 2016 Updates.

A condensed version of all of the ACA standards can be found at: <http://www.acacamps.org/staff-professionals/accreditation-standards/accreditation/standards-glance>

STAFF SCREENING

Hiring Policies (HR.3)

Does the camp have written hiring policies that:

- Identify appropriate application and screening processes for each job category?
- Have been reviewed by legal counsel or a human resources professional within the last three (3) years?
- Define additional/periodic screening requirements for year round staff beyond the new-hire period (HR.5) and annual screening process stated in HR.4, consistent with their role and relationship with campers, including a criminal background check at least every five years?

Annual Staff Screening (HR.4)

Does the camp require annual screening for all camp staff based on camp property (directors, counselors, administrative staff, and support staff; seasonal and year-round) —paid, volunteer, and contracted that includes:

- A voluntary disclosure statement?
- A check of the National Sex Offender Public Website?
- A criminal background check for returning staff 18 years and older which is initiated prior to the arrival of campers or prior to the start of employment for late—hires.

New Staff Screening (HR.5)

Does the camp require screening for all new camp staff based on camp property (directors, counselors administrative staff, and support staff; seasonal and year-round) —paid, volunteer, and contracted that includes:

- A criminal background check for staff eighteen (18) years of age and older?
- At least two (2) reference checks and verification of previous work (including volunteer) history?
- A personal interview by the camp director or a designated representative?

CAMPER SUPERVISION

Supervision Ratios (HR.8)

Does the camp require and/or advise rental groups that ratios of staff who are on duty with campers in units or living groups and in general camp activities should meet the following minimums?

- 5 years & younger 1 staff for each 5 overnight campers and 1 staff for each 6 day campers
- 6–8 years 1:6 for overnight, and 1:8 for day
- 9–14 years 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
- 15–18 years 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

One-on-One Camper/Staff Interaction (HR.8.B)

Does the camp provide training to all staff to minimize the potential of any staff member being in a one-on-one camper/staff situation when out of sight of others?

Supervision Ratio Exception (HR.9)

Does the camp identify:

- Exceptions (if any) to the general ratios in HR.8 for segments of the day when greater or fewer staff are required for supervision?
- Activities, locations, or situations where a minimum of two staff members are required to be present?

STAFF SUPERVISION

Staff Observation (HR.20)

Do supervisors conduct regular observations to provide support to staff and ensure that acceptable job performance criteria are continually practiced?

STAFF TRAINING

Pre-camp Staff Training (HR.16)

Does the camp provide training for all camp staff directly involved in camp programming and camper supervision that includes at least the following topics:

- A. Camp purpose/focus/mission/intended outcomes and how these are implemented in camp structure and program activities;
- B. Developmental needs of campers to be served and the resulting differences necessary for program and structure;
- C. Objectives, safety considerations, skills progression, operating procedures, and competencies required for program activities;
- D. Age-appropriate behavior management and camper supervision techniques that can help to create a physically and emotionally safe environment;
- E. Clear expectations for staff performance and conduct, including sexual harassment policies;
- F. Recognition, prevention, and reporting of child abuse; and
- G. Emergency procedures and the role of staff in implementation?

Staff Camper Interactions (HR.16)

Is camp staff trained in areas relevant to creating a safe environment, including:

- A. Focusing attention primarily on campers' needs and interests rather than on other staff and themselves;
- B. Speaking with and listening to campers in a manner that reflects respect for each individual, including those of different backgrounds and abilities;
- C. Creating and supporting an environment that provides emotional safety; and
- D. Guiding group behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner?

Behavior Management and Discipline (HR.17)

Is camp staff trained in behavior management and discipline techniques that:

- Teach campers skills that achieve positive outcomes in areas of problem solving and interactions with others?
- Help staff recognize bullying and address the need to share with campers that bullying is unacceptable and to whom incidents of bullying should be reported?
- Implement fair and consistent disciplinary steps that are appropriate to the camper and the situation?