FAQ for Summer Camp Programs

If you have questions regarding any of the response below or would like to submit a question to the FAQ for response, please contact DHS.Summercamps@dhs.ri.gov.

I. Registration

*Updated

Q. What summer camp programs are required to register?

A. Summer camp programs, as defined below, intending to serve more than 50 children/youth cumulatively throughout the summer (June 29, 2020-August 31, 2020) must register at the DHS online portal at https://appengine.egov.com/apps/ri/campplan by June 26, 2020.

Summer day camps include and are defined in regulation 8.3 as:

- **Day Camps:** a program that: operates during school breaks for more than two (2) hours but fewer than twelve (12) hours each day; and does not include child day care services required to be licensed under R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-12.5-4.

- **Primitive Outpost Summer Camps:** a camp or other site at which the basic needs such as places of abode, water supply systems and permanent toilet and cooking facilities are not usually provided.

- **Residential Camps:** a camp which provides overnight facilities.

Q. Why are summer camps being required to register?

A. Given the implications and potential risks of COVID-19, the State has implemented health and safety regulations and precautions to protect the health and safety of children and ensure summer camp programs adhere to public health protections to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Registering with the State demonstrates a program’s commitment to compliance with these health and safety requirements.

*Updated

Q. How can I register my summer camp program?

A. Programs may register online at https://appengine.egov.com/apps/ri/campplan

Q. What is required to submit during the registration process?

A. To view a sample registration form which outlines the required fields and content to be submitted, visit https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Summer-camp-application-5.22.20.pdf

Q. Is there a cost to register?

A. There is no cost to register.

II. Health and Safety Regulations - General

Q. Where can I find the most current Health and Safety regulations?

A. The most current Health and Safety regulations for Summer Camps may be found: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/RIDOH-summer-camp-regulations.pdf.
Q. Will the health and safety regulations change over the summer? If so, how will I find out about the changes?
A. Any revisions to health and safety regulations will be posted on www.reopeningri.com. Regulations may be updated upon the release of new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or guidance from the State. It is recommended for programs to visit www.reopeningri.com frequently.

Q. I understand I need to develop a written plan for Safe Operations. Do I need to retain a copy onsite?
A. Yes, per 8.6-A,B, copies of the written plan for Safe Operations must be retained onsite and available for review. Regulation 8.7.B.4 notes, “shall post their COVID-19 approval forms and plans as described in 8.6 of this Part in a visible area.”

Q. Are staff and campers required to wear face coverings?
A. Under 8.2.A, programs commit to abiding by CDC guidance, which requires all adults and staff caring for children, as well as visitors, to wear a cloth face covering to prevent the spread of germs. Face coverings must not be used on children under the age of 2 years old or for whom wearing a mask may cause breathing or medical complications. Executive Order 20-30 states: “Face coverings shall not be required of those who are developmentally unable to comply” or “those whose health would be damaged” by wearing a face covering.

For children over the age of 2 years old who can tolerate wearing a face covering, use is advised but not required. Face coverings should not be worn while swimming or playing in the water.

Guidance on this topic may be found at: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Phase-II-summer-camp-guidance-05.21.20.pdf

Q. Can I accept children from out-of-state into the camp program?
A. Guidance provided on reopeningri.com notes the “14 day quarantine remains only for those returning to RI from an area still under stay at home restrictions.” Camps may choose to accept children coming from out of state if their state has lifted the stay at home restrictions, or the child coming from a state under stay at home restrictions and has quarantined in state for the required 14 days.

Q. Where can I find guidance on transportation?
A. Guidance on transportation is provided by the CDC (here) and on https://www.reopeningri.com/.

III. Health and Safety Regulations – Stable Groups and Social Distancing

Q. What is a stable group? Does this include staff?
A. A stable group is defined as “the same individuals, including children, staff, and counselors, being in the same group each day. a. Children shall not change from one group to another. b. Stable groups must occupy the same space each day.” (8.3.A.11). Staff are included in stable group. The maximum size of a stable group is 14 children with 1 staff (8.3.A.11).

Q. Is there a limit to how many stable groups I can have onsite at a time?
A. To determine a camp’s stable group capacity, they must consider their ability to socially distance stable groups (8.5.B) using either a minimum of 14 feet of space between stable groups or the use of distinct
classroom or divided space using barriers (8.4.B). The camp must also consider their staffing and ability to reassign staff in the case of staff absenteeism due to illness. Camps must always abide by capacity related to fire and health codes.

Q. Are there times when stable groups can mix?
A. 8.4.C states, “stable groups of children shall not mix with other stable groups”. Camps are advised to plan ahead related to staffing and space to ensure stable groups are not mixed throughout the camp sessions.

Q. Am I really expected to socially distance stable groups when we are in outdoor locations like a soccer field, forest trail, or swimming at a lake?
A. Providers should only operate activities where compliance to social distancing requirements can be maintained. This may mean one stable group plays on one end of a soccer field, while another group plays on the opposite end. On trails, start times may be staggered and unique rest locations may be identified for stable groups. Staggered use time may also apply to swimming in lakes or use of lake equipment (such as canoes) to allow for equipment sanitizing between groups. For additional guidance on communal use of pools, please visit: www.reopeningri.gov.

