

PLAYERS HEALTH

# CAMP SAFETY GUIDEBOOK

RISK MANAGEMENT 101 FOR CAMP OPERATORS



# INTRODUCTION

*It felt like a good idea at the time. After running a successful soccer season for his youth league, Joe, the league president, and the league's board decided hosting a summer soccer camp would be a great way to generate some revenue and increase interest in the sport and their program.*

*But now, here they were on day one of their week-long summer day camp and there are hundreds of kids wandering around the 10-field complex where camp was being held. They'd barely had time to orient their instructors, who are mostly college soccer players on summer break who don't have a lot of experience coaching kids, let alone train them in the camp operations.*

*The check-in process had been mildly chaotic to put it nicely, and they had collected maybe half of the campers' authorized pick-up person forms. Already one child had been stung by a bee. Fortunately, he was not allergic because the medical form binders weren't completely put together yet and the athletic trainer was late.*

*The temperatures are supposed to be over 90° F by mid-afternoon but Joe's not sure they're even going to make it to lunchtime at this rate. He's doesn't know what the protocol even is if they must end early due to heat or inclement weather.*

*This was a far cry from managing 20 kids he knows during a practice on a single field during the regular season. What had they gotten themselves into?*

## CAMP OPERATOR: MORE THAN A JOB

Hopefully as a camp operator you've never found yourself in a situation like Joe's, but we're glad you've found your way to this simple guide to help you create great camp experiences for kids. Research shows that camp participation has huge benefits for attendees, including the opportunity to make new friends, try new things, and develop leadership skills and confidence.

Thank you for being committed to providing these opportunities. This guide will help prepare your camp in preventing or responding to situations that jeopardize the positive experiences kids should have at any camp. Your job isn't just to run a camp, it's to be a creator of safe and fun experiences for kids. This guide aims to help you achieve this goal.



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## ABUSE PREVENTION:

# THE FOUR ANCHORS OF YOUR CAMP'S ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAM

Keeping campers safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically is your number one priority as a camp operator. This can feel daunting—where do you start? At Players Health we divide athlete safety into four key anchors. Each anchor needs to be in place to keep your program from drifting into troubled waters.

### ANCHOR 1: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Establishing your policies and procedures provides a consistent actionable foundation to your camp safety program. They help in developing your camp handbook, staff training, website information, background check services and all other safety compliance actions.

Your essential abuse prevention policies need to include:

- Adult Participants, Minor Participants and Exceptions Policy
- Prohibited Conduct Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Enforcement Policy
- Background Check and Appeals Policy
- Education and Training Policy
- One on One Interactions Policy

Additional essential safety policies should also include:

- Heat acclimatation (stroke) Policy
- Concussion and Return to Play Policy
- Inclement Weather Policy

Players Health offers clients a full library of the above policies and procedures to help camp operators build out the foundational aspects of their Athlete Safety program. We encourage each camp operator to build these policies and procedures with legal counsel.

**To inquire about free access to the library as a Players Health client visit**

[www.playershealth.com/contact](http://www.playershealth.com/contact)

## ABUSE PREVENTION:

# THE FOUR ANCHORS OF YOUR CAMP'S ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAM

## ANCHOR 2: EDUCATION & PREVENTION

Education is the cornerstone of prevention. With proper training, you and your staff can be prepared to keep your youth athletes safe throughout the duration of your camp. Those you place in charge of the minor athletes should complete at a minimum:

- Abuse prevention training as required by law
- Concussion awareness training
- Sudden cardiac arrest awareness training

We also highly recommend that staff complete AED/CPR training and basic first aid.

To avoid training panic mode, prepare ahead of time with these simple steps:

- Have your education and training policy in place.
- Pre-identify your training and training platforms/providers.
- Incorporate instructions for accessing the trainings in your staff onboarding communications.

This can help you save time and effort and will accommodate even the latest add to your staff. Most abuse prevention training programs are available on-demand online.

For more on staff education and prevention, review Risk Management: Your Staff later in this document.

**Players Health offers quick and easy access to our learning management system to access these trainings for your staff if you are not required to utilize the US Center for SafeSport's Core Trainings. To learn more about our abuse prevention and safety trainings, visit [www.playershealth.com/courses](http://www.playershealth.com/courses)**

## ABUSE PREVENTION:

# THE FOUR ANCHORS OF YOUR CAMP'S ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAM

### ANCHOR 3: COMPLIANCE

For your policies to have an impact on your camp's safety, ALL adult staff and volunteers working with youth must comply with the requirements your policies lay out.

