



# BLUEPRINT FOR OPENING OVERNIGHT SUMMER CAMPS

## INTRODUCTION

For many families, overnight summer camps are an important part of the critical childcare model that allows parents to work. Time spent outdoors, peer friendships, and relationships with camp leaders are instrumental in children's psycho-social development and recreational activities are an important part of mental and physical wellbeing.

The BC Camps Association (BCCA) is providing this blueprint for opening overnight summer camps in response to the BC Government and the Provincial Health Officer's request for each sector of the economy to establish best practice standards for resuming business operations. This is the first piece of a framework to provide overnight camps with a guide to opening this summer while protecting children and staff.

## SUMMER CAMP OVERVIEW

- Overnight summer camps range between 50-500 campers at a time for programs ranging in length from a few days to 2 or more weeks. BC camps recognize that adjustments to overall camp sizes may be required.
- Campers are separated into smaller groups for activities, sleeping, and meals.
- Campers are effectively in a "bubble" at camp and spend the majority of time outdoors.
- The majority of camp staff are under 25 years old and campers range in age from 7 to 18. Both groups are at low risk for COVID-19.
- Many summer camps also offer wilderness out-tripping programs and overnight school outdoor education programs.

## HEALTH & SAFETY OF STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS

The *BC COVID-19 Go-Forward Management Strategy* states that preliminary data indicates that, compared to adults, children are less likely to transmit COVID-19 and they are very likely to experience mild symptoms if they get it.

- Routine daily screening of all staff and participants
- Explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 with coughing or sneezing to not attend camp.
- Instructions to parents and staff for pre-camp health screening.
- Staff and participants at higher risk of experiencing severe illness should not take part in camp activities.
- Routine and frequent cleaning of "high touch" areas and follow industry recommendations for cleaning of outdoor sports equipment.

- Implement a range of options to reduce transmission, including: smaller group sizes; strong focus in the daily routine on frequent hand washing and other hygiene practices; no high contact activities; limit non-essential travel and wearing of non-medical masks when travelling in camp vehicles.
- Camp specific plans, policies, and procedures for managing and reporting an outbreak if it occurs during camp or in the days after a camper returns home.
- Written signage for campers and training plans for staff detailing hygiene and physical distancing policies

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The BCCA will develop plans for review by the PHO/BCCDC and WorkSafe BC to guide camps in implementing changes to achieve physical distancing requirements.

- Accommodation: appropriate physical distancing measures may require lower density rates and overall fewer campers per week.
- Camp Food Services: buffets will be replaced by staff serving meals and dining hall capacities will be reduced by staggered meal times and arranging tables to observe physical distancing requirements.
- The majority of time at camp is spent outdoors where there is a reduced risk of transmission and low contact activities are encouraged. Identify high contact activities that should not take place during the pandemic.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Summer camps provide a range of services to campers including activities, food and beverages, accommodation, and transportation. Sector-wide best practices addressing operations within each of these areas will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of related industries.

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| ● BC Restaurant and Food Services Association | ● WorkSafe BC               |
| ● BC Hotel Association                        | ● Resource sector standards |
| ● BC Recreation and Parks Association         | ● Outdoor industry sector   |
|   | ● BC Public & ISABC Schools |

## CONCLUSION

Camps need time to get COVID-19 ready and families need to know if summer camps will provide critical childcare. The BCCA urgently requests a clear answer as to whether overnight summer camps can open this summer. If not, please work with us to establish criteria for overnight school outdoor programs in September.

Sincerely,



Paul Chatterton  
Accreditation Chair, BCCA