

# Camp Activities Need Camp Safety!

Camp activities help make the fun of the camping experience. Summer camping offers children a choice of activities. Some of these things may be new to your child. The Department of Health does not check the credentials or qualifications of the supervisors of activities.

**That means it's your responsibility as the parent or guardian** to make sure the activity's director, supervisor, or assistant has the training needed to make sure the children are safe during the camp's activities. Several camping organizations have manuals for each of their activities, which explain the safety measures and the proper training the supervisors need. These manuals list the safety guidelines for camp activities and what the level of experience is needed to supervise a certain activity.

One way to protect a camper from diseases that may be spread through the environment (by insects, mostly), is by using mosquito repellents. Wearing sunscreens with a SPF of 15 or 30 will block most of the harmful Ultraviolet rays. **But the most important way to stop the spread of germs is by washing hands after using the toilet.** To make sure hands are really clean, there must be a supply of soap and single-use paper towels or electric hand-dryers. Drying hands with a reusable towel only puts the germs back on clean hands.

## Check these sources for more information on safe camping procedures & regulations:

*Standards for Day and Resident Camps, 1993 Edition*  
American Camping Association  
5000 State Road 67 North  
Martinsville IN 46151-7902

The Girl Scouts of Florida  
Executive Director  
250 Pinewood Drive  
Tallahassee FL 32303

The Boy Scouts of America  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving TX 75015-2079

Florida Department of Health

DIVISION OF  
Environmental Health



DH 150-631, 10/01



What  
every parent  
needs to  
know



Florida Department of Health

**A** recreational camp can be as minimal as semi-primitive camps with no overnight facilities or as elaborate as establishments with cabins, recreation halls, and cafeterias. No matter what the type of camp, the State of Florida has rules and guidelines that protect children and other camp patrons from health hazards and unsafe facilities.



**Don't wait until you drop off your child to make sure the camp has current permits.**

### What Camps Should Have

County health department personnel inspect camp sites two times each year. They determine the number of occupants a camp is allowed to have. They also do inside inspections of all the buildings, structures, tents, trailers, and vehicles. These county health department employees check camp requirements such as those listed below. Facilities at each camp may not be the same, depending on the purpose of the camp or the group of campers at the time.

- Approved water supply
- Approved method of sewage treatment and disposal
- Minimum occupant space size in shelters
- Minimum heating requirements
- Minimum spacing requirements for beds

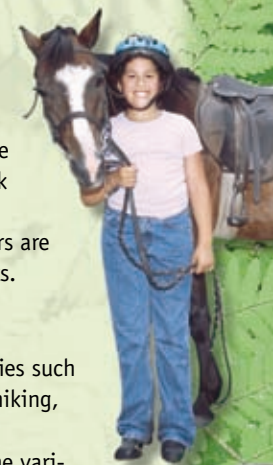
should tell the camp personnel and make sure they can handle your child's special situation.

### Day Camps

Unless county government has its own ordinance and agreement with the county health department, day camps are not routinely inspected or permitted. Ask about the supervision at day camps and make sure you feel good that the campers are protected from the heat, sun, and insects.

### Safety at Camp

Many camps offer lots of physical activities such as horseback riding, archery, canoeing, hiking, and swimming. Check with the camp director about safety requirements for the various activities conducted at the camp. Several organi-



Social organizations such as churches, fraternal, educational; and civic organizations like the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, Rotary, and ELKS operate most recreational camps. Usually, these camps have facilities for group camping, and are called **group camp sites**. They may have tent foundations

before it's time to send your children off to camp, get the basic facts about recreational camping facilities

(cement or wood bases), wooden or concrete block cabins, showers, bathrooms, and other buildings needed for shelter and sanitation.

**Semi-primitive wilderness camps** are camp sites that are not near roads but are open to the public. You get to these camps by hiking, horseback riding, or motorized trail vehicles. These camp sites do not have facilities for overnight stay like group camp sites do. Semi-primitive wilderness camps are inspected only if overnight facilities are added.

Group camp sites and semi-primitive wilderness camps are required by law to follow certain standards for their facilities. The Department of Health and its county health departments make sure these camps are following all the guidelines.

**In the next section, we will talk about the things parents should look for when checking out a camp.** If you are calling about a camp, ask the person when the last inspection of the facility was and find out when the camp permit expires.

- Minimum sanitary facilities for males and females (toilets, handwashing, showers, urinals)
- Minimum requirements for food storage, preparation, and serving
- Access to 911 emergency medical treatment and transport
  - Electrical hazards



When camps meet the minimum standards, the county health department issues a permit, which is valid for one year, beginning each October 1.

**If the camp has a swimming pool or bathing place,** the county health department inspects and permits the facility. Likewise, a camp with a kitchen serving meals on a routine basis is inspected and issued a sanitation certificate.

### Health Care at Camp

While every camp must have 911 emergency access, not all camps are required to have a nurse on staff. Some camps offer nursing or other health care services. If you are concerned about your child's potential medical health needs, or if your child has special medical needs, you

zations have safety standards for the most common activities of the camp.



### Parent Checklist

- Make sure the camp has the right permits.
- Give your child a sunscreen product and an insect repellent
- Ask to see the licenses, training certificates, and other credentials from camp staff.
- Ask the director who would respond to a 911 call in case of an emergency.
- Know what kind of camp your child is attending.

