



Emergency Preparedness Quick-Guide for Summer Camps

Is your summer camp prepared for an emergency or disaster? Quiz yourself with the checklist below.

A. Meet the local emergency (first) responders who will respond to an incident at your camp:

1. Get to know the chief and assistant chief of fire, police, and emergency medical services (EMS).
2. Find out how to contact them during and after business hours.
3. Ask how long it takes them to arrive for an emergency – and know what to do until they arrive.
4. Invite them and your insurance agent to join your hazard hunt and risk assessment team (below).

B. Identify camp hazards and conduct a risk assessment:

1. Form a risk assessment team – *camp director; first responders; insurance agent; key leaders of major camp functions such as the custodian, nurse/medical director, transportation coordinator, food service coordinator, others.*
2. Identify hazards that could impact the camp. Examples include, but aren't limited to:
 - Natural hazards – *severe thunderstorm; flood; landslide; severe heat/cold; wild fire; high wind/microburst event and falling debris; earthquake; wild animals/insects; etc.*
 - Manmade hazards – *nearby chemical spill or nuclear power plant accident; transportation accident (boat, plane, auto, etc.); dam breach; building fire, explosion or collapse; utility failure; etc.*
 - Public health hazards – *infectious diseases; contaminated food/water/air; infestations (ticks, lice); etc.*
 - Safety & security hazards – *unsafe areas (slippery steps, holes, old lumber with rusty nails); unsecured objects/furniture that could fall; unmarked wires/cords; potential missiles during high winds; unprotected propane tanks & valves; flying glass from windows; unlocked well heads and hazmat storage lockers; unsecured keys and locks; bomb threat; suspicious package; intruder or violent act; etc.*
3. Assess the risk of each hazard (see attached risk assessment template).

C. Eliminate or mitigate medium to high risks.

D. Form an emergency planning and response team (ERT):

1. Organize a team of cool-headed leaders that represent the major camp functions to help develop and implement the camp's emergency response and recovery plan. *Training is available through your county emergency manager or FEMA's free, on-line independent study program <http://training.fema.gov/IS>.*
2. Provide clear expectations and goals for the team.

E. Create an emergency response & recovery plan that is coordinated with first responders. Include:

1. Key contacts – *fire, police, EMS, hospital, poison control, public health, utility companies, insurance agent, emotional support services, local emergency manager, ERT members (home/cell), critical suppliers, etc.*
2. Roles and responsibilities – *Of ERT members and remaining staff before, during and after an incident.*

3. Response procedures for:

- Evacuation on-site or off-site – *Identify relocation sites, routes to those sites, and pre-arrange transportation.*
- Reverse Evacuation (getting people indoors) – *For a lightning storm, intruder, wild animal, etc.*
- Lockdown – *For security threats.*
- “Drop, cover, and hold” – *For protection from falling debris.*
- Children with access and functional needs
- Communications
 - For Parents – *How and what to communicate during and after an incident.*
 - For the Media – *Pre-identify & train primary and alternate spokesperson; when to contact the media..*
- Camper accounting and reunification of campers and families
- Securing the camp grounds

4. Lists of emergency kits, supplies, equipment & facilities

- Emergency food, water, and shelter - *or arrangements with local vendors or non-profit organizations.*
- First aid kits and fire extinguishers
- Camp Director’s emergency kit - *current roster of staff & campers; NOAA radio for weather updates; bull-horn/whistle; two-way radios for ERT members; pre-scripted messages to parents and media; keys to locks, etc.*
- Campers’ go-bag – *For off-site evacuation. Backpack with flashlight; hygiene kit; poncho; snack & water; whistle with lanyard; emergency information card; notebook/crayons/pen; comfort item (teddy bear/family photo)*

5. Designated staging areas for first responders, media (and curious neighbors), concerned parents, etc.

6. Diagrams and maps of the camp grounds and each building.

7. Locations of key utility shut-off valves and switches.

8. How to access keys to locks, doors and gates especially after regular business hours.

9. Recovery

- System to document and log all calls, events, and actions for claims and inquiries.
- Pre-identify and coordinate mental health emotional support resources for a traumatic event.
- Procedures for seriously injured/ill or untimely death of a staff member or camper (memorials, etc.)
- Conduct After Action Reviews after every real incident and exercise and capture the lessons learned.
- Integrate lessons learned into the plan when they occur.

F. Train the staff & practice the plan:

1. Train Camp staff on first aid, CPR, Automated External Defibrillators, and emergency kits and supplies.
2. Orient the Camp staff on the new plan.
3. Sit down and talk through how the plan would be used during different scenarios (“Table-Top Exercise”).
Involve the Camp’s Emergency Response Team and first responders. Exercise only one scenario at a time.
4. Conduct drills with the Camp staff and then with both staff and campers (“Functional Exercise”).

G. Update the risk assessment and the emergency response plan . . . as often as necessary, but not less than once per year before the start of the new camp season.

For more information:

- http://www.maine.gov/mema/about/mema_county.shtml
- <http://www.acacamps.org/members/knowledge/>
- <http://www.maineprepares.com/schools>
- <http://www.ready.gov/>
- <http://redcross.org>
- <http://www.savethechildren.org/>

