

Maryland Department of Health
Center for Recreation and Community Environmental Health Services
Youth Camps

Swim Safety Plan Guidance

Purpose

The purpose of a written safety plan is to inform camp staff and volunteers what actions to follow to ensure each camper's safety while running swimming programs. The Specialized Activity must be conducted according to the safety plan.

Training

Staff and volunteers must receive training in the swim safety plan. Training must include an opportunity to discuss the plan and ask questions.

Knowledge and Conduct

Staff and volunteers must know and follow the swim safety plan procedures.

- Each staff member / volunteer must receive training on the swim safety plan and be allowed to ask questions regarding the plan.
- The camp must keep documentation that each staff member / volunteer received the training not more than 30 days before the activity.

Availability

The swim safety plan must be on file in the camp headquarters or office and a copy must be available to the camp staff / volunteers.

- Each staff member / volunteer must know where the swim safety plan is kept and / or be provided with their own copy of the plan.

Writing a Swim Safety Plan and Procedures

Provide the following descriptions and actions in your swim safety plan:

1. Describe the health and safety risks of the activity and how these risks are addressed.
2. Describe all safety rules, standards, and practices for the swim activity.
3. Describe any equipment that will be used, your safety procedures, and proper use of this equipment.
4. Describe your maintenance procedure and proper storage for swimming activity equipment to ensure it remains in good working condition.

5. Describe the required staff; staff qualifications; and each staff member's responsibility before, during, and after the swim activity. Minimum state requirements for staffing are below. The camp's requirements may be stricter.
 - a. Director (an individual who is 21 years old or older and has at least 24 weeks of supervisory experience) present at camp or at the activity site, when the activity is not at the camp.
 - b. A swimming instructor must be present when swim lessons are taking place.
 - c. An adult with CPR certification from a national organization on duty.
 - d. An adult with first aid certification from a national organization on duty.
 - e. Lifeguard, with lifeguard certifications appropriate for the swim site, is 1 lifeguard to 50 campers or fraction of 50 campers in the water. The lifeguard on duty may not be the swim instructor.
 - f. Staff, volunteer, counselor, or assistant counselor to camper ratio is 1 staff to 10 campers participating in the swim activity.
 - g. A watcher ratio (who is a staff or volunteer that is at least 16 years of age) is 1 watcher to each group of 25 campers in the water. (A watcher cannot also be the swim instructor or the on duty lifeguard. They must be positioned on the deck watching the swimmers in the water and not in the water themselves.)
 - h. Additional instructor, lifeguard, counselor, or assistant counselor should be on duty if any condition exists that compromises the ability of the staff member to perform their duty.
6. Provide a diagram showing the following information for the pool or natural bathing area. Minimum state requirements for staffing are below. The camp's requirements may be stricter.
 - a. Location and type of staff or volunteer. (Director must be present if activity is not on camp premises)
 - b. If in a natural bathing area, show hazards that are clearly marked.
 - c. If in a natural bathing area, show the swimming and diving areas that are clearly marked or roped off.
7. Describe how, at a nature bathing area, hazards will be assessed and eliminated or clearly marked prior to the activity.

8. Describe how, at a nature bathing area, swimmers will not be subjected to a dangerous condition such as a strong current, sharp drop-off, quicksand bottom, or rough surf.
9. Describe how, at a nature bathing area, swimmers will not be subjected to a hazardous debris, sharp stones, and sharp shells.
10. Describe how, at a nature bathing area, swimmers will not be subjected to dangerous aquatic life.
11. Describe how, at a nature bathing area, the swimming area is clearly marked or roped off so swimming and diving are not conducted in the same area as boating.
12. Describe the following when the swim activity is not on camp premises:
 - a. How the campers are transported to the activity.
 - b. Where and how the health and emergency information for campers, staff members, and volunteers will be kept.
 - c. How the group participating in the swim activity communicates to emergency services (911), parents, and main camp office in an emergency.
 - d. Who will be the contact person and what their phone number is.
13. Describe the procedure (who/how) for taking attendance before, during, and after the swim activity.
14. Describe how attendance of all campers is taken quickly during a swim activity in an emergency.
15. Describe how parents, staff, and campers are notified of the activity, prior to the swim activity.
16. Describe how the camp obtains written authorization from the child's parent for the camper to participate in the swim activity.
17. Describe the minimum requirements for campers to participate (i.e., age, skills, etc.).
18. Describe how the campers' swimming abilities are evaluated before participation in the swim activity.
 - a. Describe the swim test. This is not the facility's swim test to use the deep end of the pool, you must have a test for all swimmers. Keep a list of campers and swim ability. Do not rely on the facility to keep track of this information.
19. Describe how the campers are assigned to appropriate areas, equipment, and activities once the swim test is completed. (i.e. plastic colored wristband, colored swim caps, etc.)
20. Describe how campers are instructed in safety procedures and the use of any protective equipment.

21. Describe how, where, and when (not more than 30 days before the activity) staff members / volunteers will be trained on this swim safety plan.
22. Describe how the camp will document that each staff / volunteer has received and understand the swim safety plan training prior to camp and where that documentation will be kept.
23. Describe how the staff / volunteers will have access to the swim safety plan; where copies of the plan will be kept and / or copies provided to the staff / volunteers.