

Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs 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 Health and Safety Code; and Title 17, Subchapter 6, sections 30700-30753 of the California Code of Regulations.

1. In the definition of “organized camp” in Health and Safety Code section 18897, does “five days” mean five consecutive days?

Yes, this has been the interpretation by the California Department of Public Health for nearly 50 years. This is further reinforced by the Accreditation Standards for Camp Programs and Services, American Camping Association, as follows: “To be eligible for Accreditation, an operation must: ... 4. Operate (or host a group that operates) one or more sessions that is at least 5 consecutive days in length, if a resident camp; or, if a day camp, at least 5 consecutive days in length or 5 days in not more than 14 days. The day or resident camp session may be operated by a site owner or by a group using the site's facilities and services.”

2. Are “day camps” considered organized camps?

The term “day camp” is not defined by law. The criteria for identifying an organized camp are as follows:

- Camp is located on a permanent site.
- Camp has a well defined program of organized, supervised activities in which campers are required to participate.
- A qualified program director and a staff adequate to carry out the program are present at the camp.
- A major portion of daily program activities are outdoors.
- Establishments that rent or lease facilities on an individual, family, or group basis for the principal purpose of sporting or other unorganized recreational activities should not be considered an organized camp.
- Camps operated by organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Girl Scouts of the USA, Boy Scouts of America, Camp Fire USA, The Salvation Army, etc. are true prototypes of organized camps.
- Membership in one of the following organizations is indicative of status as an organized camp:
 - American Camp Association
 - Christian Camp and Conference Association
 - Western Association of Independent Camps
 - The Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education
 - Other similar camping associations

3. California Code of Regulations section 30700 refers to “section 1596.792” of the Health and Safety Code. Where can I find this?

Applicable portions of section 1596.792 are included in this booklet.

4. Under section 30702, how do you define “suitable means” for controlling excessive dust? Due to the significant rise in asthma, is a cover of bark chips acceptable, rather than just wetting to control dust?

“Suitable means” include methods that are appropriate for the purpose and the site.

5. Related to section 30703, who is responsible to submit the 30 day notice of intent to operate – the site operator or the user group/lessee?

The site operator is always responsible for submitting the 30-day notice of intent to operate to the local health officer. The only exception is when the user group or lessee has already submitted the notice. If the site operator chooses to delegate this responsibility to the user group or lessee, the site operator must ensure that the user group or lessee has submitted the notice.

6. Do building construction plans related to 30703(b) have to be approved by the local health agency?

The local health agency can delegate the responsibility to review and approve building and construction plans to the local building official. The local health agency should conduct a follow-up inspection after, or in conjunction with, the building final inspection.

7. In section 30704, what does "submit to the local health officer" mean related to the written operating procedures?

"Submit to the local health officer" is generally assumed to mean the health officer will view the procedures at the camp as part of the camp inspection, unless there has been a change in ownership or the health officer asks you to send them in advance.

8. For new, non-ACA-accredited camps, what is the requirement for section 30704?

If it is the camp's first year of operation and the camp is not ACA-accredited, the camp must provide written operating procedures as described in 30704(b)(1).

9. Explain or define "...the program of organized and supervised activities..." that require written operating procedures under section 30704(b)(1).

A camp's program typically includes organized and supervised activities that provide creative, recreational, and educational opportunities. The purpose of requiring written operating procedures for program activities is to ensure the safety and health of campers. Examples of program activities that require written operating procedures include activities that require supervision by a skilled person, such as archery, bicycles, all-terrain vehicles, go-karts, gymnastics, power tools, model rocketry, lacrosse, and shooting sports. Other examples are activities that involve camper use of fire or heat-producing equipment, such as building fires or using wood burning tools or kilns. Activities that require injury-protection equipment, such as helmets, goggles, or padding, also require written procedures.

10. Related to section 30710, what is required if you drill a new well?

A: You must meet current state and local ordinances.

11. What type of vessels, water coolers, etc., must be provided for drinking water under section 30711?

The water dispenser must be constructed of food grade materials and be easily cleaned. The spigot should be a gravity flow design to prevent contamination during use. Contact your local health department for more information. Building code requirements for organized camps have been incorporated in the California Building Code, which includes the requirements for minimum plumbing facilities, including drinking fountains.

12. In 30712, does the definition of "single service soap dispensers" include soap pumps?

Yes.

13. Related to section 30712, is hot water required for hand washing at non-flush toilets?

No.

14. Related to section 30721, are there any circumstances where head-to-head sleeping is allowed?

Yes, it is allowed if there is a physical barrier or a minimum space between heads of 18 inches. The minimum lateral space for beds is 36 inches.

15. Under section 30723, are existing overhead electrical lines required to meet General Order No. 95 (January 2006), Rules for Overhead Electrical Line Construction?