In addition to required abuse prevention training, ALL adults working with minor athletes at your camp(s) should be background checked.

Performing a background check on those working with your campers helps identify staffers who may pose a threat to your athletes' safety.

Background checks also:

- **Protect children from abuse and neglect:** Background checks help identify volunteers with a history of abuse, neglect, or violent behavior toward children.
- **Avoid liability issues:** Failing to conduct background checks can result in legal liability if a volunteer with a known history of abusive or criminal behavior harms a child.
- **Promote trust and confidence:** Conducting background checks helps promote trust and confidence among parents and guardians who entrust their children's safety to your staffers.

The combination of abuse prevention training (and other necessary training noted in the above section) and a background check are the minimum compliance requirements you as a camp operator should be tracking.

There are many ways to track this information and you should keep a digital record of compliance.

**Players Health offers a compliance platform for our insurance clients that provides access to trainings and background checks, and helps monitor user compliance. To learn more, visit [www.playershealth.com/contact](http://www.playershealth.com/contact)**

## ABUSE PREVENTION:

# THE FOUR ANCHORS OF YOUR CAMP'S ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAM

## ANCHOR 4: RESPONSE & RESOLUTION

Incidents of prohibited conduct will happen at your camp. Your response to these incidents and how you resolve them will impact how those involved judge your operation going forward. Ignoring incidents and hoping they just go away on their own is detrimental to those involved and can also affect your long-term viability as a camp operator.

Here are the four steps to take to proactively discover and respond to incidents:

### 1. Define your camp's prohibited conduct

Start by documenting your prohibited conduct policy (child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, hazing and harassment), then informing and training your staff. You also need to provide this information to camp participants and their families.

### 2. Develop an incident reporting pathway and protocol

Define how an incident should be reported, managed, and resolved. Ensure that all involved with your camp know how to report an incident and what types of incidents to report. The incidents that should be reported are those that fall under your defined prohibited conduct.

### 3. Respond to matters swiftly following your outlined protocols.

This may include needing to perform an investigation OR reporting the matter to law enforcement if the prohibited conduct is potentially unlawful. Make sure you know what needs to be reported to law enforcement and/or social services. (This will be found in your mandatory reporting policy mentioned earlier in this guide.)

### 4. Where incidents are not under law enforcement's jurisdiction, resolve as soon as possible.

Provide information to parties involved on the steps you took for resolution and what the resolution was. Always document this in writing.

Players Health offers incident reporting protocol assistance and advisory services to our insurance clients. To learn more visit [www.playershealth.com/contact](http://www.playershealth.com/contact)

Players Health offers an online training on Reporting and Investigations available at [playershealth.com/courses](http://playershealth.com/courses)

## CAMP OPERATOR ATHLETE SAFETY &amp;

**ABUSE PREVENTION CHECKLIST****ANCHOR 1: POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- Create/review all abuse prevention policies in partnership with your legal counsel
- Create/review all additional policies and procedures related to environmental and physical safety
- Incorporate policies into your camp handbook, staff onboarding and training

**ANCHOR 2: EDUCATION & PREVENTION**

- Identify your training provider for:
  - Abuse Prevention Training
  - Concussion Awareness Training
  - Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Training
- Create/review your Education and Training Policy (who is required to do what training)
  - Volunteer requirements
  - Paid staff requirements
- Provide instructions on how to access your trainings

**ANCHOR 3: COMPLIANCE**

- Create/review mechanism and procedures for tracking the required training(s) and background checks
- Review background check and appeals policy and update as necessary
- Review background check provider's criteria to ensure it continues to meet the screening standards you need

**ANCHOR 4: RESPONSE & RESOLUTION**

- Review your prohibited conduct policy and educate staff and participant families of the policy
- Create/review incident reporting pathways and protocols
- Update and inform camp participants and staff on how to report incidents of prohibited conduct and what the process is

## RISK MANAGEMENT:

# YOUR STAFF

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### Be Values Driven

Your staff is the front line of your camp operation. Consumers will evaluate your camp by the people working directly with their minor athletes. Your selection of staff should reflect your camp operation's core values.

