the camp. The only individual authorized to give your child his/her medication is a licensed health care professional or the camp health supervisor with oversight by the camp health care consultant. (Note that other arrangements may be made for emergency medications such as epi-pens and inhalers.) When your child returns from camp, the medication must be returned to you, if possible, or destroyed.

Can a camp discipline my child?
Yes. Camps are required to have a written disciplinary policy that explains their methods of appropriate discipline, e.g. 'time-out' from activities, sending a child to the camp director's office, etc. Under no circumstances, however, may a camper be subjected to corporal punishment, such as spanking, or punished by withholding food, or by subjecting a camper to verbal abuse or humiliation.

What steps does a camp have to take to protect my child from abuse and neglect?
Public Health Regulation 105 CMR 430.000 requires all camps to have policies and procedures in place to protect campers from abuse and neglect while at camp. You may ask a camp representative for specific information on the camp's policies, as well as its procedures for reporting a suspected incident. In order to protect your child from possible abuse, you should talk openly and frequently with your child about how to stay safe around adults and other children.

Where can I get more information on abuse/neglect?
For guidance on abuse prevention and counseling regarding a possible abuse situation, contact the Department of Social Services' Child-At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200 or the Massachusetts Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Partnership at www.masskids.org or 617-742-8555 ext.1

What steps can a camp *(and parents)* take to help protect children from mosquito-and tick-borne disease such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), West Nile Virus (WNV) and Lyme disease?
Parents and Camp Administrators can discuss the need for repellent with campers. Use of insect repellents that contain 30% or lower of DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) are widely available and have proven to be safe and effective for children (greater than 2 months of age) when used as directed and certain precautions are observed. These products should be applied based on the amount of time the camper spends outdoors, and the length of time protection is expected as specified on the product label.

Should products that contain both insect repellent and sunscreen be used?
No. Use of DEET products that combine repellent with sunscreen are not recommended, as over application of DEET can occur if sunscreens need to be applied more frequently. It is generally recommended to apply sunscreen first, then insect repellant.

What is the best way to apply repellents?
Repellents containing DEET should only be applied to exposed skin, and children should be encouraged to cover skin with clothing when possible, particularly for early morning and evening activities when more mosquitoes are present. DEET products should not be applied near the eyes and mouth, applied over open cuts, wounds, or irritated skin, or applied on the hands of young children (the CDC recommends that adults apply repellents to young children). Skin where the repellent was applied should be washed with soap and water after returning indoors and treated clothing should be washed before it is worn again. Spraying of repellents directly to the face or in enclosed areas should be avoided.

Do not rely on glossy pictures and slick brochures when considering a recreational camp for your child.

Contact the camp director to schedule an appointment for an informational meeting, and tour of the facility prior to registering your child.

Ask the camp for a copy of its policies regarding staff background checks, as well as health care and disciplinary procedures. Ask to see a copy of the procedures for filing complaints with the camp.

Call the local health department/board in the city or town where the camp is located for information regarding inspections of the camp and to inquire about the camp's license status.

Obtain names of other families who have sent their children to the camp, and contact them for an independent reference.

If you would like a copy of the state regulations or additional information concerning recreational camps for children, please visit
http://www.mass.gov/dph/dcs
or call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Center for Environmental Health's Community Sanitation Program at 617-624-5757

To order copies of **"Information About Recreational Camps in Massachusetts: Questions and Answers for Parents"** contact the Community Sanitation Program at:
Telephone:617-624-5757
Fax:617-624-5777
TTY:617-624-5286

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Information about Recreational Camps in Massachusetts

Questions and Answers for Parents

Published by the
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What is a recreational camp for children?
A recreational camp for children is a day or residential (overnight) sports, travel or wilderness program that offers recreational activities and instruction to campers. Such camps have five or more children and typically operate anytime between June 1 and September 30 and/or during school vacations. Please note that there are certain factors, such as length of time the camp is in session and type of entity operating a program, that influence whether a program is considered a recreational camp under applicable Massachusetts law (G.L.c. 111, 127A) and mandated regulations (105 CMR 430.000 et. seq.: Minimum Sanitation and Safety Standards for Recreational Camps for Children). For further information on licensed recreational camps for children, contact the local board of health in the community where the camp is located.

Do recreational camps for children have to be licensed?
Yes. In Massachusetts, recreational camps for children must be inspected and licensed by the local board of health in the city or town where the camp is located. In order to be licensed, the camp must meet all regulatory standards established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and any additional local requirements.

