

Core / Foundational

Just as the name implies, standards included in this section are “core” to a camp accredited by the American Camp Association. Users expect clean and repaired facilities and to be treated with respect and dignity. For day, resident, and short-term camps, clearly articulated goals, outcomes, and activities designed to assist in camper development are core to guiding the camp’s focus and programming.

CR

Core / Foundational

CR.1 - RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF CAMPER/STAFF

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps
- Camps serving rental groups

CR.1.1 - Does the camp have a philosophy or statement specific to respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals that:

A. Is shared with all staff;

B. Staff are trained to facilitate; and

C. Is shared with parents/guardians and campers?

Contextual Education

ACA and the camp community strives to be more inclusive and serve a more diverse population. The intent of this standard is for the camp's leadership to create a statement for the camp related to respecting the rights and dignities of all individuals. It should be shared with all campers, staff, and parents/guardians. Such a statement could mention expectations for respectful communications with and regarding all individuals, and might go on to specifically indicate individuals of varying abilities, cultures, genders, races, religions, and so on. The statement might speak to what the camp teaches, how campers and staff are expected to interact, the example staff sets for campers, and the examples that all camp participants set as they return to their own worlds. Training for staff may include both precamp and in-service sessions to help staff recognize and value individual differences within groups, particularly in relation to the camper populations served.

Compliance Demonstration

Visitor interviews:

- Explanation of philosophy or statement
- Director/staff description of how information is shared with camper and parents and staff are trained

CR

Core / Foundational

CR.2 - CAMP GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps

Written Documentation Required

Included in Required Written Documentation Review

CR.2.1 - To help provide a quality camp experience, has the camp: Established a written statement of overall goals and outcomes for participants?

CR.2.2 - To help provide a quality camp experience, has the camp: Identified in writing specific measurable outcomes that address the campers' physical, social, and mental well-being?

CR.2.3 - To help provide a quality camp experience, has the camp: Provided staff with training strategies that help campers achieve established outcomes in the camp program?

CR.2.4 - To help provide a quality camp experience, has the camp: Informed parents and campers, as developmentally appropriate, of the intended outcomes of the camp experience?

Contextual Education

Goals express the purpose of the camp's existence and operation. For some camps, this may be articulated in the mission statement. From these broad goals, the camp can determine specific outcomes that are desired as a result of participating in camp activities and experiences. If goals of a national organization are used, they must relate to desired outcomes for the specific camp and clientele. Outcomes for short-term programs may be different than those for a day camp or extended-stay resident camp. For purposes of this standard, an outcome is a skill, attitude, knowledge, or ability that a young person gains when they attend camp.

Parents and campers should be informed about the camp's goals, and given some ideas as to the nature of the outcomes that might be observed so they are able to evaluate the effect of the camp experience.

Compliance Demonstration

Written documentation:

- Goals and expected outcomes
- Schedules and materials used in staff training
- Promotional pieces and/or specific communication to parents/campers regarding goals and outcomes

Visitor interviews:

- Director/staff description of goals and outcomes desired

CR

Core / Foundational

CR.3 - CAMPER DEVELOPMENT

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps

CR.3.1 - Does the camp program provide specific activities that are designed to help campers develop mental, emotional, social, and physical health?

Contextual Education

The camp community provides an exceptional opportunity for campers to develop and experience mental, emotional, social, and physical health. To be effective, the camp must identify these areas as goals and foster specific activities or experiences to provide the greatest opportunity for age-appropriate mental, emotional, social, and physical health development to occur. Staff should be trained to lead the activities and be aware of the observable outcomes that indicate such development.

Compliance Demonstration

Visitor interviews:

- Director/staff explanation of training for staff
- Description of opportunities for growth to take place in the programs and living experiences

Visitor observations:

- Variety of activities taking place during the on-site visit

CR

Core / Foundational

CR.4 - ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps

CR.4.1 - Does the camp provide for each age group served, in day and resident camp programs, structured activities that help:

A. Develop awareness for the natural environment;

B. Build appreciation and responsibility for the natural environment; and

C. Foster a stewardship philosophy including practices to minimize the camp's impact on the environment?

Contextual Education

The staff should be mindful of ways to help campers develop an awareness of the natural environment. This environmental education may be different for camps that take place in the outdoors vs. camps that occur indoors. Each age group should have opportunities to learn about the natural world through hands-on experiences that may involve art, music, games, nature activities, etc. Campers and staff should practice responsible behaviors such as recycling, water conservation, and minimizing environmental impacts, including proper trail use (even in urban settings). Knowledge and use of the Leave No Trace principles is strongly recommended.

Compliance Demonstration

Visitor interviews:

- Director/staff explanation of practices and programs

Visitor observations:

- Randomly selected programs

CR

Core / Foundational

CR.5 - CONDITIONS OF FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND VEHICLES

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps
- Camps serving rental groups

CR.5.1 - Are buildings, structures, grounds, equipment (including vehicles, if applicable) and activity areas maintained in good repair, and kept clean, safe, and sanitary?

Contextual Education

This standard includes all buildings used in camp, such as cabins, platform tents, dining halls, lodges, shelters, program buildings, shower houses, restrooms; equipment used by maintenance staff (and occasionally counselors/campers); vehicles; and other camp facilities. Examples of structures to be in good repair include railings, porches, steps, floorboards, screens, and doors. Activity areas include pool and dock areas, hiking and ski trails, paths and walkways, playing fields and courts, playgrounds and other recreation and play areas, ropes courses, and overnight sites.

