



# COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: Outdoor Youth Camps, Sports Programs, and Other Youth Programs

*Revised June 10, 2020*

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is committed to ensuring the safe operation of youth camps and programs during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency.

Per Governor Hogan's [Executive Order 20-05-27-01](#) and the MDH [Directive and Order Regarding Youth Camp Programs](#), outdoor day camps are allowed to open, effective May 29, 2020. Please find below a list of frequently asked questions and some answers to those questions.

Businesses should also see the FAQs available on the Business Express website, <https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus>, and the Back to Business website, <https://open.maryland.gov/backtobusiness/>, for more information. In particular, see Guidance and Best Practices for [Youth Camp](#) and [Youth Sports](#).

Additionally, if you have a specific question about outdoor day camps that is not answered below, or you cannot find the answer on any of the following resources, please visit [MD Youth Camp and Swimming Pool Questions](#).

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### **Which outdoor day camps are allowed to operate?**

Outdoor day camps are those that conduct all of their program activities outdoors, with the exception of drop off and pick up times, bathroom breaks, and sheltering from inclement weather. Outdoor day camps include sports camps, MDH-regulated youth camps, and other supervised outdoor activities for youth led by trained staff. Residential and overnight camp programs are not permitted at this time.

Please check with your local health department about reopening requirements or limitations in your jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of each youth camp and youth program to ensure they comply with all State and local requirements, including the [Maryland Department of Health Order Regarding Youth Camp Programs](#), before reopening.

### **Can indoor restrooms still be used?**

Yes, campers and staff may still use indoor restrooms. The facility should implement procedures (including floor markings and signage) to ensure that people do not congregate around the restrooms. Camp operators must disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day. For more information, see the [CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#).

### **What should we do if there is inclement weather (storms, heat index, air quality)?**

Outdoor day camps should have and follow a written plan for taking shelter indoors in inclement weather and ensure that the camp has adequate space to keep groups apart while sheltering indoors. To protect the health of adults and children, it is highly recommended that camps close during Code Red (high heat) and/or poor air quality days or when the weather is likely to preclude safe outdoor activities for most of the day.

### **Do campers need to wear face coverings?**

Children 9 and older, when they can be worn safely and consistently, should wear face coverings, with the following considerations:

- Level of physical activity
- Health issues – asthma, other conditions affecting breathing
- Outdoor temperature – coverings can contribute to overheating
- Ability to maintain distance

**IMPORTANT:** Caution should be used in advising the use of facial coverings during hot days or when children are engaged in vigorous activity. In these settings, facial coverings can increase the risks of heat exhaustion or hyperthermia (heat-related injuries), and may also not be advisable for children with asthma or other respiratory conditions. In general, facial coverings

will be most important when campers must be 6 feet or closer from each other for a prolonged (more than 15 minutes) period of time.

**How can we limit the number of staff working with a group while keeping staff safe, providing breaks, and providing managerial oversight?**

The group size restrictions are intended to prevent people from mixing together as much as is feasible while providing safe and appropriate staffing of camp activities. Staff should use face coverings, social distancing, and alternative methods of communicating in order to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19, especially from one group to another. Camp operators should keep careful records of group compositions and changes.

**How large can a group be? How close can they be to other groups? Will group size increase when the limit on large gatherings increases?**

Groups can be no more than 10 individuals, including staff. There can be more than one group on a field, so long as they are sufficiently separated to avoid mixing. If limits on gathering sizes in the public are changed, they do not affect the group size limits for outdoor day camps.

**Do campers need to complete a 14-day quarantine if they travel outside of the State before starting camp?**

There are no requirements for campers to quarantine or self-isolate, unless they have symptoms, are ill, or have had a close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, per [CDC guidelines](#).

**Is a doctor's note required to attend or work at an outdoor day camp?**

The Maryland Department of Health Order Regarding Youth Camp Programs requires youth camp programs to obtain clearance from the individual's primary care physician to attend or work at a youth camp for:

- children under age 5,
- staff above age 64, and
- individuals of any age with underlying medical conditions that are considered to be higher-risk for severe illness if they contract COVID-19.

