

New Hampshire COVID-19 Guidance Overnight Camps



NH Overnight Camping Industry

- The industry serves approximately 20,000 NH Children each summer.
- Total participation of campers is near 100,000 in a summer.
- We hire approximately 5,500 seasonal staff
- The industry has over 300 full-time year-round staff
- The overnight camping experience develops a love for NH's natural beauty. Many overnight campers stay in NH as residents and if not become consumers of NH tourism and real estate for their entire lives.
- The overnight camping industry is an economic driver in NH.

Impacts to 2020 Operations

- Guidance for overnight camps was issued June 5, 2020
- **Last summer, almost all of NH overnight camps did not operate.** Only 4 of 95 overnight camps ran in person/onsite in NH at substantially reduced capacities to meet the COVID safety requirements.
- Why didn't most NH overnight camps run in 2020?
 - Insufficient time to align operations with guidance as camp season was scheduled to start 2-4 weeks after guidance released.
 - Very limited access to the prescribed testing.
 - Lack of availability of PPE and other equipment needed to meet operational guidance.
 - Insufficient time to notify parents and staff of new procedures.
- At the time the initial guidance was released, critical safety information was just becoming accessible including CDC camp guidance & ACA/YUSA sponsored Field Guide. Reliable information on testing of children, transmission in a camp setting, which NPI's were most essential was not available. ***This is no longer true!***

What we know now

- Nationwide, many overnight camps were able to run in Summer 2020 summer safely and effectively, despite early press coverage of two notable outbreaks in Georgia and Missouri. These camps did not follow guidance and proved to be notable exceptions among camps.
- More than 480 camps serving 90,000 children participated in a research study to measure COVID spread in camps and which Nonpharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) were most effective.
 - Very few cases of confirmed COVID (approx. 100 confirmed cases among 90,000 participants)
 - Rate of COVID in camps was below community spread rate, even in high COVID areas.
 - Physical distancing measures including use of cohorts, pods, activity modifications, and face covering outside of cohorts when physical distancing was not possible all meaningfully reduced risk of COVID.
 - Reducing capacity did NOT significantly reduce risk of COVID spread.
 - No greater risk of COVID if camp accepted campers and staff from out of state.
 - No statistical risk difference between day and overnight camps.
- Schools and Independent Boarding Schools have had great success, with very low case count and extremely low transmission in their communities.
- Camps are a historically compliant community, that operate in controlled environments with campers and staff who have made the choice to participate and follow rules.

Why we Need Updates Now

- Camps need sufficient time to plan, hire and train staff, to communicate with parents, and enroll and prepare campers. It takes time to adapt our systems and put necessary infrastructure in place.
- We are in the midst of enrollment season and need to know if guidance will impact operational capacities.
- Parents need to line up childcare now so they can work this summer.
- We are currently hiring staff and need to provide clear job responsibilities & expectations that will include COVID prevention strategies.
- We hope to receive our sector guidance by **March 1st** to ensure we can appropriately adapt our operations and meet the needs in our communities for the 2021 summer.

Key Guidance Changes Sought

- Bring testing protocol guidance up to date and provides the flexibility for camps to procure testing from a variety of companies, while maintaining the PCR gold standard.
- Modify cohort management to fit the wide variety of NH camps, no matter their size and physical layout.
- Update on pre-arrival and travel management to camp based on 2020 research and lessons learned.