

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

Watercraft 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 watercraft programs. The Specialized Activity must be conducted according to the safety plan.

Training

Staff and volunteers must receive training in the watercraft 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 watercraft 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 watercraft safety plan must be available to the camp staff. The watercraft 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 Watercraft 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 the watercraft, 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 the watercraft activity?
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 the watercraft activity communicate to emergency services (911), parents and main camp office in an emergency?
 - c. Who is the contact person for the watercraft activity? What is their phone number?
 - d. Describe procedures (who/how/when) for taking attendance for the watercraft.
13. How do you evaluate a camper's swimming ability before a camper participates in the watercraft activity?
 - a. Describe the watercraft test. This is not the facility's swim test to use the deep end of the pool, you must have a test for all participants. Keep a list of campers and swimming ability. Do not rely on the facility to keep track of this information.
14. How do you assign campers to appropriate areas, equipment, and activities once the swim test is completed?
15. Describe your maintenance procedures for watercraft activity equipment to ensure it is in good working condition.

16. How do you quickly account for all campers during the watercraft activity?
17. Describe the type of watercraft used in each watercraft activity, the number and age of the occupants and the types of U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices used.
18. For water skiing, state that all water skiers must wear a personal floatation device approved by the U.S. Coast Guard for that particular activity.
19. For a watercraft towing a water skier, state that the watercraft with have an observer on board in addition to the driver.
20. State that all occupants of a watercraft wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device.
21. Describe the training provided to individuals using a watercraft related to:
 - a. Boarding;
 - b. Debarking;
 - c. Safety procedures for the craft.
22. Except for river trips, state that the instructor is within sight and hearing of the watercraft activity.
23. For river trips, describe the instructor's supervision if the instructor is not within sight and hearing of the watercraft activity.
24. How many individuals holding certification in first aid and CPR are present at each watercraft activity? (The minimum State requirement is 1 individual for each watercraft activity.)
25. How many individuals holding either lifeguard or water rescue certification appropriate for the watercraft site are present at each watercraft activity? (The minimum State requirement is 1 lifeguard or water rescuer for each watercraft activity.)
26. Using a diagram of the site, describe where the instructor, lifeguard(s)/water safety rescuer(s) and staff members are positioned.