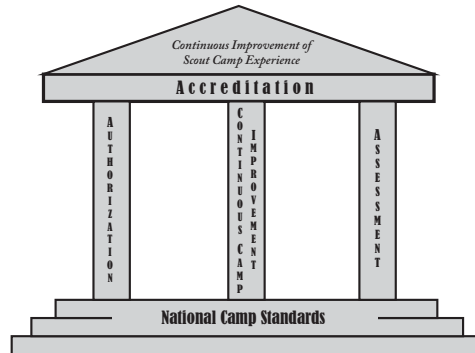


The Continuous Camp Improvement Program

In 2013, the Boy Scouts of America adopted a new approach for accrediting Scout camps: the National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP). NCAP can be thought of as a building: the National Camp Standards are the foundation; Authorization, Continuous Camp Improvement and Assessment are the pillars that support the intermediate goal of Accreditation and the ultimate goal of continuous improvement of the Scouting experience in camp. Continuous improvement is central to NCAP.

The NCAP Difference

Unlike the “check the box” approach to camp visitation and accreditation under the prior Standards, NCAP requires camps both to meet the National Camp Standards and to **continuously improve** their performance. A camp that achieves both is rewarded by higher camper satisfaction and, potentially, special BSA recognition. A camp that fails to achieve both may, over time, find itself conditionally accredited or possibly losing Authorization to Operate. In either case, the



camp’s continuous improvement will be a major factor in its ultimate success.

How does a camp continuously improve? The key is a dedicated team of professionals, volunteers and staff working together to develop and implement exciting programs that campers need and crave. NCAP offers several tools to facilitate this process including: (1) the continuous camp improvement program (CCIP); (2) the camp facilities evaluation tool (CFET); the program evaluation tool (part of the Application process); the camp long-range plan; the conservation plan; and the Camp Strategic Analysis process. While each of these tools has their place, the CCIP is the council’s and camp’s best annual opportu-

nity to set continuous improvement goals, implement them and measure the results to ensure that the camping experience is better one year to the next - in other words, to plan for continuous improvement.

CCIP Purpose

The purpose of the CCIP is to assist councils, camps and camp staff in achieving continuous improvement of their camp programs. CCIP does this by helping councils and staff focus on concrete steps that they can take that will keep their strengths strong and improve other areas, enhancing the experience for their campers and achieving NCAP’s continuous improvement goal.

How CCIP Works

CCIP works by providing councils and camps with a structured approach to identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement, setting measurable goals (success criteria) for these areas, and monitoring their progress against their selected success criteria. It is important to note that CCIP is focused on *the participants’ experience*. Councils and camps should thus think critically about those aspects of their program that enhance, or detract from, the participants’ experience as these will provide the greatest

Continued on page 3

Corrections to Revised Standards

NCAP has determined that certain of the newly revised National Camp Standards released in for 2014 should be further revised to correct typographical errors or to simplify the youth protection training. The revisions affect Standards PS-215, Tot Lots; SQ-402, General Staff Training; and SQ-404, Camp Ranger. The new

language is set forth on page 6 of this Circular and will be included on the website.

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NCAP News

Northeast Region NCAP leadership changes for 2014

Inaugural Northeast Region Camp Accreditation Chair Arnold Traupman will be stepping down in May 2014. Arnold was instrumental in developing the Northeast Region roll out and provided great leadership and insight at the Philmont NCAP training courses. Arnold and his contribution will be missed!

Bill Downey will be taking over the reins as Northeast Region Camp Accreditation Chair. Bill Smith is continuing as Northeast Region Camp Assessment Coordinator.

New NCAP Score Sheet Available

The National Council has released a new NCAP scoresheet for use in the 2014 camp assessment process. The new score sheet integrates the new COPE and Climbing Standards into the primary scoresheet. It also provides clarification on what the Assessment team should include in the narrative portion of the scoresheet.

NCAP CIRCULAR NO. 3

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Requirements for 18 Year Old or Older Staff

Local councils have been looking for guidance on camp staff registration requirements, especially with respect to state laws and regulations requiring criminal background checks on adult camp staff members.