Q. Do camp staff need to maintain social distance if they are working with different stable groups? Does this apply only when children are onsite? For example, before camp begins each day, what does this look like for an all-staff camp meeting?
A. In following CDC guidance, adults working with unique stable groups are advised to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from one another at all times. This may mean staggered seating during all-staff meetings. Staff working together within a stable group are not required to maintain social distancing while working in the stable group.

Q. When staff do need to interact with different stable groups (example: a camp nurse or director), what precautions should they take?
A. Some camp staff may be closely interacting with other staff (e.g., a camp nurse or the program director floating between stable groups to ensure safety). This staff is advised to comply with CDC guidance, including wearing a face covering, washing hands during after interactions, and where possible, maintaining social distance. These additional staff, such as camp nurses or program directors, are not included in the stable group count. In situations where maintaining social distance is not feasible (e.g., a nurse attending to a child’s cut), the staff are advised to wear the proper personal protective equipment (or PPE) for this interaction and sanitize all surface areas impacted after use.

IV. Health and Safety Regulations – Administration

Q. I see according to 8.7.A, files must be maintained for each camper. Do these need to be kept onsite? If our program is part of a large multi-site program, can these files be retained at our main office?
A. These files must be maintained in a way that they are accessible to DHS review upon request. For large multi-site programs, this may mean materials are maintained at a central location. It is recommended that contact information for each child and their parents or guardians be accessible by each stable group, whether the group is onsite or offsite, in case of emergency.
Q. What other information do I need to keep in a camper’s file?
A. Per 8.7.A, at a minimum, a program must collect information on the “Name and home address(es) of the child; Name, phone number and address of each parent and caregiver”. It is recommended the program also collect information related to a child’s known allergies or medication use, emergency contact information, and the child’s primary care physician.

Q. Where can I find guidance on developing a drop-off and pick-up protocol?
A. Guidance for developing a drop-off and pick-up protocol may be found at: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Phase-II-summer-camp-guidance-05.21.20.pdf. Guidance is based on CDC recommendations.

Q. Where can I find a copy of the self-attestation form referenced in 8.7.B.2 (to document the screening of symptoms for COVID-19) that is “developed and approved by the DHS and RIDOH”?
A. Screening tools may be found on www.reopeningri.gov in English and Spanish.

Q. Does the health screening self-attestation form need to be completed every day for each child?
A. This screening form should be completed during drop-off each day the child is at camp.

Q. Regulation 8.7.C.1 discourages visitors from visiting a summer camp facility; can my program prohibit visitors?
A. While a program may choose to prohibit visitors to their camp program, it is essential to remember parents and guardians of children in care must always be able to access their children while in the camp's care. Additionally, a program may not be able to prohibit oversight agency staff, law enforcement officials, or other individuals who have a legal right to be on the property.

Q. How long should I retain the visitor log (documenting arrival and departure time, as described in 8.7.C.2)?
A. It is recommended the visitor log be retained for the duration of camp. This may be a beneficial tool in the case of contact tracing were an outbreak or exposure of COVID-19 to become known.

Q. Where can I find a copy of the visitor health self-attestation form described in 8.7.C.3?
A. Programs may use the same screening tool as youth, found on www.reopeningri.gov in English and Spanish.

Q. If a visitor is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 as described on the self-attestation form in 8.7.C.3, can I prohibit them from entering the camp?
A. Yes, a camp may exclude anyone (campers, staff, or visitors) with COVID-19 symptoms if they can't be explained by allergies or another non-infectious cause. For more guidance, please refer to: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Phase-II-summer-camp-guidance-05.21.20.pdf.

V. Health and Safety Regulations – Hygiene and Cleaning
Q. Can we use hand sanitizer as a substitute for handwashing if running water and soap are not accessible?
A. Hand sanitizer is noted in 8.7.E as an alternative to handwashing if soap and warm water are not feasible, such as on a hike or while playing in a field. Handwashing with soap and warm water is the preferred and
primary method of cleaning one’s hands. If hand sanitizer is to be used, it must have a minimum 60% alcohol content.

Q. Where can I find additional guidance on handwashing practices?
A. Handwashing guidance, as well as posters and communication materials for public use, are available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#HandHygiene.

Q. Where can I find additional guidance on how to clean and sanitize our program equipment and facilities?
A. The CDC provides guidance on cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting program space and equipment. Additional information may be found at: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Phase-II-summer-camp-guidance-05.21.20.pdf.

Q. What should be included in the “cleaning record” required in 8.7.F.1?
A. This documentation may include: the date and time of the last cleaning, name of the individual who performed the cleaning, and what was involved in the cleaning (e.g., wiped table tops with bleach solution).

Q. How long must I retain these cleaning records?
A. It is recommended cleaning records be retained for the duration of camp. This may be a beneficial tool for the program to ensure spaces have been properly cleaned in the case of an outbreak or known exposure of COVID-19.