



# NATIONAL CAMP ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



## Council Implementation Guide



BOY SCOUTS  
OF AMERICA



## **COUNCIL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

**January 2022 edition**



**BOY SCOUTS  
OF AMERICA®**

National Camp Accreditation Committee • National Council, Boy Scouts of America

# **FOREWORD**

**The purpose of the National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) is to help councils elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's Promise to youth.**

**The NCAP uses an interwoven process of: application, authorization, continuous camp improvement, assessment, and accreditation to achieve this purpose.**

# Table of Contents

Introduction to National Camp Accreditation Program.....	6
Changes to the BSA Structure .....	7
Elements of NCAP .....	7
THE NATIONAL CAMP ACCREDITATION PROGRAM .....	8
Multiyear Authorization Cycle .....	8
The Continuous Camp Improvement Program .....	9
Annual Assessment and Accreditation Cycle .....	10
NCAP Organization and Council Job Descriptions: .....	13
The Council's Role in NCAP .....	18
Council NCAP specific responsibilities: .....	19
Council Annual Process .....	20
Understanding the Standards .....	21
Supporting the Zone Accreditation Process .....	22
Intent to Operate .....	22
The Declaration of Readiness .....	22
Postcamp/Precamp Inspection .....	23
Precamp conference with the Zone Representative .....	24
Preparation for Zone On-Site Assessment.....	25
Analyzing and Communicating Assessment Results .....	26
The Zone Assessment .....	26
Assessing Compliance .....	26
Scoring: The Objective Review of Compliance.....	26
The Narrative: Subjective Assessment and Recommendations .....	28
Council Response to Noncompliant and Deviation Findings .....	30
Multiple Programs at the Same Camp Property .....	31
Council Self-Assessment of Designated Camps .....	32
Assessing Short-Term Camps.....	38
Overall Summary of the NCAP Process.....	38
Application & Authorization Process .....	38
The Accreditation Decision.....	40
Request for Review of Authorization.....	41
Reopening and Revocation of Accreditation or Authorization .....	42

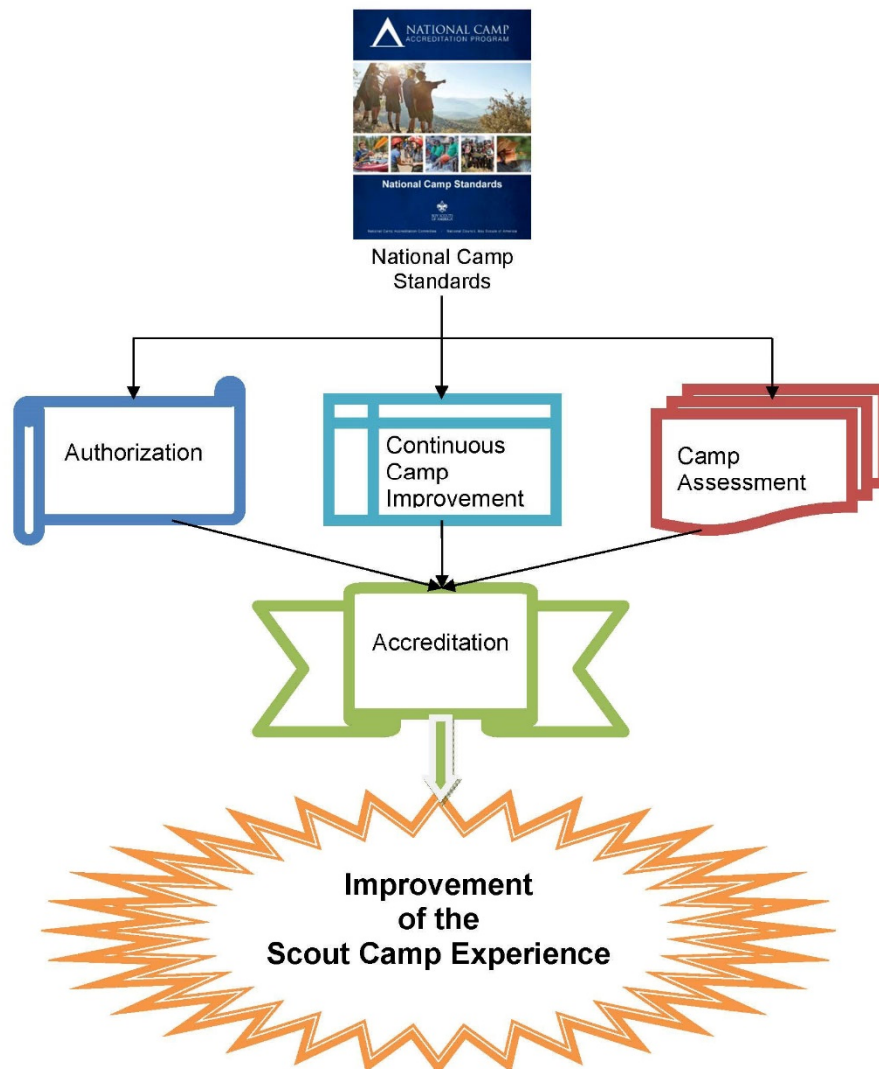
Appeals Procedure .....	43
NCAP Resources: .....	43

# Introduction to National Camp Accreditation Program

*The purpose of the Boy Scouts of America's National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) is to help councils elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's "Promise to Youth". Councils will engage in a rigorous review of camps and properties, continuous improvement, and correction or elimination of substandard practices.*

This introduction outlines the major elements of NCAP and the critical role that the Council will play in raising BSA camping to an ever-higher level of quality and performance.