There is an adult camp staff registration classification in the registration system ("49 – Council Camp Staff (Adult)") that automatically processes staff members for criminal background checks. Some local councils have not used that system to register camp staff in the past, resulting in some compliance issues with respect to required checks.

The BSA has determined that the most reasonable approach to these issues is to require that all BSA National or local council adult (18 years old or over) camp staff who are full or part-time employees must be registered as adult leaders in the Boy Scout program and be registered as adult camp staff to ensure compliance with state laws.

In most instances this will involve only adding an additional "adult camp staff position" to the individual's existing registration. However, in the case of Venturers or Sea Scouts who are 18, but not yet 21 years old, only by requiring an application and registration as an adult leader in the BSA will the individual be registered as an adult leader and the required criminal records check completed so that the adult leader membership standard will be uniformly applied.

Youth members of any program

of the Boy Scouts of America who turn 18 years of age during the term of their employment must submit their adult application to join the Boy Scouts of America as an adult leader prior to turning 18 so that the application can be processed immediately upon their turning 18 years of age. Youth members should be advised of these requirements, including the application of adult leader membership standards to all persons upon reaching their 18th birthday, prior to being offered employment if they have not already been hired.

If you have any questions about these requirements, please contact Brian Gray at brian.gray@scouting.org.

New Waiver and Variance Form Released

The National Council has released a new Waiver and Variance request form that replaces the previous version. The new form is available at:

www.scouting.org/NCAP

The new form includes instructions on the information that the council must supply as part of the waiver and/or variance process. For a waiver, the council must demonstrate both need for the waiver (e.g., an inability to hire a qualified individual; construction schedule that does not allow opening a new building prior to camp, etc.) and how the waiver will meet the substantial purpose of the Standard. For variances, the council must demonstrate that all aspects of the Standard are met and that the variance will achieve equivalent levels of safety and program quality.

The Continuous Camp Improvement Program *continued*

opportunity to favorably influence participants' view of the camp.

Selecting the CCIP Team

The CCIP team should include a professional, preferably with direct responsibility for the camp, volunteers with camping responsibilities, camp leadership and staff, and potentially camp users, either as team members or through review of the customer satisfaction survey required by Standard AO-809. The *Guide to the Continuous Camp Improvement Program*, No. 430-075, available at www.scouting.org/NCAP, provides a number of different ways that a council can obtain input to this process.

Step 1. Identifying Areas of Strength and Areas of Improvement

The team should start by identifying the camp's strengths and opportunities for improvement in concrete ways. For example, strengths might include a new dining hall, a great climbing program, a good leaders' guide. Areas of improvement might include delays in youth being able to shoot at the rifle or archery range; improving the camp fire program; improving food quality; and reducing costs.

Why does NCAP focus on both areas of strength and areas of improvement? Areas of strength draw campers to the camp. Neglecting these areas may cause the camp to lose its competitive edge.

Step 2. Establishing the Metrics for Success

In the second step, the CCIP team must establish metrics to

evaluate how well the camp is achieving the possible CCIP goal. Metrics should be simple to understand, readily measurable in the camp environment, and not too burdensome on the staff. Some possible metrics for the example Areas of Strength could be as follows:

New Dining Hall. A new dining hall is not, by itself, a strength. The team should tease out what makes the new dining hall appealing to campers. Perhaps it is a more functional layout. More likely, it is the fact that the facility is clean and neat. An appropriate metric in this case might be a housekeeping inspection or even a county health inspection numeric score card. While either a one time number (the health inspection) or a series may be used, the series approach allows the camp staff team to focus on continuing to maintain or improve the score over the summer and may represent a better metric.

Great Climbing Program. As with the new dining hall, the CCIP team needs to determine what makes this program "great." It may be staff, it may be equipment, it may be the rock face or climbing wall. The team must then develop a metric. Perhaps this item lends itself to a "customer satisfaction survey" used each week to assess campers' happiness with their experience. Facilities metrics might include tracking the number of pieces of equipment "down" for repair each week, the delay time for participants to get on the wall or rock face, or the number of unique participants included in the program.