Those working in any camp or youth programming should have the following qualities:

- Be committed to the safety and development of youth campers.
- Put the campers' needs before their own during camp hours of operation.
- Be experienced in the activity offerings of your camp (sports etc.) and have knowledge to share.
- Always operate with integrity.
- Have an impeccable background and pass your background check or have learned experience which can offer camp participants a new or different perspective on overcoming life challenges.

Preserve the integrity of your camp by only hiring those that reflect your core values and have the necessary qualifications for their role. Start the hiring process far ahead of time to avoid the last-minute scramble.

### Don't Drop the Ball

It might be easy to drop the ball on training last-minute hires, but it is imperative that your staff all have the required essential training they need to work at your camp. As mentioned in the Anchor 2: Education and Prevention, have your training plan in place and consider online or blended learning opportunities such as videos and face-to-face training as ways to quickly get training for your staff.

### Educate Staff on Your Policies

When considering what training your staff should have, think beyond just required safety and abuse prevention training. Staff also need to be educated on your policies, procedures, and emergency action plans. They need to know your abuse prevention policies and what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Finally, they need to be educated on what to do if they see incidents of prohibited conduct occurring.

### Educate Staff on Good Coaching Practices

If you are running a sports camp, consider providing coaching education for your instructors, especially if they are primarily athletes themselves with little coaching experience or understanding of working with children. Most National Governing Bodies (NGB's) have foundational coaching courses. For how to work with children in developmentally appropriate ways, consider the free courses at [www.howtocoachkids.org](http://www.howtocoachkids.org).

## RISK MANAGEMENT:

# YOUR FACILITY

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It is imperative that your camp has safe facilities with adequate space for the number of participants you have.

Before camp begins each day, staff should perform an inspection to ensure all equipment is working and safe.

Ensure that:

- all equipment is structurally sound
- goals and goal posts are free of sharp edges, protrusions, or loose netting
- any goals or cages are anchored securely
- playing surfaces have no worn areas, rips, tears or buckling
- bleachers are free of damaged areas, sharp or protruding edges, and beehives
- there is adequate run off between each playing area

If any equipment is deemed unsafe, it should be removed or marked off-limits until fixed.

Resident camps have additional facility concerns and will also need to consider the following areas for inspection:

- Sleeping quarters – temperature and ventilation controls
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors
- Fire extinguishers and fire safety equipment
- Bunk guardrails
- Emergency Exit signage
- Utility systems such as water and sewer cut off valves
- Food serving areas free from rodents and insects

Even after the facility is checked for safety it is important to have adequate supervision of campers to ensure that all facility equipment is being used in an appropriate manner. A thorough set of camp rules will assist in establishing acceptable behaviors when using facility equipment and participating in camp activities. Also make sure that staff are trained in the proper use of equipment.

# FIELD SAFETY CHECK LIST

Prior to the start of practice session or a game, the coach should assess the following field conditions and make necessary corrections to the items marked as needs attention prior to athletes being allowed on the field.

Field issues should be brought to the attention of the facility management and appropriately addressed prior to play.

## GENERAL

PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintenance equipment, rakes, hoes etc. removed from field
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Litter and unsafe debris have been removed from field and spectator areas.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Field marking lines are bright and correct for appropriate sport
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is a minimum of 25 ft. around the field for run off.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimum of 50 ft between fields if multi field complex.

## PLAYING SURFACE - NATURAL GRASS

PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is at least 75% coverage of grass on the field
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no bare spots with hard soil surface exposed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Field is drained with no standing water
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grass is uniform height and density with a strong root system
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no weeds with thorns, thistles or burrs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no holes or mounds made by rodents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no ruts or trenches excess field use

## GOALS AND GOAL POST

PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goal posts are straight and securely anchored
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goal posts are adequately Padded
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concrete for goal post anchor is below the surface
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no sharp edges, protrusions or fractures on the goal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goal cages are anchored securely to posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All bolts, screws and Connections are intact and

## PLAYING SURFACE - SYNTHETIC TURF

PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are not worn areas on the synthetic material
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no rips or tears on the synthetic material
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seams are secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The synthetic material is not buckling or bulging
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is adequate infill material that is evenly spread
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Biohazard kit is available incase Turf needs cleaned due to injury

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## **FACILITIES - FENCING, BLEACHERS & LIGHTING**

PROFICIENT    NEEDS ATTN

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fences are securely set in the ground and attached to posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fence posts are outside the playing area
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no large gaps in the fencing or between ground and fence
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no damaged areas that protrude, are sharp or loose
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wooden bleachers are free from splinters or worn areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guard rails, planks, and railing end caps are securely in place
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no broken links or sharp protruding edges
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting adequately and Uniformly covers the field, with all lights working

### **COACH COMPLETING ASSESSMENT:**

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## RISK MANAGEMENT:

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

### HEALTH CARE POLICIES

Your camp should follow a written health care policy that includes a plan for meeting individual camper's specific health needs.