## NATIONAL CAMP ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



## Changes to the BSA Structure

- In 2021, the National Council reorganized the BSA structure across the country and overseas by eliminating the four regions (and the associated areas) and replacing them with the sixteen National Service Territories (NSTs).
- As a result, the National NCAP Committee is responsible for all aspects of camp authorization, assessment, and accreditation. Assessments are administered through the **Zone Assessment Coordinators** who, while not part of the NST committee, work in the same geographic areas as the territories.
- Throughout this document, we will be referring to the “**zone**” which corresponds to your geographic national service territory boundaries.

## Elements of NCAP

**NCAP consists of the following elements:**

- The **National Camp Standards** are a foundation of NCAP and they provide for a consistently safe and quality camping and outdoor program for youth. They represent the minimum program that Scouting will deliver to youth who choose to participate in our program.
- The **Application for Authorization to Operate** challenges the council to convert the consistently safe and quality program required by the National Camp Standards to a good or great dynamic and relevant program by committing to concrete steps for quality and improvement.
- The **Application Review** by a team of trained Authorization Reviewers provides a “reality check” that the council’s camping program has evident quality and is viable and sustainable.
- The **Authorization to Operate** issued by the National Council provides clarity, consistency, and accountability in the application of the National Camp Standards to each camp, and sets forth the program quality, facility quality, and financial sustainability commitments the council has made to operate a safe, high-quality, and dynamic program for youth.
- The **Continuous Camp Improvement Program** provides a series of tools that, if used well, will help the council continuously improve the safety, quality, and relevance of its camping program by focusing on its customers and meeting their expectations for what a Scouting camp should deliver.
- The **Camp Assessment Process** conducted by the zone or council provides annual verification that the camp meets the National Camp Standards and commitments made in the council’s Authorization to Operate and provides valuable feedback to councils on improving program design and implementation.



- The **Accreditation**, the capstone of NCAP, is awarded by the National Council or local council at the conclusion of the camp assessment and it provides recognition that a council's camp is delivering Scouting's promise to youth and is an important assurance to parents and interested parties of the safety and quality of the council's camping program.

## **THE NATIONAL CAMP ACCREDITATION PROGRAM**

The purpose of the BSA's National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) is to help councils elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's promise to youth. Councils will engage in rigorous review of camps and properties, continuous improvement, and correction or elimination of substandard practices.

In addition to the National Camp Standards, the NCAP involves three separate but interrelated cycles that both support the standards and ensure that camps meet continuous improvement goals: (1) the multiyear authorization cycle; (2) the continuous camp improvement program, which has multiyear and annual components; and (3) the annual assessment and accreditation cycle.

### **Multiyear Authorization Cycle**

The multiyear authorization cycle starts with the council submitting an application to the National Council. The application contains a description of all the council's camps for which it is seeking an Authorization to Operate and accreditation. For each camp/camp property, the application will describe the program goals; the facilities; how the council will meet the standards; the recommended practices, if any, the council intends to adopt; and any additional quality commitments that the council intends to meet to provide the safest and highest possible quality program to participants. The application requires approval by the council executive board or executive committee. All councils will also submit additional documentation, including Council Sustainability Data Sheets, Camp Sustainability Data Sheets, Council Sustainability Commitments, Camp Strategic Improvement Plans and Camp Facility Evaluations with photos. Some councils that have limited or no properties/program may only need to provide some of the documents. Councils with limited properties/program should coordinate with their assigned reviewer for guidance.

The Authorization to Operate represents a determination by the National Council, through the National NCAP Committee, that the council has demonstrated that its camp properties and camps meet the requirements for accreditation. The Authorization to Operate identifies additional commitments, if any, made by the council concerning the operation of its camps and camp properties. Specified terms and conditions of the Authorization to Operate, such as the general conditions and those incorporated from variances or plans



of improvement, are treated in the same fashion as standards. Authorizations to Operate remain valid for five years, unless there is a basis to revoke the Authorization to Operate or to issue an Authorization to Operate for fewer than five years.

As part of the continuous camp improvement program (discussed below), the council will submit a camp strategic improvement plan for its long-term camps. The camp strategic improvement plan will be attached to the Authorization to Operate to record the council's plans. A council may amend the camp strategic improvement plan by submitting changes or alternatives to the National NCAP Committee. Camp strategic improvement plans are not terms or conditions of the Authorization to Operate, but are evidence of the council's commitment to continuous camp improvement. While the camp strategic improvement plans are not a term, failure of a council **to meaningfully improve** the quality of its camps over the authorization period may be a basis for denial of authorization in the future.

In addition, the Authorization to Operate will include the terms of any variances issued to a camp property or camp. If questions arise on the application of a standard to a camp, the authorization should be consulted to determine if it provides resolution. The Authorization to Operate is binding on both the council and the camp assessment team. In the third year of the council's authorization, an Interim Report is due on April 1<sup>st</sup> which provides an update on the council's progress in obtaining the goals set out in the authorization.

At the time noted in its Authorization to Operate, the council will need to file a new application to renew its Authorization to Operate, and the multiyear Authorization cycle starts over.

