

ORGANIZED CAMPS

Frequently Asked Questions

The following frequently asked questions are intended as a guide to the laws and regulations that apply to all organized camps. The official representation of the requirements can be found in ***Division 13, Part 2.3, Sections 18897-18897.7 of the California Health and Safety Code***, as well as ***Title 17, Division 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter 6, Sections 30700-30753 of the California Code of Regulations***.

What is considered an organized camp?

A site with program and facilities established for the primary purpose of providing an-outdoor group living experience with social, spiritual, educational or recreational objectives, for five (5) days or more during one or more season of the year. The following criteria apply to the definition of an organized camp:

- Located on a permanent site.
- Has a well-defined program of organized and supervised activities in which campers are required to participate.
- A qualified program director and staff, adequate to carry out the program, are present at the camp.
- A major portion of daily program activities are outdoors.

Note: Does not include a motel, tourist camp, trailer park, resort, hunting camp, auto court, labor camp, penal or correctional camp and does not include a child care institution or home finding agency. The definition of an organized camp does not allow the renting or leasing of facilities by an individual, family or group for the principal purpose of sporting or other unorganized recreational activities.

Does “five days” mean five consecutive days?

Yes. According to the legislature, the camp must operate one or more sessions that is at least 5 consecutive days in length, or if it is a day camp, at least 5 consecutive days in length or 5 days is not more than 14 days.

Are day camps considered organized camps?

The term “day camp” is not defined by law, however if it meets the requirements of an organized camp stated above, then yes, it would be considered an organized camp.

Do building construction plans have to be approved by the local health agency?

Yes, the Nevada County Environmental Health Department (NCEHD) can delegate the responsibility to review and approve building and construction plans to the local building and planning officials. An inspection would be required by the EH Department after, or in conjunction with, the building final inspection.

At least 30 days prior to the operation of any camp, construction of any new camp or any major expansion of physical facilities, a written notice shall be sent by the site operator to NCEHD.

Are showers and toilets required?

Toilets are required for all organized camps. Showers are required only for camps that have campers present for three or more consecutive days and nights.

What information is required from an organized camp?

On an annual basis and at change of ownership, the site operator must submit the following to the Nevada County Environmental Health Department (NCEHD):

- A written statement by the Director that he or she has reviewed the criminal history record check and voluntary disclosure statement for all staff, as well as documentation of criminal history and record check of the director for review from the NCEHD. **If campers are children, all staff working at the camp must undergo a background check.**

and

- A written verification that the camp is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA).

or

- A written description of operating procedures that describes the program of organized and supervised activities of the camp.

Note: Written operating procedures are not required if camp is accredited by the ACA.

What is needed for written operating procedures?

- a. Supervisor qualifications and training
- b. Staff skill verification criteria and process
- c. Participant eligibility (*if any*)
- d. Staff-to-participant supervision ratios
- e. Equipment needed
- f. Safety procedures
- g. Emergency procedures specific to location
- h. Environmental hazards
- i. Access and equipment control
- j. Equipment and maintenance repair
- k. Plans for coping with excessive numbers of flies, mosquitos, other insects or rodents.

Descriptions of activities that include a skilled staff member, use of fire or heat producing equipment and/or require injury-protection equipment are required in the written procedures.

Written operating procedures **are not required** if camp is ACA accredited.

What is required in regards to water?

You must have a dependable supply of potable water adequate to furnish 50 gallons of water per person per day. Drinking water must be provided and be centrally located within the camp. Please contact the NCEHD for more information if you plan on or already have a well as the source of potable water.

Can you serve food at an organized camp?

If you plan on having a food facility on an organized camp, you must apply for a permit. Please contact the NCEHD for more information.

My camp is near a lake, river, stream or ocean and I plan on including water activities for the campers. What safety is required?

A lifeboat or equivalent water safety device (e.g. rescue buoy or rescue tube) must be readily accessible near any lake, river, stream or ocean used by the camp. This requirement also applies to field trips away from the camp where water activities will occur.