

Prince Edward Island

# Guideline for Recreational Camps

Operator Guideline

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Department of Health and Wellness  
Chief Public Health Office  
Environmental Health

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## 1.0 Introduction

A recreation camp is a camp for recreational, educational, social, cultural or religious activities that consists of one or more cabins, buildings or structures established or maintained as living quarters for temporary occupancy of 3 or more days, with or without charge, and includes a camping program, but does not include a tourist establishment as defined in the Tourism Industry Act.

Recreational camps provide educational, social, cultural and/or religious activities for youths and adults in Prince Edward Island (PEI).

These guidelines were developed to provide additional guidance to operators to help ensure that the camp is run in a manner that prevents or eliminates the occurrence of health hazards which may endanger or transmit illness to campers, staff, or visitors.

Recreational camps in PEI are subject to the [\*Recreational Camp Regulations\*](#) and the [\*Public Health Act\*](#). The operator(s) are responsible for ensuring that other groups using the camp follow the *Regulations* and *Act*.

### 1.1 Environmental Health Inspections

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) complete routine inspections of recreational camps in PEI. These officials aid in the prevention of illness and injuries at recreational camps through consultation, education and if necessary, enforcement, during routine inspections.

**During inspections, EHOs focus on the food service operation, infection prevention and control and any obvious threat to the safety of campers, staff, or visitors.**

If there is an immediate health or safety concern, the inspection will be unsatisfactory. A timeline will be set to complete any items that could not be rectified during the inspection, and a follow-up inspection scheduled.

If violations are present which require attention but do not pose an immediate risk to the health or safety of campers, staff, or visitors, the violation will be marked as “improvement required” and must be addressed prior to the next routine inspection. Repeat violations may be marked unsatisfactory.

## 2.0 Water and Waste Disposal

Recreational camps are required to maintain an adequate supply of potable water, along with properly functioning sewage and solid waste disposal systems, to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, control pest infestations, and minimize the potential for any condition that could constitute a health hazard.

### 2.1 Water Supply

Every recreational camp must be supplied with an adequate quantity of hot and cold potable water under pressure, sourced from either a municipal supply or a private well.

If the camp utilizes a private well, the water must be tested for bacteriological quality at least once every 12 months. In cases where multiple wells or sources are used, each well or source must be sampled individually. It is strongly recommended that [water samples be collected and tested](#) prior to the camp's seasonal opening. Ideally, the sample should be taken from the point of use (e.g., kitchen tap), rather than directly from the well or source.

A chemical analysis of the drinking water at recreational camps should be completed every two years.

Water samples must meet the standards outlined in the [Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality](#). The results of these water tests must be made available upon request by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

**Backflow prevention devices must be in place as required by the local plumbing code. These devices protect the potable water supply from contamination or pollution due to backflow.**

#### 2.1.2 Central Water Systems

Recreational camps with a potable water distribution system consisting of 5 or more service connections are regulated by the [Water Supply System and Wastewater Treatment System Regulations](#) which are enforced by the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

### 2.2 Sewage Disposal

Every recreational camp must be connected to a private or municipal sewage disposal system which operates in compliance with the requirements of the applicable regulations or bylaws.

Malfunctions must be repaired immediately. If there is an immediate risk to the health of campers, staff, or visitors, further action may be required at the discretion of the Chief Public Health Officer.

## 2.3 Solid Waste Disposal

Containers used for compost, waste and recyclables must be constructed of washable, non-porous materials. The containers must be washed and sanitized on a regular basis.

Waste must be transported through a facility in a manner that avoids contamination. To prevent pests from being attracted to the premises, avoid placing outdoor waste receptacles near the building.

Waste containers (located indoors and outdoors) must be appropriately sized and located to meet the capacity requirements between collection days. Waste must be collected and removed from the property in accordance with the requirements set by Island Waste Management Corporation.

# 3.0 General Safety Information

## 3.1 Records

The operator of a recreational camp must maintain the:

- Full name and permanent address of each camper and staff member
- The arrival at and departure from the camp for each camper and staff member

In addition, it is also recommended to maintain additional records, such as:

### **Camper and Staff Information**

- Additional personal information (phone number, email, date of birth)
- Emergency contact information
- Health information (medical history, allergies, medication, special needs)
- Parent/guardian consent forms (for medical treatment, participation in camp activities)
- Authorized individuals for pick up
- Emergency medical authorization

### **Attendance Records**

- Daily attendance and absence logs

### **Health and Safety Records**

- Incident and accident reports
- Illness records
- Medical treatment logs
- Daily health checks

### **Food and Nutrition Records**

- Menu and meal plans
- Food allergies or sensitivities

### **Environmental and Safety Records**

- Water quality test results
- Waste disposal records
- Fire safety drills
- Emergency evacuation plans and drills
- Emergency contact list (for local hospitals, fire stations, police, poison control, etc.)