If a council wishes to add a new camp property, a new long-term camp, or start a day camp or short-term camp program when the council has not previously been authorized to conduct such a program, it must submit an application for authorization to NCAP for assignment to a national authorization team. A new application is not required to add sessions of an existing long-term camp, or to add additional day camps, or short-term camps when those programs are already authorized.

Questions about the multiyear Authorization cycle should be directed to the National NCAP Committee, the national NCAP staff advisor or national outdoor program staff.

## **The Continuous Camp Improvement Program**

The continuous camp improvement program is a process during which the council, after consultation with affected stakeholders and camp staff, develops goals to maintain and to improve the quality of the camp experience for participants, consistent with Scouting's commitment to continuously improve the camp experience. The council identifies areas of strength that should be maintained and then outlines areas of improvement. The continuous camp improvement program should identify improvements across all facets

of camp operation, including:

- Staff
- Program
- Program equipment
- Facilities
- Sustainability
- Marketing and communication
- Attendees and participation

The continuous camp improvement program has two components: a multiyear **camp strategic improvement plan**, and an **annual camp improvement program**. The camp strategic improvement plan, which applies to long-term camps, identifies one or more areas of improvement and one or more areas of strength that the council will address over the next four to seven years, which collectively should address at least five of the continuous camp improvement categories.

For each identified area, the camp strategic improvement plan sets forth improvement measures, an approximate time for initiation and completion, and how the camp will determine the success of its measures. This plan can be revised as needed by the council by submitting a letter to [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). Councils are encouraged to review this plan as part of the application process and then again during the council strategic planning process (and some councils may do so more frequently).

The annual camp improvement program identifies one or more areas of improvement and one or more areas of strength that the camp will address during the year or camping season, which collectively address at least four of the continuous camp improvement categories. Some of the measures may come from the camp strategic improvement plan, while others may come from camp staff reports, postcamp and precamp inspections, or customer surveys. These programs are intended to be living documents used by the camp staff. Like the camp strategic improvement plan, they should include definite goals, metrics, and success criteria to help the camp evaluate progress toward improvement.

Additional details about the Continuous Camp Improvement Program and guidance on how to address camps held off a camp property or camp properties without camp may be found in the ***Continuous Camp Improvement Guide*** available on the NCAP website.

### **Annual Assessment and Accreditation Cycle**

In addition to the multiyear authorization cycle, there is an annual assessment and accreditation cycle that ensures that each camp meets the requirements of the National Camp Standards and the Authorization to Operate (once issued). The annual cycle includes the following steps:

## **1. Intent to Operate**

The Intent to Operate is to be completed by October 31 the year prior to operation for long-term camps and camp properties. It is the application for approval for the camp to operate on behalf of the council. Long-term camps and camp-property intent-to-operate submissions are approved by the National Outdoor Programs Team on behalf of the National NCAP Committee. The long-term Intent to Operate is used by NCAP leadership to facilitate the scheduling of the assessments of the camps and properties. An Intent to Operate is not needed for short-term camps or day camps. Instead, the council will issue a Local Council Authorization and Assessment Declaration, which serves many of the same functions.

## **2. Postcamp/Precamp Inspection**

Postcamp/Precamp Inspection is an inspection conducted by the council to help prepare each camp property for the upcoming program year. At least once during each authorization cycle, the council will use the Camp Facility Evaluation tool to provide a brand fitness evaluation. Councils should also plan to complete their camp property self-assessment in conjunction with a precamp inspection and file the results through the national assessment reporting portal on the NCAP website.

## **3. Declaration of Readiness (Long-Term Camps)**

The Declaration of Readiness for long-term camps is due to the assigned zone assessment team leader by May 15 or 30 days in advance if the event is not held in the summer. The declaration is a statement by the council that the long-term camp is ready to open and will comply with the standards. Councils are encouraged to attach much of the paperwork required for demonstrating compliance with the standards to the Declaration of Readiness to save time during the assessment. Councils will also include in their Declaration of Readiness their prior-year annual camp improvement program goals, metrics, success criteria, whether the camp achieved the goals, and if not, the lessons learned. The Declaration of Readiness will also present the initial annual camp improvement program goals, metrics, and success criteria for the current year, which collectively address at least four of the continuous camp improvement categories.

## **4. Assessment and Accreditation**

Each year, the assigned NCAP national zone camp assessment team (for long-term camps) the council self-assessment team (for day camps, COPE/Climbing courses, and camp properties), or the Short-Term Camp Administrator (for short term camps) will visit the camp property or camp to assess whether it qualifies for accreditation. If the camp assessment team finds that the camp property or camp complies with the standards and Authorization to Operate and is appropriately implementing the continuous camp improvement program, it will confirm the camp property's or camp's accredited status. If

there are issues, the team will work with the council to address them. A camp that promptly corrects items that are not serious will maintain its accredited status. Short-term camps are assessed by their short-term camp administrator.

