



Checklist

Camps on Campus

A recent review of underwriting data shows that over 80% of United Educators' (UE's) members host camps and recreational or academic programs for minors. With so many minors attending camps on campus, colleges and universities are advised to review and assess effectiveness of their risk management practices.

Camp directors, youth programs specialists, conference and event managers, and administrators are encouraged to use this checklist for guidance on topics such as facilities and equipment, staffing, protecting minors, emergency planning, and contracts and insurance. Use these guidelines to increase the likelihood of a safe experience for campers and protect the institution from camp-related legal liability or adverse publicity.

For each question, check the appropriate “Yes” or “No” box. Review any box checked “No” to determine whether the suggested practice or an alternate measure is possible to reduce risk. Use the “Actions Needed” box to identify any follow-up actions your institution may wish to take.

Facilities and Equipment

Actions Needed

Before the camp begins:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all anticipated camp facilities and notify the department or person that oversees their use, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classrooms 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theaters 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laboratories 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletic facilities 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food service 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health facilities 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-campus spaces 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive permission from the relevant person or department to use all anticipated facilities 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with relevant departments or groups with substantial experience running their own camps on campus, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental health and safety 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletics 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theater 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

- Inspect all camp facilities for:
 - Tripping hazards (for example, uneven ground surface or debris) Yes
 No
 - Construction or maintenance work occurring at the same time as the camp Yes
 No
 - Overgrown trees or shrubs Yes
 No
 - Unsafe height risks, such as climbing walls, high ropes courses, zip lines, or jungle gyms that are not regularly inspected or maintained Yes
 No
- Take measures to prevent trespassers from gaining access to a building or space, unlocked doors, faulty windows, or key control Yes
 No
- Correct or mitigate all hazards identified during the inspection Yes
 No
- Identify all camp-related equipment Yes
 No
- Inspect all camp-related equipment for defects Yes
 No
- Correct equipment defects or find alternate equipment Yes
 No
 - Contact local building inspectors to review and inspect any temporary structures, such as tents, if necessary Yes
 No

While the camp is in operation:

- Regularly inspect facilities and equipment for hazards or defects Yes
 No
- Correct the hazards or defects or remove the equipment from use Yes
 No

Staffing

Hiring

- Conduct background checks in compliance with your institutional policies and state and local laws or regulations Yes
 No

Prior to the camp's commencement, train all staff and volunteers on:

- Supervising campers during structured and unstructured time, including:
 - Meal times Yes
 No
 - Bathroom trips Yes
 No
 - Locker room visits Yes
 No
 - Nighttime (if an overnight camp) Yes
 No
 - Free-time activities Yes
 No

Actions Needed

• Interacting with campers to promote their physical and emotional safety	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Appropriate electronic interaction outside of camp, including text messaging and social media	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Managing camper behavior without using corporal punishment or verbal abuse	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Taking camper attendance and reporting missing campers	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Releasing campers early	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Providing campers with adequate breaks	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Following emergency procedures for likely camp emergencies	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Following camper health care procedures and policies	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Completing incident or accident reports	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect to camp authorities and the state	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Identifying and reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment that may not rise to the level of child abuse and neglect	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Ensure training for those staff or volunteers who are:	
• Hired or recruited later than the norm	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Rehired from previous years	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Hired mid-camp to replace another staff member or volunteer	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Supervising	
To ensure campers are properly supervised:	
• Provide enough staff to meet or exceed the minimum staff-to-camper ratios established by the host institution or state regulations	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Screen additional staff or volunteers to have on call in case a staff member does not show or is asked to leave	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Follow a policy for investigating alleged wrongdoing by a staff member or volunteer such as the physical or sexual abuse of a camper	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Prevent unsupervised access to campers by any staff member or volunteer who is the subject of an investigation for wrongdoing until the investigation is complete	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Observe staff behavior regularly	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

- Address promptly any observed inappropriate staff behavior Yes
 No
- Ensure the camp complies with all applicable state regulations, including licensing requirements and background checks Yes
 No

For an overview of camp regulations in your state, go to the [American Camp Association](#) website.

