

Legal Considerations for a Summer Camp

Unfortunately, the fun, carefree times of summer camp can be overshadowed by the legal implications and liabilities of an unprepared and untrained camp volunteers. The following are the top six camp general liability losses based on frequency of occurrence. With appropriate supervision and training, ALL of these are preventable.

1. Falls, Trips and Slips
2. Athletics and Sports
3. Horseplay and Fighting
4. Abuse (physical, sexual, psychological)
5. Medical, Food, or Illness
6. Aquatics

Things that would take us out of camp and into the courtroom are:

- Negligence – failure to exercise the care toward others which a reasonable and prudent person would do in the circumstances or, acting which, such a reasonable person would not.
- No documentation, poor documentation, or incomplete records (cabin assignments, health records, injuries, complaints, incidents, etc.).
- Not having written acceptable policies, procedures or standards; or having them but not adhering to them.
- Failing to train, or improper training for volunteers; allowing untrained volunteers to supervise. Documentation of training should be kept in a file.
- Failure to plan for emergencies, not having a crisis management plan, not training volunteers to implement. Know emergency protocols and procedures.
- Improper or lack of supervision (ratios, not training volunteers, inappropriate ages supervising). Supervision is the number one key to reducing behaviors, which lead or contribute to preventable accidents. Bottom line is who is keeping the children and volunteers safe.
- With every decision you make, you had better ask yourself “What would a reasonable and prudent person do?”