Good Leaders' Guide. The metrics for a good leaders' guide

might include a customer satisfaction survey, a listing of questions received by headquarters that should have been addressed in the guide, but were not (e.g., last year we received five questions that should have been in the guide; this year we want to only have four questions that should have been in the guide).

Possible metrics for the example Areas of Improvement could be as follows:

Shooting Sports Delay. A possible metric would be how much time a Scout spends in line waiting. This could be measured by giving four or five Scouts a card with the time they arrived and noting the time that they started shooting. These times could be tracked to see if there is improvement.

Improving Camp Fire Program. This metric lends itself to the customer satisfaction survey, but other measures are possible (number of units submitting skits, walk ons or song proposals; average decibels during the camp song, etc.).

Improving Food Quality. Food quality is a critical element of camp success. Metrics include surveys, tracking quality of the ingredients (fresh fruit and vegetables versus canned); higher quality meat or poultry cuts; dietician review of menus; number of complaints.

Reducing Costs. Reducing cost, but delivering the same quality of program, helps conserve Scouting's resources to deliver program to more youth. Costs can be calculated on a metric such as \$/user day or \$/camper to help "normalize" the values to reflect changes in camp load from year

The Continuous Camp Improvement Program *continued*

to year. Examples of such calculations are included in *Strategic Planning for Council Camp Properties*, No. 20-940.

The **Guide to the Continuous Camp Improvement Program** lists a number of additional examples of potential areas of strength and areas of improvement and possible metrics. All CCIP teams are encouraged to review the **Guide** (available at www.scouting.org/NCAP).

Selection of appropriate goals and metrics is critical to the CCIP. Some goals that may have been attractive initially may turn out not to be feasible after the CCIP team evaluates possible metrics -- either because no good metric exists or the metric would be burdensome to collect in the camp environment. After all, no one goes to camp to complete paperwork! CCIP goals should be developed with this thought in mind.

Step 3. Establishing the Success Goal

After the areas of strength and improvement and their metrics are selected, the CCIP team should establish the success goal, which tells the team that they have succeeded in maintaining (or improving) an area of strength and improving an area of improvement. Success goals should be established in terms of the metric for the area. So, the dining hall goal might be to achieve greater than a 93 on each weekly housekeeping inspection; the climbing program goal might be a customer satisfaction survey combined score of 4.3 on a 5.0 scale; the leader guide success goal might be either fewer questions that should have been included or a specific num-

ber (e.g., two).

In the areas of improvement, CCIP is trying to improve the camp's performance. Therefore, the goals should be either to achieve a specific benchmark or a specific amount of improvement over the prior year. Thus, the campfire improvement goal might be to achieve a 4.5 on a 5 scale (a determined standard) or to achieve a 0.2 improvement over the prior year's results (a relative scale). Either approach is appropriate and the choice may depend upon what information is available to the CCIP team. Similarly, improving wait times at the rifle or archery range might call for no Scout to wait more than 5 minutes (a determined standard) to reducing average wait time by 10% (a relative standard).

Step 4. Measuring Progress

Once the goals and metrics are selected, the CCIP team needs to work with camp staff to ensure that the relevant metric information is collected. This is why including camp staff in the CCIP team is critical; the staff can provide instant feedback on whether collection of the desired metric is feasible and/or suggest other metrics of measuring approaches. The importance of the CCIP and the metrics should then be addressed during training, to ensure that the staff understands CCIP's goals and why gathering the metric information is important to the camp's success. Outreach during training will result in better support during CCIP implementation.

Assessing CCIP Implementation

NCAP splits its review of the CCIP into two parts: the first during the annual Assessment and the second during Application and Authorization.

Assessment. During Assessment, the focus is on the *process* of CCIP: Does the camp have a CCIP? Does it have goals? Does it have metrics? Is it measuring the metrics? How did the camp do on last year's goals?