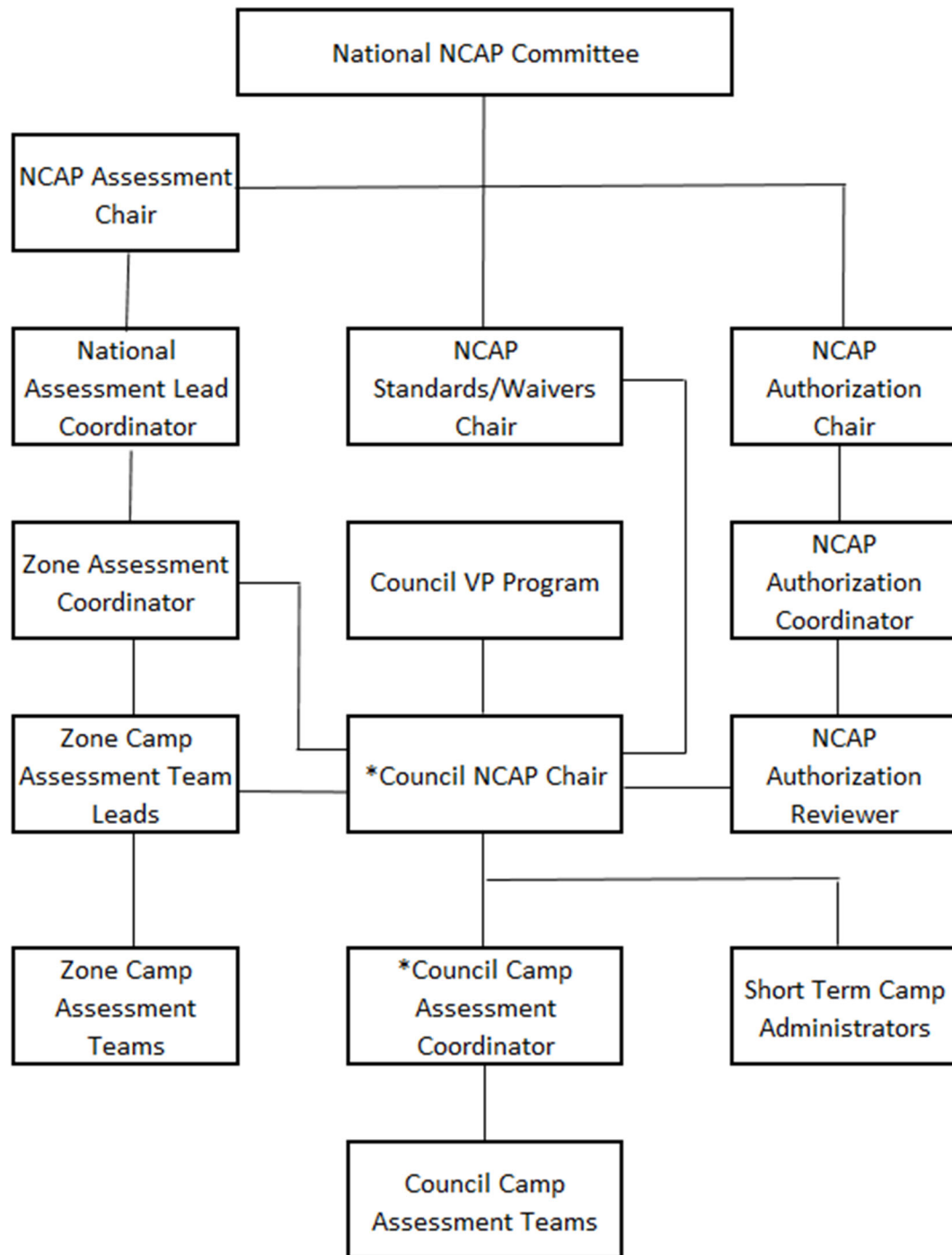
A camp that cannot correct promptly is placed into conditional accreditation or, in serious cases, the camp assessment team may recommend to the national NCAP committee the possible reopening or revocation of its Authorization to Operate. In cases of possible threat to life or health, the camp assessment team may direct that the program causing such threat be closed until the threat is removed. The National NCAP staff advisor will be notified immediately and will provide leadership in this situation.

Assessments done on short-term camps and day camps will be done by using the NCAP Local Council Authorization and Assessment Declaration forms and retained by the council for a review done annually by the assigned zone leadership. Questions about the annual cycle of assessment and accreditation should be directed to the assigned zone camp assessment coordinator.

## **5. Annual Report**

Councils will be asked to submit information on the number of camps held by type, assessment results and attendance information through the annual Intent to Operate process. This annual report is due October 31.

## NCAP Organization and Council Job Descriptions:



\*Depending on the size of the council, these positions might be filled by one person. National Assistant Chairs for Assessment, Standards/Waivers and Authorization are not shown here for simplicity.

Note that the council communicates directly with the zone in parts of the NCAP process.

Each council is encouraged to appoint a Council Camp Assessment Coordinator to work with the Zone Assessment Coordinator, to help facilitate zone assessments of Long-Term camps and to ensure that the council conducts all required self-assessments.

### **General Qualifications for all Council NCAP Appointments**

All council NCAP volunteer personnel must meet qualifications and will be supplied with job descriptions outlining their appointment and responsibilities.

Uniform requirements for each of the positions described below include the following:

1. Registered adult member of the Boy Scouts of America.
2. Knows and practices Scouting ideals.
3. Completes required training for the position to which appointed. Completes Youth Protection training.
4. Meets any special qualifications required for the position.
5. Completes the Annual Health and Medical Record, Parts A and B.