Your camp should include procedures for:

- Identifying and accommodating campers with allergies.
- Accommodating campers with prescribed medications.
- Incidents of illness or injury:
  - Transportation for off-site care
  - Notification to guardians when an incident occurs

#### Forms:

To have a working understanding of campers' health needs, proper health information forms need to be collected as part of the registration process. Understanding allergies and/or medication requirements is critical to providing a safe environment for all campers.

#### Special Needs:

Parents/guardians of campers with special health needs should receive information about your camp's health management practices and how they will address any specific health concerns.

#### Health Care Professionals:

Every camp should have adequate health care professionals available at an acceptable ratio to the number of campers attending. Athletic trainers are a logical choice for this as they have knowledge about injuries and treatment techniques and are versed in the organization of medical intake forms. Additionally, they will have the necessary first aid equipment to take care of the minor injuries that may occur and know how to complete the necessary incident reports.

#### Record Keeping:

All health-related forms and records should be kept for enough time post-camp ending to meet insurance requirements. Incident reports should be filled out for all injuries or medical incidents that occur at camp and kept on file.

## RISK MANAGEMENT:

# YOUR EMERGENCY PLANS

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A risk management plan that covers emergencies will prepare camp staff for specific incidents or unforeseen events that could take place in a camp setting. Your camp should identify and analyze risk exposure and take the appropriate corresponding control measures.

Begin building out your camp risk control measures and emergency action plans by assessing the types of risks your camp could face.

Once you've established each possible risk, create a written emergency action plan to be distributed and reviewed by all staff members.

Incident reporting is imperative to provide context to the camp's emergency action plans. Written reports on incidents and accidents should be reviewed annually to assist with modification or changes needed to any policies, procedures, and emergency action plans.

Common areas of risk to consider might include:

- Security and active threats such as an active shooter  
(Download a copy of the *Players Health Active Shooter in Sport Guidebook* at [playershealth.com/guidebooks](http://playershealth.com/guidebooks))
- Severe weather or natural disasters
- Missing person procedure for a lost, missing, or runaway camper
- Emergency communications with staff, campers, and parents
- Health related risks such as concussion, sudden cardiac arrest, or severe injury

Proper communication of the risks associated with attending camp to families is important. It is important to communicate the risks associated with attending camp to the campers' families. Appropriate insurance must be obtained, along with waivers, indemnification, and assumption of risk documentation signed by parents and guardians.

Visit the [Players Health Athlete Safety Library](#) for access to customizable emergency plan templates and video tutorials.

## RISK MANAGEMENT:

# YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE

As much as we prepare and prevent, things can happen that are out of our control. Storms will roll in, kids will take tumbles, someone will forget to wear their shower shoes, and a staffer will accidentally back the golf cart into a dumpster.

Ensuring you have the proper and adequate insurance coverage for camp activities is essential for being prepared for the things you cannot anticipate. If your organization operates activities other than camps, review your policies and make sure they are appropriate for your camp operations.

At a minimum camp coverage should include<sup>1</sup>:

- General liability
- Property
- Health (for owners, staff, and campers)
- Worker compensation
- Vehicle liability
- Personal property

According to the American Camp Association claims trends data, claims that are on the rise include<sup>2</sup>:

- Property losses including personal property and those due to natural disasters and extreme weather
- Abuse claims both peer to peer and adult to child including sexual and physical abuse
- Auto claims
- Losses related to off road carts such as golf carts and ATVs
- Cyber claims, including hacking
- Challenge course losses included operator error, improper training and falls from trees while climbing
- Trips and falls in general, bites from bugs/insects and animals

**Players Health can assist you in ensuring you have the appropriate policies and coverages in place for your camp activities. You may request a contact at [www.playershealth.com/contact](http://www.playershealth.com/contact)**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hisawyer.com/for-business/blog/summer-camp-insurance-programs-companies-costs-and-types>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.acacamps.org/article/campline/camp-insurance-trends-where-have-we-been-where-are-we-going>

## DAILY CAMP ACTIVITIES QUICK TIP GUIDE

# DAY CAMPS

### FOR CAMP OPERATORS

#### PRIOR TO CAMP

Provide families with a detailed itinerary of a typical day for the campers.

