



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE (UWL)
YOUTH PROTECTION
YOUTH EMERGENCY PLAN GUIDELINES

UW La Crosse Guidelines for Youth Camp Emergency Plans

The following guidelines for emergency plans have been developed as a resource to assist youth camp operators and directors in the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive written plan that will meet the provisions of the **UW Systems Youth Safety Policy SYS0625**. Anything in this Guideline that goes beyond the requirements of the rule is based on the professional literature or best practices. These recommendations are for your consideration, but in no way replaces the policies of your sponsoring agency or the advice of your legal counsel.

Lost Camper Plan

Supervision and utilizing a Buddy System at the start of the campus are excellent measures to prevent lost campers. The plan should include explaining to campers what to do if someone is missing or if they become lost. **Clearly identify an easily identifiable familiar location campers should return to if lost (unless event is taking place with outdoor/woods component)** Include discussion of typical situations in camp and on off-site trips. If a child has been separated from the group, immediately procedures should be activated for finding a lost child.

Before event:

- Compile list of all event staff contact information, including chaperones if event is a fieldtrip.
- Have list of all participants in attendance, with ability to determine where students are expected to be at all times, and who is expected to be with them. Agenda should note down-times and traveling between locations if applicable.
 - This list must be easily and quickly accessible for entire duration of event.
- Incorporate attendance counts throughout the event, letting responsible volunteers know the number of students to expect for event component.
- Provide all event staff with contact information of program manager in case of missing children.

At start of the event:

- Reinforce the camp policy that no child may leave his or her group for any reason without speaking to the counselor.
- Reinforce the practice that other children in the group should tell the counselor if they notice that their assigned buddy or anyone else in the group is not present.
- Adhere to the policy that no child may leave the group alone. If a child must leave the group (e.g., to take a restroom break, to get a piece of equipment), he or she must be accompanied by a staff member or an assigned camp buddy.
- Frequently glance over at children who are waiting on the sideline and tell them to start getting ready to participate.
- Not allow children to be idle for long periods; idle children look for something else to do and wander off without even realizing that they are leaving the group environment.

When child is noted to be missing.

- Assemble children in a secure place under supervision. *If in classrooms, keep in classrooms until missing child is located.* Stop the activity and ask the campers about the last time they saw the missing child and if they know where he or she went. If no one knows, pull the group together, have them sit on the ground or floor, tell them that you will be right back to restart the activity, and leave them with your assistant counselor. Never leave the group alone. Call for backup if no assistant is present.
- Notify the event program manager and Risk Executive Sponsor. Provide the name, basic characteristics of the camper (hair color, age, size, weight), any description you may have that would help others search (such as apparel that he or she was wearing), and how long it has been since anyone has seen the child. The camp director will arrive on the scene with other support personnel as soon as possible.
- Discover (if possible) the state of mind of the camper – interview other students who would have recently interacted with the missing student. *Was she depressed or angry, threatening to run away? Did he fall behind on a hike, or leave to visit a friend in another unit? A camper who does not wish to be found will require a wider and more careful search.*
- If the group is indoors and a facility monitor or director is on site, alert that person right away. If exits can be monitored, ask the facility monitor or director to help watch those exits with his or her staff to prevent the missing camper from leaving the building. If a camper goes missing from a residence hall, contact every staff member in the residence hall and complete the following:
 1. Assign one or more counselors to go door to door and instruct campers to stay in their rooms until further notified.
 2. Assign one or more counselors to watch the exits and do a perimeter sweep outside the building.
 3. Call the camp director with the information described in point c above and then commence the search through the building.
 4. If you find the child, call the camp director immediately so that the search can be called off. If you do not find the child, wait until the camp director arrives for further instructions.
- Maintain communication with the director.
- If search is unsuccessful after **5-10 minutes**; notify police.
- Notify parents/guardians of student.

Camper Orientation Plan

The camper orientation plans should include the following:

Map of Campus, Description of Hazards, Designating Off-Limit Areas on Campus

All campers must receive a map of campus with clearly marked areas of refuge for multi-day, overnight events.

Reporting of Illnesses and Incidents

Encourage campers to report to camp staff any illness or injuries they may arrive with, or which occur at camp. Make campers aware that any form of physical or sexual abuse must be reported to the health director, counselor or other staff member. Explain to campers that if they feel uncomfortable telling a particular staff member about an incident, there is other staff willing to listen and assist them.

Buddy System

Explain the method of bather accountability (Buddy System) to the campers. Explain all of the rules such as properly entering and leaving the swim area and pairing up with a buddy of similar ability, and staying in the assigned swimming area.

Fire Drills and Evacuation

Instruct campers how to exit assembly areas and sleeping areas. Instruct campers about where to assemble after exiting a building. Explain the purpose of fire drills and required camper conduct.

Thunderstorm and Lightning Plan

A recommended plan would require at the first sign of an approaching thunderstorm and lightening, instructing campers to seek shelter in a nearby building. For outdoor events, instructing campers to seek safe shelter such as a car, bus or large building. In the building, stay away from windows and open doors facing large trees.

Plan for Handling Medical Emergencies

A camper or staff member may sustain an injury or suffer an illness that requires prompt action to be taken at the site of occurrence. A plan for prompt action, written, presented to the entire staff in training sessions, and posted in strategic places, is necessary. What follows is a suggested plan of action:

1. Make victim and others safe from further harm.
2. Summon first aider.
3. Describe event to first aider.
4. Assess victim as having a life-threatening emergency or a non-life-threatening emergency.

Life-threatening emergency:

- Give first aid*
- Activate EMS (911)
- Notify Camp Director.
- Notify victim's parents.

* call poison control if poisoning is suspected. 800.222.1222

Non-life-threatening

- Give first aid

- Notify Camp Director.
 - Notify victim's parents.
 - Activate EMS (911), if needed.
5. Obtain victim's medical records and signed parental consent for emergency treatment for EMS personnel.
 6. Assign adult staff member to remain with victim until arrival of parents.
 7. If required, fill out and submit an injury report to the Indiana State Department of Health

Recommended Camp Staff Training Plan

Tour of Camp, Description of Hazards, and Designating Off-Limit Areas

Staff members should tour the camp facilities and the community. Include off-limit areas, hazardous areas, and areas not routinely used, to familiarize staff with the area if a lost camper search becomes necessary. Familiarize staff with the surrounding community.

Provision of First Aid and Emergency Assistance

Identify the staff trained in First Aid and CPR. Determine and describe the proper location and use of first aid equipment, first aid kits, and CPR masks during orientation.

Buddy System

Train staff members in implementing the Buddy System, which should be fully described in this Plan.

Fire Drills and Evacuation

Give staff complete instructions on how to exit assembly areas and sleeping areas. Instruct staff on the location where campers are to assemble after exiting a building. Explain the purpose of fire drills and required camper conduct.

Additional Topics: In addition, address the following areas at the Staff Orientation meetings:

- The chain of command in the camp, including contact information.
- Supervision of campers (ratios, methods, etc.) and event agenda with expected number of students in each component
- Acceptable and unacceptable methods for disciplining campers.
- Recognition and reporting of child abuse allegations (*see required trainings in Youth Policy*)
- Reporting of injuries and illness, and sick call.
- Thunderstorm and lightning safety.