Are all summer programs licensed as recreational camps for children?
No. There are certain regulatory requirements that a camp program must meet to be licensed as a recreational camp for children. The definition of a recreational camp for children and specific provisions for its licensure are found in regulations at 105 CMR 430.000. Programs that do not meet the legal definition of a recreational camp for children are not subject to MDPH's regulatory provisions and therefore may not follow the mandatory requirements that apply to licensed recreational camps for children including:

- performing criminal record background checks on each staff person and volunteer prior to employment
- requiring proof of camper and staff immunizations
- requiring proof of appropriate training, certification, or experience for staff conducting or supervising specialized or high risk activities

In addition, neither MDPH nor a local board of health conducts on-site inspections of facilities that are not considered recreational camps for children.

To see if a camp is licensed, contact the local health department (board) in the community where the program is located.

What is the purpose of the regulations?
The regulations establish minimum health, safety, sanitary, and housing standards to protect the well-being of children who are in the care of recreational camps for children in Massachusetts.

Where can I get information on the status of a recreational camp's license?
The local health department/board in the community where the camp is located can confirm if the camp is a licensed recreational camp for children, confirm the status of the camp's license, and provide a copy of the camp's most recent inspection report.

What does the local health department/ board evaluate as part of a camp inspection?
The primary purpose of the inspection is to ensure that the camp provides an appropriate environment to protect the health, safety, and well being of the campers. Inspectors look to see that the camp has, for example: safe structures and equipment; adequate sanitary facilities; sufficient supervision of the campers; appropriate plans in case of medical emergencies, natural, and other physical disasters; sufficient health care coverage; and injury and fire prevention plans. Contact the local health department/ board of the community in which the camp is located to find out mandatory requirements, policies and standards.

Are recreational camps required to provide copies of operating plans and procedures?
Yes. You may ask a camp representative to let you see copies of any of the required plans and procedures.

Are there minimum qualifications for camp counselors in Massachusetts?
Yes. All counselors are required to have at least four weeks experience in a supervisory role with children or four weeks experience with group camping. Counselors must also complete an orientation program before campers arrive at camp. Any counselor who supervises children in activities such as horseback riding, hiking, swimming, and other events must also have appropriate specialized training, certification, and experience in the activity. You may ask to see proof that a counselor is certified in a particular activity.

Is the camp required to conduct background checks on camp staff?
Yes. For all camp staff and volunteers, the recreational camp for children must conduct a background check that includes obtaining and reviewing the applicant's previous work history and confirming three positive references. The camp must also obtain a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) history/juvenile record history from the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) to determine whether the applicant has a juvenile record or has committed a crime that would prevent the applicant from being with campers. The local health department/board will verify that CORI checks have been conducted during their annual licensing inspection. Where an applicant resides in a foreign jurisdiction, where practicable, the camp must also obtain from the applicant's criminal information system board, the chief of police, or other relevant authority a criminal record check or its recognized equivalent. The camp is required to hire staff and volunteers whose backgrounds are free of conduct that bears adversely upon his or her ability to provide for the safety and well-being of the campers.

Is the camp required to check staff and volunteer backgrounds for a history of sexual offenses?
Yes. The operator of the camp must obtain a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) report from the Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB) for all prospective camp staff, including any volunteers. The Sex Offender Registry Board is a public safety agency responsible for protecting the public from sex offenders. The local health department/ board will verify that SORI checks have been conducted during their annual licensing inspection. For more information concerning the Sex Offender Registry Board, and SORI information and policies available to the public, visit the SORB website at www.mass.gov/sorb.

How can I be sure that such background checks have been conducted?
You can request a copy of the camp's written policy on staff background checks from the camp director. Please note, however, that you are not authorized to review the staff person's actual criminal history record.

How old do camp counselors have to be?
There are different age requirements depending on the type of camp. A counselor working at a licensed residential (overnight), sports, travel, trip, or special needs camp must be 18 years of age or have graduated from high school. Counselors working at a day camp must be at least 16 years of age. All counselors at licensed camps in Massachusetts are required to be at least three years older than the campers they supervise.

Is the camp required to have a person on-site who knows first aid and CPR?
Yes. All licensed camps are required to have a health supervisor at the camp at all times who is at least 18 years of age and currently certified in first aid and CPR. The camp must provide backup for the health care supervisor from a Massachusetts licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse who serves as a health care consultant. Special needs camps, and residential camps where there are a large number of campers and staff, must have a licensed health care provider, such as a physician or nurse, on site.

How can I coordinate my child's medication administration while at a recreational camp?
Licensed camps are required to keep all medications in their original containers and to store all prescription medications in a locked cabinet. If your child will be participating in off-site activities while taking prescription medication, a second original pharmacy container must be provided to