Protecting Minors

Protecting minors from harassment, discrimination, and abuse is the responsibility of colleges and universities that host camps. Follow state youth protection statutes and institutional policies closely to guard children and promote compliance.

Ensure your institution has a written policy that explains its commitment to protecting minors who participate in institution-sponsored programs on campus, and addresses:

- Registration requirements for programs involving minors Yes
 No
- Age, experience, or employment requirements for individuals who oversee programs involving minors Yes
 No
- Whether direct contact and one-on-one contact between an adult and a child are permitted Yes
 No
- Obligations for reporting suspected child abuse, harassment, or discrimination Yes
 No
- A procedure for notifying the child’s parent or guardian in case of incident or emergency Yes
 No

All campus constituencies involved in the camp process meet to discuss:

- Policies and laws that address protection of minors Yes
 No
- The institution’s reporting obligations Yes
 No
- Crisis response protocols in the event of child abuse, harassment, or discrimination Yes
 No

When camps on campus are operated by third parties, are these parties:

- Required to meet the same child protection standards as camps operated by the institution Yes
 No
- Obligated to report incidents of child abuse, harassment, or discrimination to the institution Yes
 No

When hiring employees or enlisting volunteers who work with minors in camps or similar programs:

- Background checks are used as an initial screening mechanism Yes
 No
- Protecting minors resources are included in staff training, specifically resources age-appropriate for the given camper population Yes
 No

- Employees and volunteers are advised how to report suspected child abuse, harassment, and discrimination Yes
 No

- Prior incidents of child abuse are included in the institution’s annual Clery Report Yes
 No

Title IX

Sexual misconduct against minors, whether perpetrated by college employees, volunteers, contractors, or students, is also a form of discrimination covered by Title IX, the federal statute prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex at any educational institution receiving federal funds. Title IX requires that institutions implement a nondiscrimination policy and select a Title IX coordinator and investigator.

Your institution should have a written policy that:

- Establishes that sexual assault includes sexual misconduct involving minors and that each is a type of sex discrimination under Title IX Yes
 No

- Includes examples of conduct prohibited by the policy Yes
 No

Those individuals with camp oversight meet with the Title IX coordinator to discuss:

- How camps are operated on campus and how these operations intersect with Title IX Yes
 No

- How incidents of sexual misconduct are reported Yes
 No

For more information about protecting minors, see UE’s [Checklist: Protecting Minors on Campus — Sexual Misconduct Policies and Investigations](#) and the [Protecting Children Learning Program](#).

Instructional Program

Policies and Procedures

To reduce the risk of camper injuries and liability for those injuries:

- Ensure that the camp’s instructional program is appropriate for the skill level of the campers Yes
 No

- Explain accurately in the camp’s promotional materials the nature of the camp activities, the potential for injuries, and the physical requirements of campers Yes
 No

- Arrange for legal review of camper promotional materials Yes
 No

- Require campers and their parents, if the campers are minors, to sign a release or an assumption of risk form specifying the nature of camp activities and the potential risks Yes
 No

For more information on drafting waivers and releases, see UE’s [Checklist: Drafting Effective Releases](#).

Athletics

Camps that include contact sports create additional liability risks. For these camps, it is important to include procedures targeted to limiting the potential for catastrophic injury caused by concussions and heat illness.

Athletic camp participants are required to complete a pre-participation evaluation. Yes No

There is an emergency action plan for each athletic venue. Yes No

To reduce the risk of concussion:

• Require campers and staff to complete annual concussions training. Yes No

• Add concussion specific language to your release or assumption of risk form. Yes No

• Require coaches to sign a form annually agreeing to follow the concussion management plan. Yes No

• Require institution health care providers to sign a form annually agreeing to follow the concussion management plan. Yes No

• Immediately remove from play (including competition, practice, and conditioning) any athlete showing signs of a concussion. Yes No

• Keep potentially concussed athletes out of play until evaluated by a medical professional with experience in the evaluation and management of concussions. Yes No

To reduce the risk of heat illness injuries:

• Require campers and staff to complete annual heat illness training. Yes No

• Include training modules on:

• Heat illness symptoms Yes No

• The importance of acclimatizing athletes to weather conditions, workouts, and new equipment Yes No

• Signs of dehydration and actions for keeping hydrated Yes No

• Add heat illness language to your release or assumption of risk. Yes No

• Ensure easy access during practice and play to the appropriate equipment, including:

• A heat stress monitor Yes No

• A rectal thermometer with flexible arms Yes No

• Cold water immersion tubs Yes No

- Immediately remove from play (including competition, practice, and conditioning) any athlete showing signs of heat illness and provide on-site treatment. Yes
 No

- Keep athletes showing signs of exertional heat stroke out of play until cleared by a physician. Yes
 No

For more information on concussions prevention and response, see UE's [Checklist: Creating an Athletics Concussion Management Plan](#). For more information on heat illness prevention and response, see UE's [Reducing Heat Illness in College and High School Sports](#).

Health and Medical Care

Policies and Procedures

Camp administrators should provide a written health policy that articulates the scope of health care services provided. In addition:

- Ensure that the camp's written health care policy is reviewed periodically by legal counsel and a physician or registered nurse. Yes
 No

- Document all incidents requiring professional medical treatment. Yes
 No

- Require campers or their parents, if the campers are minors, to sign a permission form allowing the camp to provide routine medical care and seek emergency medical treatment. Yes
 No

- Accommodate campers or minors who arrive on campus with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans. Yes
 No

Medication Management

With respect to prescription and nonprescription medications dispensed at the camp:

- Medications are stored under lock and key. Yes
 No

- Medications are kept refrigerated if necessary. Yes
 No

- Nonprescription drugs are dispensed pursuant to the signed instruction of a parent or the camp's written health care procedures. Yes
 No

- Prescription drugs are dispensed pursuant to a physician's directions and with a parent's signed authorization. Yes
 No

Contact and Health Information

Gather the following information about each camper:

- Current contact information, such as:
 - Name Yes
 No

 - Date of birth Yes
 No

 - Age Yes
 No

• Name and phone number of emergency contact	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Name and phone number of physician	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Name, phone number, and address of the adult responsible for minor campers	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Health information, such as:	
• Physical evaluation completed within the past two years	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Past medical treatment	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Immunizations	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Chronic conditions, such as:	
• Allergies	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Seizures	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Diabetes	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Prior to the camp's commencement:	
• Have a trained staff member review each camper's health information to ensure it is complete and that campers with special medical needs are identified.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Alert staff members about campers with special medical needs.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Provide training for staff members who administer medication or assist students with chronic conditions.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Emergency Planning

Prior to the camp's commencement, notify representatives from the following organizations about the camp's operation:

• Campus security	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Fire officials	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Local law enforcement	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Have established procedures for handling emergencies, including:

• Alleged physical or sexual abuse of a camper	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Fire	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

• Weather	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Crime (for example, an assault or homicide)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Lost or missing camper or staff member	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Death, illness, or injury of a camper or staff member	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Natural disasters endemic to the camp's geographic location	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Your procedures for handling emergencies include considerations for campers with:

• Physical mobility limitations, such as wheelchairs	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Visual impairments	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Hearing impairments	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Have a staff member trained in first aid and CPR on duty at all times during the camp and on field trips.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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Have plans in place to provide emergency transportation of campers and staff at all times during the camp.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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Please refer to the next section, Transportation, for important additional considerations.

Assess the need for an automated external defibrillator (AED) at the camp	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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Have a crisis communications plan that addresses how to communicate factual and up-to-date information with campers, staff, parents, the media, and others in a crisis situation	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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For more information on establishing a crisis communications plan, see UE's [A Guide to Developing a Campus Crisis Communications Plan](#).

