



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Guidelines for Summer Day Camps and Overnight Camps

With the strategic, measured reopening of businesses and recreational activities across the State, organizations will be making decisions about the reopening of summer camps and youth programs. The top priority should be preserving and protecting the health and safety of campers, staff members and communities. This guidance is just that—guidelines. These guidelines have been compiled by the Mississippi State Department of Health as a helpful resource to help protect campers, staff members, and communities, and to slow the spread of COVID-19. When making the decision to open summer day camps and overnight camps, organizations should make reasonable, good-faith efforts to comply with these guidelines, as well as other guidelines and regulations issued by the Mississippi State Department of Health and the CDC to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additional guidance may be found in the American Camp Association Field Guide (<https://acacamps.app.box.com/s/7gkh9buu3ntssx2v38gajg4z94631lag>) and at the references listed at the end of these Guidelines.

Preparation

- Every Camp must have a dedicated **Safety Officer**. The Safety Officer will be responsible for ensuring the adequacy and execution of the camp's safety plans.
- Consider limiting the number of campers and staff members to ensure compliance with applicable limitations on group gatherings and to promote social distancing.
- Designate a qualified person or team as the primary contact for campers, parents/guardians and staff members who can address questions and concerns related to COVID-19 medical matters as well as explain policies and procedures the camp has implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Maintain an appropriate inventory and supply chain for cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves.
- Provide educational material to the staff members regarding COVID-19, policies developed by the administration to decrease spread of infection, and their roles and responsibilities.
- Prepare and distribute policy guidelines to parents prior to camp to explain the guidelines for campers during their time at camp.
- Prepare signage and posters about handwashing, cough etiquette, symptoms of COVID-19, social distancing, etc. (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>).
- Sanitize and disinfect all buildings and equipment prior to opening the camp.
- Consult with medical and healthcare professionals to help develop best practices to protect the health of campers, staff members and the community.

- Ensure the flow of fresh air, as much as practical, in all buildings. Ensure that ventilation systems are operating properly. Regular and frequent cleaning of HVAC intakes and returns is recommended. If electric fans are used, ensure placement to prevent them from blowing from one person directly onto another person. For more information on general ventilation and HVAC systems, please refer to <https://acacamps.app.box.com/s/7gkh9buu3ntssx2v38gajg4z94631lag>.
- Camp administration must establish a plan for medical assessment and referral for COVID-19.
- Notify local emergency management leaders and healthcare professionals of the planned operations schedule. Be aware of local or state policies related to group gatherings.
- Stay informed of the most updated recommendations and safety protocols from the Mississippi State Department of Health and CDC for handling COVID-19 and reevaluate your procedures as the COVID-19 situation evolves in your community.

Prescreening

- Identify campers or staff members who might be at higher risk for complications related to COVID-19 and encourage them to take additional precautionary measures in consultation with their physician.
- Encourage campers and staff members to be tested for COVID-19 in the days immediately prior to the camp beginning.
- Prior to the start of day camps, pre-screen all campers and staff members for signs of illness within the previous 2 weeks including:
 - fever over 100.0 degrees F,
 - cough, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat,
 - loss of taste or smell and
 - diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Prescreen all campers for a history of COVID-19 infection (or infection in a family member). Anyone with a history of COVID-19 cannot be admitted until released from Isolation Orders by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- A camper or staff member with known exposure to COVID-19 should not be permitted to attend camp until 14 days have elapsed since last exposure or release from Quarantine Orders by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- Document any international travel in the previous two weeks and do not permit a camper to attend until two weeks have elapsed since such international travel.

Upon Arrival

- Stagger arrival and departure times for campers, as feasible.
- Repeat daily screening of all campers and staff members during check-in for signs of illness within the previous 2 weeks including:
 - fever over 100.0 degrees F,
 - cough, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat,
 - loss of taste or smell and
 - diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Consider temperature screening of all campers and staff members with a no-touch thermometer upon arrival and once or twice a day during the camp. Temperature should not exceed 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If camper or staff member is flagged during the pre-screening process, the administration should follow their communicable disease plan to decide about admittance.

