

 **Location:** Virtual TEAMS Meeting
 **Date:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025
 **Time:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Facilitators:

Chairperson/Associate Executive Director Camp Hazen: Katherine Davies, YMCA
Licensing Director: Elizabeth Proietti, OEC
Supervising Nurse Consultant: Keisha Hewitt, OEC
Health Program Associate: Jerry Mandigo, OEC
License & Applications Supervisor: Gary Waters, OEC
Communications & Legislative Program Manager: Maggie Adair, OEC
Licensing & Youth Camp Processing Technician: MaryEllen Wallace, OEC

Members:

Alan Pender – CT Camping Association
Elizabeth Mayne – CT Recreation & Parks Association
Justin Hubeny - YMCA
Robert Melillo – Day Camp (Unsure if in attendance)
Owen Langbart – Resident Camp
Jeromy Nelson – Camp Mattatuck
Chris McNaboe – Resident Camp
Michael Moylan – Sports Camp
David Farrell – Independent School Camp
Jennifer Zuccaro – University that hosts or conducts a summer camp
Heather Logee – Camp Director Windham – Tolland 4-H Camp

Public Attendees:

Michael Rell – Lobbyist, International Government Strategies, LLC
Donna Bastrzycki – Director, Suffield Parks and Recreation
Mark Simmons – Director, Preston Parks and Recreation
John Cattelan -Vice President of Government Relations, Connecticut/Rhode Island Alliance of YMCA's

- I. **Welcome presented by Council Chairperson Kath Davies, OEC & Introductions of all facilitators, members, and public attendees**
- II. **Legislative update and possible regulatory changes, presented by Liz Proietti, OEC Director of Licensing, with commentary by Maggie Adair, OEC Communications & Legislative Program Manager**

- Proposed changes include clarification of “youth camp”, “day camp”, and “resident camp”. The definition of “youth camp” does not include the language currently used in the definitions of “day camps” or “resident camps”, which reads “on any parcel or parcels of land on which there are located dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate five or more children who are at least three years of age and under sixteen years of age,”. Removing it from the definitions of resident camp and day camp and inserting similar language in the definition of “youth camp” more clearly defines the overall meaning of “youth camp”.
- Non-transferability language added to clarify that licenses are only operable under one operator. The addition of the non-transferability language brings the youth camp statute into alignment with the statutes and regulations governing all other licenses issued by the OEC.
- Language has been added to make clear that in addition to a renewal fee, an application must be submitted to renew a camp license.
- OEC recommended regulatory changes include clarifying when a minor may be employed/permitted to work to be consistent with mandates of PA 23-183 pertaining to employment of minors as youth camp staff members and lifeguards.
- OEC is also proposing an update to regulations concerning the dispensing and storage of food and beverages to include proper refrigeration of no more than forty-one degrees Fahrenheit for perishable foods in all youth camps and on field trips. These proposed changes align with current DPH regulations relative to food safety.
- The OEC is also proposing to update regulations surrounding the requirement of an isolation bathroom for residential youth camps only, not allowing dangerous weapons, and clarity regarding the Director of First Aid being separate from the Director of the Youth Camp. Note:

Regarding the suggested regulation changes for dangerous weapons, the OEC is mindful of camps who use weapons as a part of camp activities, i.e.) Scout Camp pistol/shotgun/rifle training.

- Conversation Re: Proper Refrigeration: Per several Council members, full kitchen inspections have been relinquished to the town over the last 10 years. Keisha Hewitt, Supervising Nurse Consultant, OEC, offered insight to clarify this is not considered a kitchen inspection and that all OEC inspections have included ensuring proper refrigeration of food by the use of a thermometer. The new regulation would simply change the temperate requirement to more closely align with DPH regulations.
- Conversation Re: Weapons: Request for an example of a weapon at a youth camp, Keisha Hewitt, Supervising Nurse Consultant, OEC, provided the example of some wilderness camps keeping a weapon on site to guard against bears and other wild animals that could pose a danger to campers.