Transportation

Camp Arrivals, Departures, and Emergencies

Prior to the camp:

• Inform parents and staff about designated drop-off and pick-up locations for campers.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Inform parents and staff about alternate drop-off and pick-up locations for campers in the event of inclement weather or other potential emergencies.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Arrange sufficient parking and traffic control for the camp.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Driver Qualifications

Require that all potential drivers of vehicles transporting campers:

- Demonstrate a driving record free of unreasonable violations or offenses. Yes
 No

- Provide a license that is appropriate for the vehicle to be driven. Yes
 No

- Be above a minimum age. Yes
 No

- Pass a safe-driving exam. Yes
 No

- Receive training on passenger safety issues — for children and adults — such as:
 - Loading and unloading passengers, including those with disabilities Yes
 No

 - Handling a vehicle breakdown Yes
 No

 - Evacuating the vehicle Yes
 No

 - Controlling camper behavior while driving Yes
 No

 - Lowering the student-to-staff ratio when extra supervision is required Yes
 No

 - Conducting vehicle safety checks Yes
 No

 - Following accident procedures Yes
 No

 - Orient passengers on safety procedures Yes
 No

Vehicle Safety

Require that all vehicles transporting campers:

- Contain first-aid kits Yes
 No

- Are evaluated for mechanical soundness Yes
 No

- Be equipped to accommodate campers with special needs, such as:
 - IEPs Yes
 No

 - 504 plans Yes
 No

 - Physical, visual, and hearing limitations Yes
 No

Leasing, Renting, and Chartering Vehicles

When leasing, renting, or chartering a vehicle with a driver, can you demonstrate that the selected provider:

- Maintains its vehicles? Yes
 No

- Conducts safety checks of its vehicles? Yes
 No

- Verifies its drivers’ driving records and experience? Yes
 No

- Trains its drivers on passenger safety issues? Yes
 No

For more information on transportation safety, see UE’s [Checklist: Safety in Student and Employee Transportation](#).

Contracts and Insurance with Third-Party Providers

Camp directors often contract with third parties to provide services to the camp. For your protection, contracts with third parties must be reviewed, and the third party must be adequately insured. If you are an employee of the host institution or a co-sponsor of the camp, you should consult with the host institution’s contract and insurance experts, such as the general counsel, risk manager, or business officer. If not, use legal counsel and talk with your insurance agent.

Take the following steps when dealing with third-party service providers:

- Define the third party’s relationship to the camp’s sponsor (the camp’s sponsor is most likely the host institution or your employer) in a written contract. Yes
 No

- Specify in a written contract how the third party will share responsibility with the camp’s sponsor for any claims, losses, or injuries that arise out of camp activities (this contract language is often called an “indemnity,” “hold harmless,” or “risk allocation” provision). Yes
 No

- Determine what lines of insurance the third party must carry to cover the claims, losses, or injuries that might arise out of camp activities. Yes
 No

- Require the third party to provide a certificate of insurance showing that it carries the necessary lines of insurance. Yes
 No

- Request the third party name the camp’s sponsor as an additional insured party on its general liability policy. Yes
 No

- Impose the same child protection standards as camps operated by the institution. Yes
 No

- Mandate reporting of child abuse, harassment, or discrimination to the institution. Yes
 No

For more information on reviewing contracts and determining insurance requirements, see UE’s [Guide for Reviewing Contracts](#), [Improving Contracting on Campus: A Layperson’s Guide to Understanding Contract Basics](#), and [Improving Contracting on Campus: Allocating Risks Between Parties](#).

After the camp:

• Collect feedback from campers and parents about their experience with the camp.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Meet with staff to review camper feedback and any incident reports to identify what went well and areas for improvement.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Consult with campus departments involved in the camp to identify areas for improvement.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
• Save all documents used in planning and carrying out the camp, including any recommendations for improvement, to help plan future camps.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

By Alyssa Keehan, Esq., CPCU, ARM, Director of Risk Management Research & Consulting. Alyssa oversees the development of UE's risk management content and consulting initiatives, ensuring reliable and trustworthy guidance for our members. Her areas of expertise include campus sexual misconduct, Title IX, threat assessment, campus security, contracts, and risk transfer. She previously handled UE liability claims and held positions in the fields of education and insurance.

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UE wishes to thank Olabisi "Bisi" Okubadejo, JD, for her assistance with this publication. As of June 2021 she was Associate Vice President of Equal Opportunity at Georgetown University.



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