Compliance Demonstration

Visitor interviews:

- Director/staff description of maintenance procedures

Visitor observations:

- Camp facilities

Administration : Site and Transportation

ADMINISTRATION Administrative standards include policies and procedures for which key administrative staff are most typically responsible for writing and distributing. Topics include transportation, risk management, emergency procedures, policies related to camp staff, and various program areas. For some key topics, the writing and maintaining of the policy/procedure is addressed in this section of standards, and the training and implementation of the procedure is in the staff training standards.

ADMINISTRATION: Site and Transportation

The camp's transportation practices promote safety, minimize risk, and help administrators consider the critical aspect of traffic control, vehicular safety, driver qualifications and camper education.

All camps must score AD.1 through AD.4.

Transportation standards AD.5 through AD.10 apply to any and all transportation of campers, staff, or rental group members provided by, planned for, or arranged by the camp, whether in owned, leased, private, or commercial land vehicles. This includes as examples:

- Camp-arranged transportation to and from camp
- Transportation to activity sites such as pools, stables, lakes, or vendor-provided programs
- Transportation for day trips or field trips
- Transportation for **non-emergency** doctor visits (even the occasional visit)
- Transportation to trip sites and within the trip/travel program itself
- Group transportation in any kind of passenger vehicle, including bus, van, SUV, and car

These standards *do not apply* to use of regularly scheduled public transportation (e.g., trains, limos, buses, taxis, Uber) or to watercraft transportation, such as ferries, whose operations are subject to local or other regulations. They do not apply to rental groups that provide their own transportation.

These standards are *not scored* for camp maintenance vehicles (e.g., tractors, trucks, golf carts) **unless** they are used to transport persons other than maintenance staff, housekeeping staff, health supervisors, or administrative staff. However, camps are advised to consider the requirements of transportation standards when establishing guidelines for any vehicle used within the camp operation.

This section applicability also includes the additional transportation standards, FA.22 through FA.24, ST.18, ST.19, and ST.39.

AD

Administration: Site and Transportation

AD.1 - LOCAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps
- Camps serving rental groups

MANDATORY

Written Documentation Required

DNA: AD.1.1 does not apply if the camp is using a non-owned ACA accredited site.

AD.1.1 - Does the camp make annual contact with all applicable local emergency officials to notify them of the camp's dates of operation and relevant scope of programming (including items such as clients served, significant elements of the program, and overview of the facilities)?

Contextual Education

The purpose of this communication is to verify emergency officials have the correct and appropriate emergency contact and response information for the camp. Contact should be made even if the camp has access to the 911 system. This may include fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, civil defense, homeland security, forest service, national park service, or other local officials — depending on the location and risk management issues of the camp and its program sites. Even in locations where the camp is automatically covered by municipal emergency services, the camp should notify officials of the number, the age of campers and scope of the camp operation to assure that the camp's crisis response plan is consistent with local emergency procedures.

Compliance Demonstration

Written documentation:

- Copy of communication sent to the different local officials containing relevant information
- Notes from phone conversation(s) where relevant information was shared (This should include date, agency/office contacted and with whom the conversation was held)

Visitor interviews:

- Director explanation of annual contacts and the process used to verify/update emergency response information

AD

Administration: Site and Transportation

AD.2 - EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps
- Camps serving rental groups

AD.2.1 - If the camp does not use 911 for emergency medical transportation, does the camp have a policy that requires emergency transportation be available at all times by the camp being accredited or by the rental group?

Contextual Education

“Available” by the camp means that specifically designated vehicle(s) are in operational order with enough fuel to reach primary emergency locations and are not being used for other jobs.

MANDATORY

Written Documentation Required

If rental groups are responsible for their own emergency transportation, this expectation should be identified in a contract or use agreement, or clearly specified in written procedures provided to groups. For additional safety, emergency numbers and directions to the camp should be posted or provided.

DNA: AD.2.1 does not apply to camps with no base site or to nonmedical religious camps.

Compliance Demonstration

Written documentation:

- Procedures for rental groups

DNA: AD.2.1 does not apply if a camp/rental group relies on 911 for emergency transportation.

Visitor interviews:

- Director/staff description of system and options

Visitor observations:

- Observation of designated vehicle(s) available when applicable

AD

Administration: Site and Transportation

AD.3 - PRIVATE VEHICLE USE

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term camps
- Camps serving rental groups

Written Documentation Required

DNA: AD.3.1 does not apply if private vehicles are not used by the camp for transportation of campers or staff.

AD.3.1 - Does the camp obtain written permission from the owners of private vehicles to use their vehicle(s) for transportation for camp business?

Contextual Education

The purpose of this standard is to confirm that the owner specifically grants permission for the vehicle to be used for camp business. Permission is assumed (i.e., written authorization not required) if the owner is driving his or her own vehicle. Owners who grant permission are not required to show maintenance records on private vehicles. However, camps may want to advise vehicle owners that their permission implies their responsibility to have an adequately maintained and insured vehicle.

Compliance Demonstration

Written documentation:

- Randomly selected authorizations from private car owners