A good CCIP should have clearly stated goals and metrics. The staff responsible for the goal and metric should know them and be able to demonstrate that they are collecting the required information. What does an Assessment team do if this is not the case?

- *No CCIP.* If a camp has no CCIP in place, the appropriate Assessment response is to mark Standard AO-810 as "noncompliant" and to request that the camp develop a corrective action plan within two weeks that at least achieves part of the Standard. The corrective action plan may not always be practical (e.g., camp may only last two to three weeks), so Assessment teams should use discretion on whether to require a corrective action plan during this camping season or require submittal of the CCIP prior to the next camping season. The absence of the CCIP should be called to the attention of the council president in the council president's letter.

- *No metrics.* If a camp has developed goals, but hasn't developed metrics, or isn't collecting them, the appropriate Assessment response is to make Standard AO-810 as "noncompliant," require a corrective action plan (if appro-

The Continuous Camp Improvement Program *continued*

appropriate), and to note the needed improvements in the letter to the council president.

- **Partial implementation.** Partial implementation occurs where some, but not all, of the CCIP goals are set; or some, but not all, of the measurements are being taken. In this case, the appropriate Assessment response would be to write up the program as a “deviation” and counsel the camp on fully implementing NCAP.

- **Failure to achieve goals.** Unlike the prior issues, a camp’s failure to achieve its CCIP goals is not a matter for which Assessment would score the program as either noncompliant or a deviation. Instead, Assessment should note this issue in the program narrative. A camp’s failure to achieve goals, or failure to set meaningful goals, will be reviewed in the Authorization phase.

Assessment teams play a critical role in the CCIP. Assessment teams identify when CCIP is not being used and strive to bring about implementation by counseling and, where necessary, requiring a corrective action plan. Assessment teams also document in the Assessment report how the camp did during the prior year. However, while CCIP is critical to NCAP, in no situation would a camp’s failure to participate in NCAP be grounds for closure of a camp or program activity, although it may be grounds for a conditional accreditation if the failure to implement the CCIP process warrants a “noncompliant” finding. If a camp persistently fails to comply with Standard AO-810, then on the second (if egregious), or third (if less egregious), occurrence in a row, the situation

should be referred to the regional camp accreditation committee for investigation, counseling and any needed action.

Authorization. The Authorization team, unlike the Assessment team, is concerned with the *substance* of the camp’s CCIP in addition to its *process*. Starting with the later rounds of initial Authorization, and then when camps come in for re-Authorization, their implementation of the CCIP should be carefully scrutinized. Camps that are not participating in the CCIP should be addressed with Conditional Authorizations, Improvement Plans or corrective action plans, as appropriate. Camps that set inappropriate goals should be counseled, with consideration of Conditional Authorization, Improvement Plans or corrective action plans as needed. Camps that set goals, but do not achieve them, warrant a more nuanced review. A camp that has set weak goals and not achieved them should be counseled, perhaps assigned an area liaison as a mentor, and encouraged to do better, with a corrective action plan as a stick should success rates not improve. Camps that set ambitious goals, but fall short of them, but see improvements in score nonetheless, should be commended for their efforts. In general, camps should achieve a quarter to a third of their goals in any Authorization period. It is likely that camps seeking recognition, once that program is rolled out, would need to achieve a higher percentage, perhaps two-thirds to three-quarters.

Improving the CCIP

NCAP hopes to improve the CCIP over time. Improvement will occur if camps, councils and assessment teams share examples of particularly good CCIP goals and metrics, allowing other councils and camps to “bestmark” those goals. If you are aware of a particularly good CCIP or even just a specific goal and metric, please share them with NCAP for possible future use in the **NCAP Circular**. Information should be mailed to NCAP@scouting.org. We will publish examples received from the field in upcoming issues of the **NCAP Circular**.

Working together with the CCIP, we can make Scout camping the envy of the larger camping world. Let’s do it!