### **3.2 Emergency Plans**

The operator of a recreational camp should have a written plan addressing circumstances such as communicable disease outbreaks, natural disasters, fire, severe weather events, etc.

Emergency contact numbers should be posted in a prominent location, such as the camp office, for easy access.

Camp staff should be thoroughly instructed on the emergency plan and procedures, and regular drills should be conducted to ensure readiness in contacting emergency personnel when necessary.

### **3.3 Health and First Aid**

The recreational camp should have health records for campers and staff that include information about significant or unusual illnesses, and any activity that could impact the health of other campers. The camp should maintain a list of any health complaints or treatments and the necessary details.

Staff should have valid first aid certification.

A fully stocked first aid kit should be readily accessible on site, with additional portable kits available for use during outdoor activities. It is recommended that the camp has extra supplies of frequently used items, such as ice packs, bandages, and antibiotic ointment.

### **3.4 Fire Safety**

It is the responsibility of the operator to consult with the authority responsible for fire safety regarding requirements of the provincial and/or municipal fire codes.

For assistance, contact:

**Charlottetown  
Fire Department**  
 89 Kent Street,  
Charlottetown  
 902-629-4083

**Summerside  
Fire Department**  
 251 Foundry Street,  
Summerside  
 902-432-1224

**Provincial Fire  
Marshal's Office**  
 31 Gordon Drive,  
Charlottetown  
 902-368-4869

### 3.5 Animal Bites

Animal bites should always be taken seriously and examined by a health care professional. Prompt treatment is important to help prevent infection or more serious health issues. If there is concern about rabies, the Chief Public Health Office will [investigate reports of human exposure](#) to potentially infected animals to assess the risk and determine the appropriate course of action.

It is important to report an animal bite immediately to a healthcare provider, public health nursing, the PEI Humane Society or Environmental Health.

**Under the [Public Health Act](#), human contact with an animal suspected or known to be infected with rabies must be reported.**

### 3.6 Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat-related illnesses are a concern at recreational camps where outdoor activities are common, and cabins often lack air conditioning. Most heat-related illnesses are caused by overexposure to high temperatures and prolonged physical activity in hot and humid conditions. The health risks are the greatest for infants and young children, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions.

[Heat-related illnesses](#) include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat fainting, heat cramps, heat rash and heat edema.

Common symptoms of heat-related illness may include headache, nausea, dizziness or fainting, rapid breathing and/or heartbeat, muscle cramps, or behavioural changes in children (e.g. sleepiness or temper tantrums).

Tips to stay safe during extreme heat:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Choose lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing to help keep your body cool. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses for added protection.
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all exposed skin and reapply every two hours, or more often if swimming or sweating.
- Keep an eye on the local weather forecasts and heat advisories. Know the signs of heat-related illnesses and be prepared to act quickly if symptoms arise.
- Ensure that young children, the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, people who work outside, and people taking specific medications stay cool and hydrated.
- Plan strenuous outdoor activities for cooler days, or choose a cooler location, like a place with air conditioning or with tree shade.

- Spend time in a cool place. It could be a tree-shaded area, swimming facility or an air-conditioned spot.

## 4.0 Recreational Camp Facilities

### 4.1 Building Exterior

All buildings used for the recreational camp should be separate from any structure used for or intended to be used for sheltering animals, storing highly flammable materials, and/or any other environmental condition that may constitute a health hazard.

Any permanent building that is used for living, sleeping, kitchen or dining areas must be at least 30.5 cm (12 in) above the ground, if the building is not on solid foundation.

**All exterior surfaces (e.g. roof, walls, foundation, downspouts, gutters, windows and doors, etc.) must be in good condition, weatherproof and pest proof.**

Decks, walkways, and stairs should be free from trip hazards and have appropriate railings.

Every building must be constructed in a manner to prevent the entrance of pests, such as insects or rodents. If an infestation occurs and cannot be controlled by conventional methods, a certified pest management company must be contacted to address the issue.

**All exterior windows and doors of buildings in the camp must be screened.**

### 4.2 Building Interior

The interior surfaces (e.g. ceiling, flooring, windows and walls, etc.) must be in good condition and pest proof. Buildings must be maintained in a sanitary condition.