**Terms:** One year.

### **Council NCAP Chair**

**Position Summary:** Coordinates and oversees implementation of the Council's camp accreditation process.

**Appointment and Support:** Appointed by and reports to the Council Vice President of Program or Council Camping Committee Chair. Works with the Scout Executive or his designee as staff adviser. Communicates with and is supported by a Zone Assessment Team Lead and the Zone Assessment Coordinator. During the multiyear authorization process, communicates with and is supported by the National Authorization Coordinator and Reviewer to facilitate the completion of the necessary documentation.

#### **Specific Qualifications:**

1. Shows leadership and management skills in working with people and data, including use of the latest electronic communication resources.
  2. Has in-depth understanding of the BSA National Camp Accreditation Program.
  3. Has completed position-specific training, including annual NCAP online training and zone camp assessment meetings.
  4. Can use good common-sense judgment in implementing accreditation processes.
- Has board-level experience in council operations.

#### **Responsibilities:**

1. Takes the lead in explaining and interpreting the National Camp Accreditation Program

- to the council.
2. Coordinates long-term strategic planning for camp programs and operations, using the continuous camp improvement program and its Camp Strategic Improvement Plans.
  3. Establishes a detailed plan and time schedule for completion of year-round required tasks.
    - a. Ensures that the Intent to Operate is submitted each fall.
    - b. Oversees preparation of the Application for Authorization, when required.
    - c. Works with the council Properties and Camping Committees, etc. to assure that the council completes the fall/spring postcamp/precamp inspections. May provide guidance to these committees to ensure that this information is made available to the Council Executive Board, council leadership, and council committees to make the needed improvements.
    - d. Ensures that the Camp Facilities Evaluation Tool is completed and that related action plans are developed and implemented by appropriate council committees or groups.
    - e. Ensures that the Declaration of Readiness is submitted annually by May 15 for each operating summer camp.
  4. Develops and oversees a well-prepared group of council volunteers to assist in self-assessment and preparations for accreditation.
    - a. Recruits and supports volunteers to participate in the council's self-assessment of camps.
    - b. Recruits and supports volunteers to serve as Short-Term Camp Administrators.
    - c. Selects and appoints assistant chairs, team leaders, and administrative assistants as needed.
    - d. Provides guidance and assistance in training volunteers for on-site assessment.
    - e. Ensures that self-assessment records are maintained, analyzed, and submitted as appropriate.
  5. Supports the zone's assessment of council camps.
    - a. Assists the Camp Director in understanding the assessment process and in preparing to meet the standards.
    - b. Arranges for a team of key council board members and Scouters to be present for the zone on-site assessment at each camp.
  6. Analyzes camp operations and provides periodic updates to the Council Executive Board.



7. Responsible for ensuring the council has developed background plans and programs to ensure compliance with National Camp Standards for short-term camps.
8. Responsible for ensuring the council issues a Local Council Authorization and Assessment Declaration form for each short-term camp and day camp.
9. Responsible for ensuring that all required site appraisal forms are prepared for day camp and short-term camp locations.
10. Responsible for ensuring that short-term camp administrators are recruited and trained (unless delegated to the council camp assessment chair).
11. Supports zone assessment of other council camps.
  - a. Works with the council to identify potential camp assessors who will be approved by the Scout Executive and submitted to the Zone Assessment Coordinator for participating in zone assessment of other councils' camps. The Council NCAP Chair will follow up and encourage the council appointed camp assessors to participate in the zone camp assessment meeting in the spring.

### **Council Camp Assessment Coordinator**

Note: this position may be combined with Council NCAP Chair

**Position Summary:** Coordinates and oversees the council's camp self-assessment process.

**Appointment and Support:** Appointed by and reports to the Council NCAP Chair. Works with designated council staff as adviser.

#### **Specific Qualifications:**

1. Shows leadership and management skills in working with people and data, including use of the latest electronic communication resources.
2. Has in-depth understanding of the standards and assessment processes of NCAP.
3. Has completed position-specific training, including online orientation, self-study, and zone camp assessment meetings.
4. Can use good common-sense judgment in implementing assessment processes.

#### **Responsibilities:**

1. Develops and oversees a well-prepared group of volunteers to conduct on-site assessments and preparations for accreditation.
  - a. Recruits and supports volunteers to participate in the council's self-assessment of camps.
  - b. Selects and appoints assistant chairs, team leaders, and administrative assistants as needed.

- c. Ensures that all assessors participate in online orientation and self-study.
- d. Conducts formal training for assessment team members, using information and approaches from the zone's in-person meeting for council self-assessment chairs. Receives training at the zone assessment meetings in the spring.
- 2. Organizes and oversees the council's self-assessment of council Day Camps and Camp Properties.
  - a. Schedules on-site assessments.
  - b. Assigns the members of the team assessing each camp, seeking unbiased evaluation.
- 4. Maintains, analyzes, and submits council assessment records as appropriate.

## **The Council's Role in NCAP**

The council plays an important role in implementation of NCAP and the goal of improving the quality of the program received by Scouting's youth in outdoor programs. The role may be summarized as follows:

### **Implementing a dynamic, relevant, high-quality, and safe outdoor program for Scouting:**

The first, and most important, duty the council has is to implement a dynamic, relevant, high- quality, and safe outdoor program for its youth. This is typically done by providing a safe, exciting, and high-quality council-sponsored camping program, either at the council's own facilities or by making arrangements with others, including other councils, to provide such programs to the council's units. If a council chooses to operate its own camping facilities, the council is required to complete the steps in the NCAP process as outlined above. It is then the responsibility of the council to operate its camps in accordance with the National Camp Standards and its Authorization to Operate.

