



## American Camp Association Accreditation

For fifty years the American Camp Association (ACA) accreditation process has grown to keep pace with changes in the camp industry, expectations of the public, and the challenges of operating a business in today's highly regulated society.

### The ACA-Accreditation Program:

- Educates camp owners and directors in the administration of key aspects of camp operation, program quality and the health and safety of campers and staff.
- Establishes guidelines for needed policies, procedures and practices for which the camp is responsible for ongoing implementation.
- Assists the public in selecting camps that meet industry-accepted and governmental-recognized standards. ACA's Find a Camp database provides the public with many ways to find the ideal ACA-accredited camp.

### **What Areas Are Covered?**

American Camp Association standards help you with every aspect of your camp management and operation:

- Site fire protection, food service, sleeping quarters, bathing and toilet facilities.
- Transportation procedures concerning drivers, vehicles and traffic onsite.
- Health and wellness staff qualifications, facilities requirements, record keeping, storage distribution of medicines, contact information, and health forms.
- Operational Management safety regulations, emergency communications systems, procedures for intruders, and personal property regulations.
- Human Resources staff qualifications, training, supervision ratios, and procedures.
- Program Activities aquatics, adventure/challenge, trips, horseback riding, and staff qualifications for special programs.

There are certain mandatory standards that include requirements for emergency exits, first aid, aquatic-certified personnel, storage and use of flammables and firearms, emergency transportation, and obtaining appropriate health information.

### **Steps to Becoming ACA-Accredited**

1. Apply for accreditation by completing an accreditation application and remitting required fees. Camp fees, paid annually, vary among ACA local offices and provide not only accreditation services but also benefits for the camps such as public awareness and legislative monitoring.
2. Attend a Standards Course, offered by local ACA sections, which explains the accreditation process and describes the requirements of the standards.
3. Review and evaluate each area of camp operation according to the guidelines in the standards. (Camps will receive a discounted copy of the *American Camp Association's Accreditation Process Guide*.)
4. Prepare materials and written documentation required by the standards.
5. Participate in the visit by a team of ACA-trained visitors who will spend a day observing the camp and working with the director in determining compliance with the standards. The visit must occur when the camp is in full operation.
6. Annually sign a statement of compliance—the camp administrator's pledge to operate ethically, legally, and in compliance with ACA standards. (A statement of compliance will be sent upon application.)

(Source: American Camp Association Website)