#### 4.2.1 Building Systems

##### Heating

If present, heat sources must be operational and meet the applicable codes. If heating devices are used, they must be safe for use around campers.

**Portable space heaters cannot be used as the primary source of heat.**

##### Lighting

Adequate lighting is required in each building to allow for proper use of each space, cleaning and overall safety of the campers, staff, and visitors.

## **Ventilation**

The washrooms and the kitchen must be properly ventilated. Ventilation must be sufficient to remove excess moisture, odors and other potential air contaminants from these areas.

Every living space, sleeping room, kitchen, and dining room must have at least one window or screened opening to provide a reasonable movement of air within the space.

## **Flooring**

Floors, if not built of concrete, must be durable, smooth, non-absorbent, and washable.

If carpets and/or rugs are present, ensure they are placed only in appropriate areas. Carpets and rugs should not be in kitchens, food preparation areas, bathrooms, shower areas, or laundry rooms.

Additionally, it is important to clean carpets and rugs regularly to maintain hygiene and prevent the buildup of dirt and allergens.

### **4.2.2 Kitchen**

If food service is provided to the campers, staff, and/or visitors, the operator of the camp is required to hold a valid [food premises license](#). Areas where food is prepared, served, and stored at the camp are subject to the [Food Premises Regulations](#).

### **4.2.3 Sleeping Accommodations**

All sleeping accommodations should have natural or mechanical ventilation.

Natural ventilation should be provided by openings to outside air equal to 1/10 of the floor area. All openings to the outside must be screened.

There needs to be at least  $8.5 \text{ m}^3$  (300 ft<sup>3</sup>) of air space per individual in the sleeping accommodation, and there must be at least 0.91 m (3 ft) of clear space between the beds or bunks. Beds should be at least 30 cm (12 in) above the floor.

Beds can only be in a designated sleeping area, and there must be an appropriate number of beds for the intended occupancy.

Mattresses must be constructed of a washable, non-porous material with no rips or tears. Mattresses must be cleaned and sanitized weekly, or prior to the arrival of a new camper. The use of cloth mattresses is not recommended. However, if they are used, they must have mattress covers on them. The covers must be laundered or cleaned/sanitized once a week, or between campers.

Appropriate means for each camper to store their personal belongings should be provided.

**It is the responsibility of the operator to consult with the authority responsible for fire safety regarding requirements of the provincial or municipal fire codes.**

#### 4.2.4 Washrooms

Washrooms are a high-risk area as the potential for fecal-oral transmission is always present. To prevent illness, the washrooms must be always maintained in a sanitary condition.

There must be at least one (1) toilet for every twenty-four (24) campers. Where there is more than one toilet available, a privacy partition must be present between the toilets. Toilet paper must be available in a dispenser.

There must be at least one (1) hand washing sink for every two (2) toilets or combination of toilets and urinals. Sinks must be equipped with hot and cold potable water under pressure, liquid hand soap in a dispenser, and single-use towels in a dispenser.

If shower facilities are provided, hot and cold running water should be available to promote good personal hygiene practices. If there are multiple shower stalls, there should be a privacy barrier (e.g. shower curtain) present.

The hot water at the plumbing fixtures accessible to the campers should be at a recommended temperature of at least 41°C (106° F) and never exceed 49°C (120°F).

**It is strongly recommended to have separate washrooms and shower facilities for staff.**

#### 4.2.5 Laundry Areas

Laundry areas are to be in an appropriate area within the camp. There needs to be an adequate supply of hot and cold water. If campers have access to the laundry areas, they should be supervised.

#### 4.2.6 Custodial Areas

All mechanical, storage, and janitorial rooms must be inaccessible to campers.

Cleaning supplies and other hazardous materials should be stored in their original, covered, and labelled containers in a separate, secure area accessible only to appropriate staff.

Chemicals and other hazardous materials should be used only for their intended purpose and according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### 5.0 Recreational Water

#### 5.1 Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs

A [pool permit](#) is required to operate a public or semi-public swimming pool, whirlpool, or water fun park in PEI. Public and semi-public swimming pools are inspected up to three times each year for water quality and public safety, and must operate in compliance with the standards and requirements of the *Public Health Act* and [Swimming Pool and Waterslide Regulations](#).

## 5.2 Coastal and Fresh Water Beaches

Coastal or fresh bodies of water used for swimming should meet the requirements of the latest version of the [\*Canadian Recreational Water Quality Guidelines\*](#).

Every camp with a coastal or freshwater swimming area should have a written plan that outlines the safe use of the swimming area, which includes emergency response information.