### **Implementing the self-assessment process for council Day Camps, Short-Term Camps and Camp properties or portions of camp properties not assessed by the zone:**

The second major responsibility of the council is to conduct a self-assessment of its council Day Camps, Short-Term Camps, and camp properties. This process involves selecting knowledgeable individuals to review camp facilities and operations, training them in NCAP assessment techniques, conducting a thorough assessment, submitting the assessment report to the council, and then reviewing the assessment report and striving to continuously improve the safety and quality of Day Camp and Short-Term Camp programs and camp properties. Refer to the NCAP website and the Short-Term Camp Resources page for details.

### **Implementing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program at its Camps:**

As part of Scouting's commitment to "elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's Promise to youth," NCAP has developed a Continuous Camp Improvement Program (CCIP) to assist councils in taking concrete steps to improve all areas of camp operations. Each council operating a camp program will be required to engage in this process and to survey its stakeholders, to the extent feasible, to assist in improving the camp experience.

### **Participating in NCAP at the Zone level:**

The local council also has a critical role in making the zone assessment program for Long-Term camps. This role is fulfilled in part by nominating high-quality individuals to represent the council on the zone camp assessment teams. Also crucial to success is ensuring that council personnel responsible for camp administration, National

Camp Standards, application and authorization, assessment, and continuous camp improvement are properly trained and familiar with NCAP processes and procedures.

### **Council NCAP specific responsibilities:**

What	Who	How	When: (A) Annual (M) Multi-year
1) Council NCAP team organization meeting	Council NCAP Chair and designated volunteers & staff	Participate in NCAP orientation.	Fall (A)
2) File Intent to Operate Camp(s).	Council staff with Council NCAP Chair	Submit to National	Fall (A)
3) Conduct postcamp inspection.	Camping committee (or designated group)	Use the <i>Postcamp/Precamp Inspection Checklist</i> .	Fall (A)
4) Recommend and approve volunteers for zone assessment teams.	Council NCAP Chair, Scout Executive	Chair recommends, recruits; SE submits list to Zone Assessment Coordinator.	December (A)
5) Annual NCAP Assessment Training.	Council NCAP Chair and designated volunteers; designated staff	Participate in online training and Zone assessment meetings.	Spring (A)
6) Train Council self-assessment teams for Day Camps.	Council camp assessment coordinator with Council NCAP Chair	Follow designated procedures.	Spring (A)
7) Recruit and ensure training of Short-Term Camp Administrators	Council NCAP Chair and designated volunteers	Participate in the National Camp School Training for Short-Term Camp Administrators	Year-round (A)
8) Conduct camp facilities evaluation and precamp inspection.	Camping committee (or designated group)	Use the <i>Postcamp/Precamp Inspection Checklist</i> .	Spring (A)
9) File Declaration of Readiness.	Scout Executive and Camping Committee Chair with Camp Director	Supply to Zone Assessment Team Leader	By May 15 or 30 days prior (A)
10) Participate in a precamp conference with Zone Assessment Team Leader.	Council NCAP Chair, Camp Director, Scout Executive, Council Executive Board members.	As arranged with the Zone Assessment Team Leader	Late Spring (A)
11) Support Zone assessment of camps.	Council NCAP Chair; Council and camp staff	Follow designated procedures	Summer (A)

12) Conduct council self-assessment of Day Camps and camp properties	Council camp assessment coordinator and teams	These are filed at the council office for future review by the zone.	Summer (A)
13) Conduct council self-assessments of short-term camps	Council Short-Term Camp Administrators	These are filed at the council office for future review by the Zone.	Year-round (A)
14) Prepare assessment report for Council Executive Board.	All stakeholders	Present to council leadership (Board, council committees, etc.)	Fall (A)
15) Complete application for multi-year Authorization to Operate (with analysis and commitments).	Council NCAP Chair, Scout Executive, council leadership	Follow National supplied guidelines and return all completed documents to assigned NCAP Reviewer	By April 30 of designated year (M) *
16) For the Authorization Process, complete Council Sustainability Commitment.	Scout Executive, Council NCAP Chair, council leadership	Complete workbook and submit improvement plan.	Fall of designated year (M)
17) Complete an Interim Report in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of the Authorization cycle.	Scout Executive, Council NCAP Chair, council leadership	Follow National supplied guidelines and return all documents to National (ncap@scouting.org)	By March 1
* For the Multi-Year Authorization Process, councils will receive notification with instructions from National in the fall prior to the April 30 due date.			
Note: The Postcamp/Precamp Inspection Checklist should be used with the Camp Facilities Evaluation Tool. Councils will use these tools to conduct a comprehensive study of its properties and facilities as a part of the application processes.			
Standards-At-a-Glance are available for use by the council and by the zone to help simplify the assessment process and for recording comments while conducting the local council or zone assessment. For the zone assessment, the Camp Director should edit the document to eliminate programs not being conducted at the camp to assist the zone assessment team. For the local council assessment, the same type of document editing should be done by the Day Camp Director.			