Resources:

- **Guide to the Continuous Camp Improvement Program, No. 430-075** (available at www.scouting.org/NCAP)

- **National Camp Standards, No. 430-056**, Introductory Materials, pages 7-8; and Standard AO-810, Continuous Camp Improvement



Standards Deferred from Assessment for 2014

NCAP Circular No. 3 *super-sedes* the discussion of Standard deferral in NCAP Circular No. 1 pages 2-3. If there are questions, please contact Eric Hiser or Brian Gray.

Standards PD-101, General Program Design; PD-102, Cub Scout Program Design; PD-103, Boy Scout/Varsity Scout Program Design; PD-104, Venturing/Sea Scouting Program Design; and PD-105, Specialty-Adventure and High Adventure Program Design.

NCAP has determined that program design will be assessed by the regional authorization teams. NCAP Assessment Teams should review with the camp director how the council and camp have met the annual review requirement at the end of each Standard.

Any concerns with the camp's compliance with the Program Design Standards should be flagged in the narrative report, but is not a basis for denial of accreditation or conditional accreditation by the team. The regional and area camp assessment coordinator and chair should also be notified.

Standard PD-111, New Programs and Activities

This Standard should be assessed in regular course in 2014. It applies to any programs or activities started at the camp after January 1, 2013.

Standard AO-801, Permits and Compliance

This Standard is in effect in 2014. All camps should be in full compliance with applicable law. All camps should have a list of required permits and approvals and copies of those permits or approvals available to the Assessment team. Proof of a legal review within the past three years should be available. For 2014 only, the failure to have proof of legal review shall be treated as a deviation and not as noncompliance with the Standard.

Standard AO-802, BSA Authorization to Operate

This Standard is in effect. Councils with an Authorization to Operate must demonstrate compliance. Councils without an Authorization to Operate may demonstrate compliance by show-

ing that they are not required to have submitted their Application or have timely submitted their Application. A letter or email from the regional camp accreditation chair stating that the council is in compliance with the Standard will also meet the requirement of the Standard.

Standard AO-806. Camp Budgeting, Analysis and Financial Controls.

The Standard requirement for an annual camp analysis and the Specific Requirement A for budget and financial data entered in accordance with BSA directives will be addressed during the Authorization process and not during the Assessment process. The Assessment team should inquire whether financial control requirements have been shared with key staff and that such finance, inventory and related controls are being followed.

Std. AO-808. BSA Reporting.

As stated in the compliance verification section, the National Office will notify the area or council if issues are detected in reporting.

New Youth Protection Training Materials for Standards PS-215, SQ-402 and SQ-404.

BSA's National Youth Protection Team has released replacement youth protection training for camp staff members. The following documents are being *discontinued and replaced*:

- Camp Leadership—Youth Protection Begins With You™, No. 623-127; and
- Seasonal Camp Staff Youth Protection and Personal Safety Training, No. 20-138.

The *replacement* is **Camp Staff Youth Protection Training, No. 430-149**. In addition, the National

Youth Protection Team has released a training powerpoint that all camps should use as part of their staff training. The powerpoint is entitled: *Camp Staff Youth Protection* contains 19 slides with detailed information on Scouting's barriers to abuse, reporting framework, with guidance on acceptable and unacceptable touching and behavior. It is a must review for all camp staff.

Both Camp Staff Youth Protection Training, No. 430-149 and

the powerpoint Camp Staff Youth Protection are available at the NCAP website:

www.scouting.org/NCAP

Please note that on the website, the powerpoint is called "Managing Youth Protection powerpoint," but this is the correct powerpoint to use with the Camp Staff Youth Protection Training.

Contact NCAP@scouting.org if you have any questions about proper youth protection training at your camp.

Understanding “Equivalent” in Standard SQ-412

One of the dramatic changes between the NCAP program and the prior camp standards is the grant to local councils and camps of broader authority to tailor training requirements for camp staff to meet individual safety and program excellence goals. Instead of requiring National Camping School certificates for positions, NCAP authorizes the council to substitute “equivalent skills” or “equivalent training.” How does a council determine what is “equivalent” and who makes the ultimate determination under NCAP?

