

COMPREHENSIVE CAMP SAFETY – FINAL DRAFT

dated 1/29/20

- *The American Camp Association (ACA) believes that the physical and emotional safety of campers and staff are of paramount importance in the delivery of any camp experience. ACA provides camps and their leaders with well tested programs and services that advance a continuous improvement process for camps that goes beyond fundamental practices. ACA encourages camps to become accredited and to utilize ACA standards and educational resources to adopt a proactive approach in developing and evolving safe practices and procedures. ACA believes agencies responsible for camp regulation should collaborate with ACA to implement relevant foundational practices reflected in ACA expertise to enable a high level of care and well-being for campers and staff during a camp experience.*

Support to Camp Safety Position Statement

- Camp safety should be intentional and comprehensive and use core concepts to guide the process. States vary significantly in their oversight of camp operations. ACA's accreditation educational resources provide a safety and risk management reference tool based on current industry specific practices, collaboration with experts in the field and relevant research. Core concepts should be implemented in partnership between camps, safety experts, and state regulators utilizing ACA as a resource.

Core Concepts

- Physical and emotional safety is of the upmost priority
- Camps should strive to provide an environment where all participants are safe
- All camp staff should be trained in child abuse prevention
- Safety requirements and training for activities should follow the recommended best practices from authorities in those fields with staff skills verified in the specific location
- Criminal background checks should be in practice by all camps as one component of a comprehensive screening process for staff and volunteers
- All camps should have access to biometric based criminal background checks that are reasonable in cost and timely in response.
- ACA will seek partnerships and collaboration opportunities with appropriate state regulatory agencies in order to protect all campers and staff
- ACA encourages camps to become accredited
- ACA will maintain and provide access to up-to-date resources through education, professional development and the accreditation program