## Council Annual Process

### Recruiting and Training Council NCAP Leaders

Careful recruitment and training of council NCAP personnel are keys to success. Review the job descriptions for the Council NCAP Chair and the Council Camp Assessment Chair. The leadership of these key individuals will be crucial. In a small council, one person may fulfill the responsibilities of both positions. However, it is essential that the responsibilities of the two roles be understood by those taking the job and those working with them. NCAP provides for volunteers to be active planners and decision-makers throughout the accreditation process.

Training for NCAP volunteers including council personnel is provided through various methods including zone NCAP meetings, as well as National BSA on-line presentations.

The Council NCAP Chair has the major responsibility for keeping council volunteers informed about NCAP purposes and processes. The Scout Executive and staff members provide support for that effort. The Council NCAP Chair meets frequently with council staff responsible for camp operations.

The Council NCAP Chair should actively identify and recruit individuals to be part of zone assessment teams. The Council NCAP Chair should help to build awareness of the importance of the camp assessment role and should present nominees to the Scout Executive in a timely fashion so that the Scout Executive can submit the approved list to the zone on time.

## Understanding the Standards

NCAP standards are numbered and organized by category:

- SA-00x—Standards Applicability
- PD-1xx—Program Design
- PS-2xx—Program Specific
- SQ-4xx—Staff Qualification and Training
- HS-5xx—Health and Safety
- FS-6xx—Commissary and Food Service
- FA-7xx—Facilities
- AO-8xx—Administration and Operational Management

PD-101	GENERAL PROGRAM DESIGN
	(Revised January 1, 2020)
<b>STANDARD:</b>	<b>Applies to:</b>
The overall program supports Scouting's aims using methods appropriate to the youth being served.	Camp properties
<b>Specific Requirements of the Standard:</b>	Day camp
A. Camp programs support the aims and methods of Scouting as appropriate to the youth being served. The camp has a written statement of overall goals for participants, including desired behavioral outcomes. This statement is provided in the leaders' guide.	Short-term camp
B. The camp provides a description of the overall program, showing how it implements the following camp program essentials and the applicable requirements of PD-102, PD-103, or PD-104, depending on the participants served.	Long-term camp
All areas of camp program are re-examined annually and compared with the results of end-of-session surveys to validate program effectiveness.	
<b>INTERPRETATION:</b>	
The methods appropriate to the various ages of youth are detailed in Standards PD-102 (Cub Scouts), PD-103 (Scouts BSA) and PD-104 (Venturers and Sea Scouts).	
<b>VERIFICATION:</b>	
• Review of camp literature	
• Discussion with staff about how the camp-provided program description is implemented	
• Observation of program implementation	

Recommended practices are also numbered and organized into similar categories.

Each standard is presented on a separate page using the following format:

- Number, category and title
- Effective date
- Applies to
- Standard (or recommended practice)
- Specific requirements of the standard
- Interpretation
- Verification
- References

The “Applies to” section, on the right side of each page, usually lists the types of camp to which a standard applies: Camp properties, Day camp, Short-term camp and/or Long-

term camp. Sometimes the wording is different, such as “Applies to: Camps offering aquatics programs.” The standard is presented in bold print in the shaded section. If there are specific requirements, those are presented next. The “Interpretation” explains and clarifies. “Verification” identifies how the camp assessment team will check to be sure that the standard is met. “References” provides links to additional helpful information in interpreting the Standards and Recommended Practices properly.

In addition to the full document described above, each council will have a template for the Standards-At-a-Glance and will help to create a Standards-At-a-Glance document tailored to each camp. The Standards-At-a-Glance documents and all information regarding the NCAP process can be found online at the official NCAP web page: <https://www.scouting.org/ncap>.

## **Supporting the Zone Accreditation Process**

### **Intent to Operate**

The Intent to Operate, which the council submits each fall, provides information and intended operation dates for all Long-term camps the council plans to operate during the next program year.

The Intent to Operate is used by the zone to coordinate zone assessment of Long-term camps. Since many camps open during the same short window, all visits may not be able to be scheduled at the time requested. The Zone Assessment Coordinator may have to consider zone resources and ask camps to support a date different than originally requested.

### **The Declaration of Readiness**

#### **Preparation and gathering of written materials for meeting the standards**

The **Declaration of Readiness** (#430-072) is the council’s assurance to National that a camp will be ready to open and prepared to offer a program meeting or exceeding the requirements of the National Camp Standards and its Authorization to Operate. An example of the Declaration of Readiness is shown below. The current versions of the **Declaration of Readiness** (#430-072) can be downloaded from the BSA NCAP site. One form is to be submitted for each Long-term camp.





opening camp or damage that occurred during the winter season.

Leadership for the inspection should be collaborative, involving the Council Camping Committee Chair and the Camp Director or others designated by the council. The inspection group should include members of council committees such as Camping, Properties, and Enterprise Risk Management as well as Camp Director(s), Ranger(s), and Scout Executive, plus specialists who can evaluate conditions of the facilities. It is important to get the people who are subject matter experts — a public health expert to check on all phases of sanitation, refrigeration, etc.; medical personnel for health lodge, medical supplies, and equipment; aquatics specialists for waterfront or swimming pool; and safety and/or insurance-loss experts to check hazards. Construction managers and other tradespeople can help evaluate the camp AND have the capability of volunteering to take on a needed project and complete it before opening.

