

Maryland Department of Health
Center for Healthy Homes and Community Services
Youth Camps

Swim Safety Plan

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.

- Describe the training: what/where/when. Document that each staff/volunteer was trained before camp and knows the safety plan.

Availability

A copy of the swim safety plan must be available to the camp staff. The swim safety plan must be on file in the headquarters or office of the camp.

- Where are copies of the safety plan kept?
- Do staff/volunteers receive a copy?

Writing a Swim Safety Plan and Procedures:

Provide the following:

1. What are the health and safety risks of the activity?
2. What minimum staff qualifications are required for the activity?
3. Describe staff responsibilities for each staff position, from CIT to Director. For trips and when activity is not on camp premises, a director (an individual who is 21 years old or older and has at least 24 weeks of supervisory experience) must accompany the activity.

Describe your procedures or the actions you want staff to take for each question or item:

4. Prior to swimming, how are parents, staff, and campers notified of the activity?
5. How does the camp obtain written authorization from the child's parent for the camper to participate in swimming?

6. What are the minimum requirements for campers to participate? (ie. age, skills, etc.)
7. What is your minimum staff to camper ratio? (State requirement is 1 staff to 10 campers; yours may be stricter.)
8. Describe all safety rules, standards, and practices.
9. Describe the equipment to be used, your maintenance schedule and storage procedures for the equipment.
10. Describe your safety procedures and the proper use of the equipment.
11. Describe how campers are instructed in safety procedures and the use of any protective equipment.
12. When activity is not on camp premises:
 - a. Where and how is health and emergency information for campers, staff members, and volunteers kept?
 - b. How does the group participating in swimming communicate to emergency services (911), parents and main camp office in an emergency?
 - c. Who is the contact person for the swimming activity? What is their phone number?
 - d. Describe procedures (who/how/when) for taking attendance for the swimming.
13. How do you evaluate a camper's swimming ability before a camper participates in swimming?
 - 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.
14. How do you identify which campers may use which areas of the pool once the swim test is completed? (Examples include plastic colored wristband, colored swim caps, etc)
 - a. Campers with weak swim skills must stay where the water is not deeper than their chest.
 - b. Allow only the campers with strong swim skills to use the area of the pool that is deeper than their chest.

15. How do you quickly account for all campers during the swimming activity?
16. What is your minimum lifeguard to swimmer ratio? (State requirements are 1 lifeguard on duty per 50 swimmers) Note: Lifeguard certification must be appropriate to the swimming site. Certification for pool lifeguards is different from certification for natural bathing area lifeguards. Be sure your staff have the appropriate certification for your swimming site.
17. What is your minimum watcher to swimmer ratio? (State requirements are 1 watcher on duty per 25 swimmers)
18. Using a diagram of the pool or natural bathing area, describe where the lifeguards and watchers are positioned.
19. Describe who on the camp staff will attend to other camper needs while at the swimming activity, such as, taking campers for bathroom breaks, supervising campers who are not in the water, etc. Watchers CANNOT have any other responsibilities while on duty as the 'watcher'.