## 6.0 Infection Prevention and Control

### 6.1 Personal Care Items

If not used, handled and stored properly, personal items may aid in the spread of illness in a recreational camp.

Individual personal care items (e.g. facecloths, hairbrushes, toothbrushes) should not be shared. They should be stored with the camper's personal items in the cabin.

### 6.2 Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is an important step to help prevent the spread of illness. It's essential that campers, staff, and visitors properly wash their hands:

- before preparing and/or serving food;
- before eating;
- after using the washroom;
- after wiping or blowing your nose or assisting someone else to wipe or blow their nose;
- after sneezing or coughing into your hands;
- before giving medication to someone;
- after playing outside; and
- after any other activity which may contaminate the hands.

#### [Appendix A: Handwashing Poster](#)

##### 6.2.1 Hand Sanitizer

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available. Hand sanitizer must contain at least 60% ethyl alcohol to be effective. Keep in mind that hand sanitizer does not replace hand washing, and hand sanitizer is not effective if hands are visibly soiled.

### 6.3 Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Frequent cleaning and disinfection will help provide a safe and sanitary environment for campers, staff, and visitors.

### 6.3.1 Cleaning and Sanitation Policy

Recreational camps must establish, maintain and follow a written policy with respect to the cleaning and disinfection at a recreational camp. At minimum, this written policy needs to include a:

- procedure for cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched or frequently used items and surfaces (e.g. light switches, doorknobs, faucet taps, railings);
- procedure for monitoring pests; and
- procedure for maintaining the shower rooms and bunkhouses in a sanitary condition.

In addition to the above written procedures, the policy also needs to include:

- A schedule that outlines the frequency that each of the above procedures will be completed,
- A list of cleaning and disinfection agents that will be used,
- And for each cleaning and disinfection agent:
  - o The agent's intended use
  - o Instructions on how to mix/prepare each agent, where applicable, and
  - o Storage requirements

By following these procedures, we can ensure that the facility remains clean, hygienic, and safe for all campers, staff and visitors.

The operator must establish a record of each time one of the procedures listed above is carried out. These records must be retained for a minimum period of 12 months and made available for review by an EHO upon request.

### 6.3.2 General Chemical Safety Tips

- Follow proper procedures and safe work practices recommended by the employer
- Check product labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) to know the potential hazards
- Participate in Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing as appropriate
- Use cleaning products appropriate to the workplace
- Clean and wash surfaces thoroughly before disinfecting them
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using chemicals
- Check expiry date on chemicals
- Do not mix chemicals

### 6.3.3 Approved Sanitizers

Sanitizers are for use on food-contact surfaces (e.g. kitchen counters, dining tables, etc.)

#### Bleach (Chlorine) Solution

- Prepare a fresh 100 ppm solution weekly, or more often if needed.
- Use chlorine test strips to verify the strength of the sanitizer solution.
- Daily records are to be maintained for bleach sanitizer.

- It is not advisable to store bleach solution in direct sunlight as the UV rays from the sun can degrade the active ingredient (sodium hypochlorite), reducing its effectiveness.

#### **Quaternary Ammonium Compound (QUAT) Solution**

- Prepare a fresh 200 ppm solution weekly, or more often if needed.
- Use QUAT test strips to verify the strength of the sanitizer solution.
- Daily records are to be maintained for QUAT sanitizer.

#### **Appendix B: Food-Grade Sanitizer Information Sheet**

##### **6.3.4 Disinfectants**

Disinfectants are for use on non-food contact surfaces (e.g. light switches, doorknobs, etc.).

#### **Bleach (Chlorine) Solution**

- Prepare a fresh 200 ppm solution weekly, or more often if needed.
- Use chlorine test strips to verify the strength of the sanitizer solution daily.

#### **Quaternary Ammonium Compound (QUAT) Solution**

- Prepare a fresh 400ppm solution weekly, or more often if needed.
- Use quaternary ammonium sanitizer test strips to verify the strength of the solution daily.

#### **Hospital Grade Disinfectants**

- Approved hospital grade cleaner(s) and disinfectant(s) can be used on non-food contact surfaces.

## **7.0 Communicable Disease Control**

Reducing the risk of illness or an outbreak is based on having adequate policies in place for observing, recording, and reporting of communicable diseases.

### **7.1 Recording Illness**

This policy is designed to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases and ensure a safe and healthy environment for staff, children, and parents. All staff members and parents are required to follow these guidelines to minimize the risk of illness transmission at the camp.