The answer to these questions varies by the position and important guidance is provided in the Interpretation. For example, for camp commissioners, “equivalent skills” are stated to “include an experienced unit, district or council commissioner.” What is experienced? The initial judgment is made by the council, with review by the camp assessment team.

For ecology/conservation directors, the Interpretation of the Standard provides extensive guidance and this provision is self-executing for those qualified

in that way. Other criteria may also be appropriate. In that case, the council should put its proposed criteria in its Application for Authorization to Operate and get it approved during the Authorization process. The Authorization then becomes the governing document. If the council is not scheduled to obtain Authorization for a year or so, the council can submit its request to the Regional Camp Accreditation Chair (listed on the last page of this **NCAP Circular**), and he will arrange to review and grant interim approval of the proposed criteria pending final Authorization.

Outdoor skills directors and first-year camper directors are core Scouting skills. While NCAP encourages individuals holding this position to seek National Camping School accreditation due to the program benefits it brings, an experienced Scoutmaster with experience working with outdoor skills and/or new Scouts could potentially fit this position well. Once again, the council should set forth its criteria in writing with a justification.

The remaining positions in Standard SQ-412 do not explicitly call out “equivalent skills” because their nature is different. In the case of chaplains, the primary qualification is by the religious entity or the Scout Executive’s judgment.

Horse and Stock Directors are expected to have great familiarity with horses and stock, to be able to provide for proper care, feeding and grooming of the stock, and proper supervision of staff and campers. Prior experience in commercial or government riding is important -- more than just having a horse at home.

ATV staff must be trained by the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute and is only allowed when the program is authorized by the National Council.

Finally, councils are required to establish criteria for “other activity leaders,” which means staff in charge of program areas and activities at the camp. These training criteria are to be included in the Application and will be reviewed and approved during the Authorization process.

Shooting Sports Clarifications for 2014

Day Camp, Family Camp or Resident Camp Leadership Requirements.

A BB Gun, Archery Range or Sling Shot (wrist rockets) Range(s) requires a Trained Rangemaster with a 1 to 8 ratio of Rangemaster to Wolf, Bear and Webelos Shooters. Tiger Cubs is an adult partner / youth program and requires an adult to serve as a coach on the range.

Rangemasters are trained by a currently certified National Camp School Shooting Sports Director

or an NRA Rifle Instructor. The Training requirements are found in the **Shooting Sports Manual**, No. 30-931, at page 84.

Boy Scout or Venturing Resident Camp.

Rifle and Shotgun Ranges must be operated under leadership of currently certified National Camp School Shooting Sports Director or an NRA Rifle or Shotgun Instructor. A camp operating more than one range must have one

NCS Shooting Sports Director on site with additional ranges led by an NRA Instructor for the discipline.

Boy Scout Resident Camps cannot operate pistol programs unless they are one of the approved pilot councils.

Only the fourteen councils selected by the National Council in 2014 will participate in the Pistol/Revolver Pilot Program as part of their resident camp program.

NCAP Recognition News; Advisory Group Sought

As part of the initial design for NCAP, the Camp Standards Task Force envisioned that Accreditation with Gold or Silver recognition would be available to camps that go “above and beyond” the minimum requirements of the BSA National Camp Standards. Feedback from the field and participants at the Philmont NCAP training session indicated support for this concept, but requested that it be made available to all camps and councils at the same time and not be specifically tied

to the Application and Authorization process to facilitate an earlier start and level playing field for all camps. NCAP has been striving to meet these requests.

NCAP is currently considering an alternative approach to Gold and Silver Recognition that might focus on the strength of particular program or activity areas in lieu of a “whole camp” recognition program. NCAP hopes to release a draft discussion document on the proposed approach to Recognition in the next **NCAP Circular**.

In the interim, NCAP is seeking professional and volunteer Scouters with experience in all aspects of camp administration and program to assist with reviewing the proposed recognition program. NCAP is seeking balanced representation among interested groups. Interested individuals should send a statement of interest detailing their camp leadership experience to NCAP@scouting.org. All individuals applying will need the approval of their Scout Executive.

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