Because the Department has discouraged unnecessary provider visits during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department recommends that parents and staff consider telephonic or electronic (email, fax, etc.) consultation with provider offices regarding camp attendance or work. Camps may accept copies of an electronic message as meeting the clearance requirements in the order for campers under age 5, staff above age 64, and individuals with underlying medical conditions.

## **What underlying medical conditions are considered to be higher risk for severe illness for COVID-19?**

People age 65 and older are considered to be at higher risk of severe illness. In addition, the following conditions are also thought to increase risk, especially if they are not well controlled:

- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised
  - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease

## **When will indoor or overnight (residential) camps be allowed to operate?**

At this time, the Department is unable to provide additional information about if or when indoor or residential camps will be permitted. The Department will continue to monitor the situation and provide guidance as necessary for the safe operation of camps.

## **Our camp has an outdoor pool - can it open, and under what guidance?**

If the pool is not otherwise required to close (such as if it is part of a fitness facility), it may open under the [Governor's Executive Order](#), the [MDH Directive and Order](#), and the available [guidance](#). Please see <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/Pages/AquaticFacility.aspx> for links to these resources, as well as a separate FAQ for the operation of outdoor swimming pools.

## **Do camps need to screen campers?**

Yes, complete the daily temperature check for temperatures over 100.4°F and symptom screening questions and log the information. Temperatures can be taken by staff or the parent or guardian of the camper while being monitored by staff.

Camp administrators may use examples of screening methods in CDC's supplemental [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) as a guide for screening campers and CDC's [General Business FAQs](#) for screening staff.

### **How can camps safely transport campers?**

Do not mix camper/staff groups, clean and disinfect the vehicle after each use. Provide as much physical distancing as possible and wear face coverings.

The CDC has additional guidance on [using transportation](#) and [cleaning and disinfecting vehicles](#).

### **If a camper becomes sick or has a confirmed case of COVID-19, what does the camp need to do?**

Any staff or child exposed to a person diagnosed with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 may not work or attend camp until they have completed self-quarantine following the [CDC guidelines](#). Persons who have recovered from COVID-19, must be cleared for release from isolation according to CDC guidelines.

If a group has a staff member or a child that is found to have a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 at the facility:

- The group shall quarantine following the CDC guidelines.
- Individuals may not work at or attend until completing self-quarantine and obtaining clearance from the individual's primary care physician.
- Follow exposure control plans in the camp's health program.
- Communicate with the local health department and parents.
- Based on consultation with the local health department, the entire facility may be closed based on level of contact and potential exposure.
- Wait 24 hours, then complete extra cleaning/disinfection of the facility, all areas not just high touch surfaces, and wait at least five (5) days to bring in the next group.

If a staff member or a child develops symptoms of COVID-19 during camp, safely isolate the person and place a mask or face covering. Contact the youth camp's health supervisor and the parent/guardian and arrange for safe transportation to a healthcare facility or home.

### **Can campers share equipment, including sports equipment like baseballs and basketballs?**

The best practice is to provide individual equipment for each participant. If equipment is shared, reinforce healthy hygiene and wash hands immediately after using equipment. Don't use equipment that cannot be easily disinfected between uses.

Frequently clean and disinfect equipment and gear, and all high-touch surfaces per CDC guidelines.

**Should camps administer medication to campers? If so, how can they do so safely?**

The Governor's Executive Order and the MDH Directive and Order do not change the requirements for administration of medications in a camp setting.

MDH-licensed youth camps should follow standards for medication administration in the youth camp regulations, [COMAR 10.16.07](#), including procedures if medication cannot be administered at home.

## Resources

- Maryland Department of Health directives regarding outdoor day camps:  
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/2020.05.27.02%20-%20MDH%20Order%20-%20Youth%20Camps.pdf>
- Guidance and best practices for youth camps:  
<https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/BusinessResource/Youth-Camps-COVID-19-Directives.pdf>
- Guidance and best practices for youth sports:  
<https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/BusinessResource/Youth-Sports-COVID-19-Best-Practices.pdf>
- Guidance from CDC for businesses: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- Guidance from WHO for businesses:  
<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>
- Additional information for businesses on planning for and responding to coronavirus disease is available on Maryland's Business Express website:  
<https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus>
- Maryland Department of Health Youth Camps website:  
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/Pages/YCCertification.aspx>