Ongoing Screening/Response and Management

- If at any time, either during initial screening or during the camp time, a camper or staff member is suspected to have COVID-19, place a face mask on them and isolate them at least 6 feet away from others pending further assessment.
- Health staff members handling possible COVID-19 patients should wear an N95 face mask, face shield or other eye protection, and disposable gloves.
- Camp administration must have a plan for medical assessment and referral for COVID-19.
- The family should be notified if their child develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and plans made to remove the child from camp as soon as possible.
- Staff members will isolate themselves and notify the administration promptly if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- Staff members should immediately notify the Mississippi State Department of Health of any suspected COVID-19 campers or employees.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

- During camp orientation train and encourage proper handwashing (soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds):
 - Before eating
 - Upon entering your cabin
 - After touching frequently touched surfaces such as railing and doorknobs
 - After using the restroom
 - After using common items such as sports equipment, computer keyboards, craft supplies, etc.
 - After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol readily available in high traffic areas such as cabins, activity areas, dining room, etc., and encourage its use.
- Encourage the use of masks or cloth face coverings covering the nose and mouth:
 - Masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.
 - Masks (or cloth face coverings) should be used by staff members and campers in situations where proper social distancing cannot be maintained.
 - Teach and reinforce the use of masks. Face coverings should be worn by staff members and campers as feasible and are **most** essential in times when physical distancing (6 feet) is difficult. Information should be provided to staff members and campers on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
- Instruct campers on the need to maintain physical distancing:
 - Attempt to increase spacing between individuals and groups.
 - Develop small groups (cohorts) that stay together while limiting mixing among cohorts as much as possible throughout the day, every day. The maximum group size will be different depending on the type of camp (day/overnight), duration of camp session, the ability of the camp to test staff members and campers for COVID-19 prior to arrival, and the camp's ability to isolate campers and staff members from the wider community. It is recommended that camps follow applicable state and local guidelines on group gatherings.

- Avoid group events or meetings where social distancing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained. Limit group size to 20 or less, when groups must meet in close proximity.
- Group singing is strongly discouraged.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks, to ensure staff members and campers remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- Campers and staff members should be encouraged to remain on the premises for the duration of the camp session. When campers or staff members leave the camp, screening and temperature checks should be conducted prior to reentry.
- It is recommended that organized field trips be cancelled.
- Housing
 - Keep the same staff members assigned to a cabin and cohort throughout the program.
 - Do not rotate campers and staff members between cabins.
 - Limit cabin access to only individuals that reside in that cabin.
 - Avoid sharing common items such as cups and bedding with cabinmates.
 - Keep personal belongings separate from other campers' belongings. Keep toiletries in a tote or zip-lock bag labeled with their name.
 - Cabins, including bathrooms and bedding, should be cleaned on a frequent and regular schedule.
 - Create a staggered bathing schedule to limit the number of campers using the bathing facilities at one time.
 - If possible, create a least 6 feet of separation between beds. If 6 feet of separation is not possible, position campers heat-to-toe to maximize distance between heads. Additionally, if 6 feet of separation between beds is not possible, create physical barriers using curtains or sheets.
 - Hand sanitizer should be made available in all cabins.
 - Increase ventilation and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
- Outdoor recreational activities should be conducted in accordance with the limitations in Paragraph I(h) and its subparts of Executive Order 1492.
- Indoor recreational activities should be conducted in accordance with the limitations in Paragraph I(i) and its subparts of Executive Order 1492.
- Water activities- The COVID-19 virus is not waterborne nor is there evidence to indicate its spread through pools. However,
 - Stagger activities by cohorts.
 - Limit the amount of shared supplies such as pool noodles, floats, etc.
 - At least daily and preferably between groups, clean and disinfect surfaces around the pool area that are touched frequently such as railings.
 - Life jackets should be cleaned with hot soapy water after use.
- Food service
 - Food services shall comply with the limitation placed on in-house dining pursuant to Paragraph I(a) and its subparts of Executive Order 1478.
 - Stock disposable face masks, gloves and cleaning supplies and train staff members on their use.
 - Use disposable food service items (utensils, dishes) as feasible. Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed appropriately.

- Self-service food bars, food stations and buffets should be prohibited.
- Encourage physical distancing through such measures as staggered mealtimes, making outdoor eating spaces available and spreading out tables to decrease occupancy density to about 50% of usual.
- Continue to eat in cohorts as with other activities.
- Cleaning and disinfection
 - Establish enhanced cleaning protocols that follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfection of common areas, restrooms, etc.
 - Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces in cabins, bathrooms, playgrounds, and activity areas at least daily and between use by different cohort groups.
 - Sanitize shared resources and equipment after each use.

COVID-19 Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

[Children](#) have similar symptoms to adults and generally have mild illness.

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

For more information and guidance, please refer to the CDC guidelines and references listed below.

- [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
- [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- [Back to Work Safely](#)
- [Reopening America-CDC](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting your Facility](#)
- [EPA Disinfectants](#)
- [CDC Guiding Principles for Summer Camps](#)

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