Items to consider including in this policy are:

- Rules for hand hygiene, cleaning, disinfection, and food safety
- Exclusion policies for sick campers and staff
- Procedures for handling an ill camper on-site until a parent or guardian can pick them up
- Procedures for administering medication on-site
- Procedures for informing parents about illness at the camp
- Reporting outbreaks at the camp to the Chief Public Health Office

## 7.2 Exclusion of Staff and Children

Ill campers or staff must remain home. Staff who are well enough to remain at work should be assigned tasks which limit contact with campers and other staff and must wash their hands more often. Ill staff must not prepare or handle food.

**Surfaces the sick camper contacted must be immediately cleaned and disinfected.**

Separate ill campers from others until a parent or guardian removes them from the camp. Designate a staff member to care for the sick camper, and ensure they properly wash their hands after caring for the camper.

## 7.3 Cleaning Blood and Body Fluids

Blood and body fluids must be cleaned immediately by a staff member using the following process:

- Wear disposable gloves and properly wash hands after removing gloves
- Wipe spill with a disposable towel
- Wash the area with soap and hot water and then rinse
- Disinfect the area with a 1:10 solution of household bleach and water
- Use disposable towels to mop up the solution
- Place disposable towels in a sealed plastic bag for disposal

## 7.4 Outbreak Situations

The definition of an outbreak depends on the type of illness. A suspect outbreak exists when an illness occurs at a higher rate than expected in campers or staff in a program.

**Call the Chief Public Health Office (902-368-4996) as soon as possible to report a suspected outbreak or increase in illness at the camp.**

A gastrointestinal (GI) outbreak is when there are two or more cases of GI illness with a common link (e.g. same location or same caregiver) and an initial onset within one 48-hour period.

**For more information, contact Environmental Health:  
902-368-4970 or [envhealth@ihis.org](mailto:envhealth@ihis.org)**

## Appendix A: Steps for Proper Hand Washing



## Appendix B: Food Safe Sanitizer Information Sheet

### SANITIZERS FOR FOOD CONTACT SURFACES



**A food contact surface is any surface food may come in contact with (cutting boards, counters, etc.).**

Use a spray bottle or small bucket for the sanitizer solution. The container must be clearly labeled. Ensure there are enough buckets/bottles of sanitizer for each work station.

#### **QUATERNARY AMMONIUM COMPOUNDS (QUATS)**

**200 ppm (parts per million)** - Mix according to no-rinse directions on concentrate bottle. Allow solution to air dry on surfaces.

- QUAT products can break down over time and with use. If you are using sanitizer that was prepared the day before, verify with test strips that the concentration is still 200 ppm. If it is not, discard and prepare a fresh solution.

#### **HOUSEHOLD BLEACH (5.25% CHLORINE)**

2 mL of 5.25% bleach in 1L water = **100ppm**

Allow solution to air dry on surfaces.

- Chlorine will break down over time, with use, and when exposed to sunlight. If using sanitizer from the day before, verify with test strips that the concentration is still 100ppm. If it is not, discard and prepare a fresh solution. **It is strongly recommended to mix a fresh solution daily.**

Other approved sanitizers include iodine and accelerated hydrogen peroxide. Approval from an Environmental Health Officer is required before these products can be used as a sanitizer for food contact surfaces. To have an alternative sanitizer approved for use on food contact surfaces, the product must:

- have a drug identification number (DIN);
- have test strips available to verify concentration;
- have a short contact time; and
- be classified as a no rinse sanitizer.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water first. Sanitizer will not be as effective if the surface is soiled.
- Sanitizer that is mixed stronger than the concentration listed is no longer safe to use on food contact surfaces.
- Sanitizers requiring a potable water rinse cannot be used on food contact surfaces.
- Test strips must be used to verify sanitizer concentration. They can be purchased through chemical suppliers, restaurant supply stores or online.
- For safety reasons, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be available on site for staff members to reference.
- Products such as tea tree oil, baking soda, vinegar, electrolyzed water, microfiber cloths, ozone, and silver compounds are not approved sanitizers for food contact surfaces.
- Avoid mixing or using multiple sanitizers at once.
- If using a bucket for the sanitizer solution, it will need to be changed frequently, such as every few hours, or if the solution becomes soiled.
- Reusable cloths must be stored in a sanitary manner (such as in the bucket of food-grade sanitizer) and laundered/changed daily.

**Contact Environmental Health with questions or concerns.**  
(902) 368-4970 [envhealth@ihis.org](mailto:envhealth@ihis.org)