#### MORNING DROP-OFF

Have at least two adults/counselors onsite to prevent 1 on 1 interactions with campers.

#### GROUP CHECK-INS

Have coaches/counselors do a roll call before the start of each session (morning, after lunch, or any time the group moves between coaches with longer breaks in between).

#### BATHROOMS

Have two staff members routinely monitor the bathrooms every hour.

Remind coaches and counselors to allow athletes to utilize the bathroom, but to radio the admin if the athlete is not back in 15 minutes.

#### HAZING/BULLYING/INCLUSION

Remind everyone that hazing and bullying are not tolerated. No athlete should feel unwelcome during your camp. Run inclusive, positive activities only.

#### LUNCH

Have coaches/counselors oversee the lunch breaks with their assigned group to ensure that all campers are safe and accounted for. Have coaches/counselors lead activities that foster inclusivity at this time.

#### PICK-UP

Provide detailed information to families about how the camper pick-up will operate.

Ensure there is a way to identify who the person picking up the camper is and ensure that there are specific individuals identified allowed to pick-up the camper.

#### EARLY PICK-UP

Provide a process for how a camper can be picked up early.

Ensure there is a way to identify who is allowed to pick-up the camper and ID the individual picking up the camper prior to release.

## DAILY CAMP ACTIVITIES QUICK TIP GUIDE

# OVERNIGHT CAMPS

### FOR CAMP OPERATORS

#### PRIOR TO DROP OFF

Provide families with a detailed itinerary of a typical day for the campers.

Provide all camp policies before campers arrive on site. Ensure policies are thorough regarding prohibited conduct, especially around bullying, hazing and harassment.

#### CHECK-IN/DROP-OFF

Specific directions should be provided to families on where to check in and how to get their camper situated with your camp's sleeping arrangements. Each unit should have at least two counselors available as families move their campers in to avoid being 1 on 1 with any campers.

#### ON-FIELD SESSIONS

Have coaches/counselors do a roll call before the start of each session (morning sessions, afternoon sessions) and games at night (and any time the group moves between coaches with longer breaks in between).

#### BATHROOMS

Prior to selecting sites for your overnight camps, ensure that the fields or courts have ample bathrooms nearby. Ensure coaches/counselors take note of campers that leave their sessions and are gone for more than 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, coaches/counselors should notify admins of the camper's absence. Bathrooms should always be monitored (outside) by one staff member and internally monitored by two staff members every hour.

#### DINING HALLS

The first few meals at camp may be hard for some campers. Have assigned tables by group, team, dorm floor, to ensure inclusivity and prevent campers from eating alone. Direct your staff to sit with their groups as much as possible and have them actively listen to and engage with conversation with campers. This will help the camper's experience and ensure that they have a good experience. During dining times, there should be designated staff (not assigned to specific groups/teams/tables) that overall monitor the activities in the dining hall.

#### DORMS

There should always be 2 counselors present on every floor any time campers can be in the dorms. A camper should never be alone in a dorm. Bathrooms should be monitored with 2 counselors every hour. Dorms should lock at the curfew time and room checks should occur at that time. Never assume a camper is in their room unless you have checked them into the dorm for the evening at curfew time.

## DAILY CAMP ACTIVITIES QUICK TIP GUIDE

# OVERNIGHT CAMPS

### FOR CAMP OPERATORS

#### CAMP STORE/CANTEEN

Lay out specific guidelines, times and expectations with respect to utilizing the camp store. Ensure the store is always staffed with at least 2 counselors.

#### WALKING WITHIN CAMPUS

Provide maps or signage for campers to ensure they get to all relevant sites safely. Institute a 2-camper rule so that no camper is walking alone. Campers must travel in groups of 2 or more. Lay out which areas of the campus are designated for camp, and enforce penalties for knowingly departing campus grounds without permission.

#### LAST DAY/PICK-UP

Provide detailed information to families about how the camper pick-up will operate. Ensure there is a way to identify who the person picking up the camper is and ensure that there are specific individuals identified allowed to pick-up the camper. During dorm move out, ensure there are at least 2 counselors on every floor to assist and to prevent campers from being 1 on 1 with your staff.



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