General Order No. 95 states:

12.3 Constructed Prior to This Order

The requirements of this Order, other than the safety factor requirements specified in Rule 12.2, do not apply to lines or portions of lines constructed or reconstructed prior to the effective date of this Order. In all other particulars, such lines or portions of lines shall to the requirements of the rules in effect at the time of their construction or reconstruction.

Lines or portions of lines constructed or reconstructed before July 1, 1942, may conform to and be maintained in accordance with the requirements of this Order, instead of the requirements in effect at the time of such construction or reconstruction.

16. Under section 30736, must the vector and pest control "plans" be written?

Yes. The plans for coping with excessive numbers of flies, mosquitoes, other insects, and rodents must be written, and either included in the documentation for ACA review and accreditation or included in the written description of operating procedures as required by section 30704(b)(1).

17. In section 30741, what does "submit" mean related to the plan for the use of a lake, stream, river, or the ocean? Does the camp need to send the plan to the local health officer or just have it available for inspection?

"Submit to the local health officer" is generally assumed to mean the health officer will view the plan at the camp as part of the camp inspection, unless the health officer asks you to send it in advance.

18. In section 30741(b)(2), does the requirement that water safety devices be "readily accessible" apply to areas away from camp? What about field trips away from the main camp area where water activities (snorkeling, etc.) will occur?

A lifeboat or equivalent water safety device must be readily accessible at any lake, stream, river or ocean used by the camp. A rescue flotation device such as a rescue buoy or rescue tube can be considered equivalent water safety devices. The requirement for safety devices also applies to field trips away from the camp where water activities will occur.

19. Under section 30741(c)(1), does the posting of signs apply only when the camp owns or leases the whole body of water or owns or leases waterfront property on a body of water—where swimming and bathing are permitted?

The posting of signs outlined in 30741 is required only when the water body is owned or wholly controlled by the camp.

20. Related to handling the health information required by section 30750, who must comply with HIPAA privacy rules?

Anyone with access to medical records must comply with HIPAA privacy rules.

21. Does the requirement in section 30750(a) to supply a health history apply to adult campers?

Yes, camps are required to ask for this health information. If the adult camper chooses not to provide the information, the operator must document that the information was requested and the camper declined to provide it. For example, the camper can check a box on a health form that states "I decline to provide this information," and sign the form.

22. Section 30750(d)(1) states that the health screening for staff must be conducted "prior to the arrival of campers." What does this mean?

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23. Are adult campers and family groups exempt from the requirement in section 30750(h) regarding medications that must be dispensed by the Health Supervisor or qualified staff?

Yes. However, camp staff who work with and live with campers are not exempt.

24. In section 30750(h)(3), does "locked container" for medication include a locked room or building?

Yes, a locked room or building meets the requirement. If medication requires refrigeration, it must be secured in a locked refrigerator, or in a locked container inside a refrigerator, or the refrigerator must be in a locked room or building. The refrigerator used for medication storage must be located in the infirmary or in a non-food area.

25. Under section 30751, who is responsible for reviewing the Director's criminal background check?

The organization hiring the Director must ensure that the Director has completed a voluntary disclosure statement as required by the regulations, and has obtained a satisfactory criminal history record check from one or more of the agencies listed in 30751(a). This information must be verified by the hiring organization. If the site operator is also the Director, the local health officer is responsible for reviewing the record check.

26. How do we verify the Director's experience under section 30751?

The organization hiring the Director must ensure that the Director has completed a voluntary disclosure statement as required by the regulations, and has obtained a satisfactory criminal history record check from one or more of the agencies listed in 30751(a). The hiring organization must verify the Director's experience and make the information available to any appropriate inspecting agency.

27. Related to 30751, what is acceptable proof of age for the Director and the counselors?

A valid driver's license, birth certificate, or passport.

28. Related to 30751, what does "satisfactory" criminal history record check mean?

"Satisfactory" means satisfactory to the camp. The individual must have no crimes against children in his/her record.

29. Related to 30751, what is acceptable proof that a person has been trained in first aid and CPR?

Acceptable proof is current certification documentation, such as a card, by a nationally recognized provider, such as the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or similar organization. A list of providers can be found on the following websites:

- Emergency Medical Services Authority:
<http://www.emsa.ca.gov/personnel/files/ccfacpr.pdf>
- American Camp Association:
<http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/firstaidcpr.php>

30. Who establishes the maximum occupancy for the entire camp?

The maximum occupancy for an organized camp is determined by the maximum occupancy established by the State Fire Marshal for fire safety, the maximum occupancy established by the local health agency for onsite sewage disposal system capacity, and local planning department requirements.

31. What is included in the local health agency's inspection form?

Each health agency may use a different form. Typically, an inspection form includes a checklist and comments area for each applicable section of the California Health and Safety Code, and Title 17 and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.