III. Youth Camp Application Update, New Payment Portal & Background Check Invites, presented by Gary Waters, OEC License & Applications Supervisor

- A new section has been added to address business entity attestation and a follow-up workers compensation insurance question. If there is no workers compensation insurance, you must answer the follow-up question as to why your camp does not have workers compensation insurance.
- Clarification for Sports Camps: There is a new section requesting field names and locations to ensure inspectors are able to find the various locations campers and staff will be during inspections.
- A line was added to include the Director of First Aid.
- Update on fillable application: the goal is to have a fillable PDF version of the Youth Camp application available by the start of spring
- Update to online payment portal: A test was conducted and successful over the weekend, you may now pay camp licensing renewal fees online using a credit card or echeck

- **Renewal Letters:** Will be mailed by the end of the week (Friday, February 7, 2025) which will have a PIN and website link so that payments can be made online. A blast email will also be sent out by the end of this week/early next week
- **Conversation Re: Director of First Aid:** Council members requesting clarification regarding how to fill out the Director of First Aid section. Questions surrounding needing to list all nurses who will be at camp the entire season or if it is still permissible to submit Change Forms as the nurses rotate each week. Keisha Hewitt, OEC Supervising Nurse Consultant, explained that we will continue to accept Change Forms as needed throughout the season, which are available via JOT form that is sent directly to the Youth Camp email inbox. It is also acceptable to list all potential Directors of First Aid on the initial application, specifying which nurse will be on site during which session/week. A reminder was given that ALL staff need to be on the BCIS roster. Gary Waters, OEC Licensing Supervisor, recommended adding a secondary BCIS administrator as a way to streamline the BCIS process.
- **Conversation Re: FAQ Page on Website:** Liz Proietti, OEC Licensing Director, replied that we will explore posting this on our website. Gary Waters, OEC Licensing Supervisor, suggested FAQ's to be emailed to our general inbox for consideration.

IV. Sample Youth Camp Policies & Procedures, presented by Keisha Hewitt, OEC Supervising Nurse Consultant

- Asked for volunteers to review her draft and offer suggestions and samples of their own policies. Four Council members volunteered. THANK YOU!

V. JOT Forms Update, presented by OEC Health Program Associate, Jerry Mandigo

- All JOT Forms are sent to the Youth Camp email inbox (youthcamps@ct.gov). Change Forms and Director/Alternate Director JOT forms will be available by the end of the week/early next week. Incident reports will also be fillable and submitted in the same way.

Action Items	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
Topics for upcoming meetings	Katherine Davies	Open	Ideas: Unlicensed camps, legislative updates, discussion regarding common violations and a better way to identify them on the public (2-1-1) website.
Dates/Locations of future meetings	Council Members	Open	In Progress/Tentative: Tuesday's at 10:00 AM unless there is a Monday holiday, to be held virtually in February (1 st Quarter), April (2 nd Quarter), end of September (3 rd Quarter), and early November (4 th Quarter)
Addendum	Keisha Hewitt	Closed	The 1:00 p.m. April 3, 2025, meeting will be virtual. The November meeting will be in-person and the OEC will try to get space at the LOB for this meeting.

Discussion/Closing: There is ongoing discussion regarding the impact of new Federal legislation on Youth Camps, which Maggie Adair, OEC Communications & Legislative Program Manager, has confirmed that the Governor's Office is closely monitoring. Council Chair, Katherine Davies suggested using the ACLU's Know Your Rights website for support. Questions were asked how to report unlicensed camps. A response was given by Liz Proietti that the OEC has help desk and complaint desk phone numbers, and direction is provided on the OEC website how to report a violation online, if the individual does not wish to call. All complaints can be anonymous, however, if you provide your information, you may be contacted for additional questions. Other legislative matters include a proposal by the Children's Council, H.B. 6396, an act considering the term "camp" by unlicensed entities that would prevent the use of the word "camp" if the provider does not have a valid license. Also included in potential legislative updates that may impact Youth Camps, is the Education Council's H.B. 5856 regarding the classification of violations from OEC to discuss the separation of technical and safety/security violations. If any bill proposals concerning youth camps become a raised bill, it will be discussed further in the next meeting.

Closing statement given by Katherine Davies, Council Chair, thanking everyone for their commitment to keeping kids safe and participation in today's meeting.