### **Precamp conference with the Zone Representative**

The Zone Assessment Team Leader assigned to each council's camps should contact the council leadership during the spring to make preliminary arrangements for a precamp conference. The conference should be scheduled to take place after the Declaration of Readiness has been submitted and before the opening of camp. The required precamp conference can take place in person, by phone, or through an electronic meeting site. Where the council is seeking to open a new camp or to bring a camp out of conditional accreditation, a face-to-face meeting is necessary.

The precamp conference has the following purpose:

- To clarify the camp accreditation standards and process as necessary and note council progress toward accreditation, including the Standards-At-a-Glance for each camp and the authorization.
- To review standards-related paperwork and note meeting of associated standards and identify additional documentation that may be required. By checking off as many of the standards as possible ahead of time, the actual day of the site visit in the camp can be more productively spent looking at the actual quality and delivery of program.
- To confirm arrangements for on-site assessments.

The team leader facilitates the discussion with participation from appropriate council and zone representatives. Council representatives should include the Council NCAP Chair, the Camp Director, the Scout Executive or designee, and other council leaders who are interested.

## **Preparation for Zone On-Site Assessment**

The Council NCAP Chair can be helpful in ensuring understanding of all accreditation requirements, gathering supporting documentation, and providing mentoring and encouragement to the Camp Director. The Council NCAP Chair is also responsible for inviting council officers and other board members to be part of the group hosting the camp assessors and for building a positive atmosphere to support the on-site visit.

The Camp Director has the following responsibilities related to the on-site assessment:

### **Before:**

- Understand that the purpose of zone on-site assessment is to help the council provide an outstanding BSA summer camp experience that is safe, fun, and meaningful.
- Become familiar with the standards identified as applicable to the specific camp.
- Assemble documentation for standards requiring written verification.
- Work with council personnel to submit the Declaration of Readiness on time (by May 15), attaching as much as possible of the standards-related documentation.
- Participate in a precamp conference with the Zone Assessment Team Leader and other zone and council personnel.
- Communicate with the Zone Assessment Team Leader to finalize arrangements for the on-site assessment (timing, identification of team members, check-in procedures, plans for breakout groups, etc.).
- Invite key council volunteers to the assessment and help to provide informal orientation for them. (An inside look at your camp can help volunteers understand the requirements of running a summer camp and can cultivate future supporters of the camp.) You may wish to ask trained camp assessors from your council to assist as tour guides.
- Provides camp staff with an NCAP orientation so they understand their role in the process and which standards apply to their areas.

### **During:**

- Welcome the Zone Assessment Team.
- Assign camp staff and volunteers to show Zone Assessment Team members around camp.
- Answer questions and provide information to show how well the camp meets the standards.
- After the tour, meet with assessment team and council leaders to review results, discuss any standards not met, identify camp strengths, and solicit suggestions for improvements.
- Assist the team leader in completing/submitting the score sheet.
- Assist team leader in presenting camp accreditation recognition to the camp at an appropriate time, such as lunch or assembly.

- May present a camp patch or other token of appreciation to camp assessment team members.
- Invite team members to join the camp participants for lunch.

**After:**

- Develop a list of improvements that would strengthen the camp program. Work with key volunteers and Council staff to determine priorities.

## **Analyzing and Communicating Assessment Results**

The Council NCAP Chair and key council leadership share the responsibility for the “big picture” follow-through on the camp assessment based on the comprehensive follow-up letter sent to the council president by the Zone Assessment Team Leader. The letter provides valuable feedback to the council’s Executive Board regarding the council’s camping strengths and challenges and provides recommendations for improvements.

## **The Zone Assessment**

### **Assessing Compliance**

A camp assessment team is a group of trained Scouters charged with the responsibility of assessing a camp’s or camp property’s conformance to the standards; recommended practices; and terms, conditions, and commitments of the Authorization to Operate. The team will undertake three primary tasks: scoring, narrative assessment, and making the accreditation decision. Each task is addressed below. National-led assessments are conducted on long-term camps; council self-assessments are conducted on camp properties and for day camps.

Short-term camp and day-camp assessments are conducted using the NCAP Local Council Authorization and Assessment Declaration form. Completed forms must be submitted to the council, which retains the document for its records and a council assessment review. Short-term camps are assessed and reported by their Short-term Camp Administrator. Day camps are assessed by the trained local council assessment team.

### **Scoring: The Objective Review of Compliance**

The first task the assessment team will undertake is scoring whether the camp property or camp is complying with the National Camp Standards, the terms and commitments of its Authorization to Operate and any approved variances or waivers. This is an objective assessment with the goal of treating all camps consistently. Careful adherence to the standards, interpretation, and verification provisions is needed. The Authorization to Operate also includes additional items for review such as the Camp Continuous Improvement Plan.

**Scoring Options:** The following scoring options are available for scoring standards, recommended practices, variances, and waivers. Authorization terms, conditions, and commitments, if the authorization has been issued, are scored the same way.

**Passing scores:**

**Compliant:** A standard, authorization term, conditions, or commitment, variance, or waiver is scored as “compliant” if the facility meets the terms and intent of the standard, authorization term, conditions, or commitment, variance, or waiver.

**Deviation:** A standard, authorization term, conditions, or commitment, variance, or waiver is scored as a deviation if the exact terms are not met, but the camp has substantially met the intent of the standard, authorization term, conditions, or commitment, variance, or waiver with adequate levels of safety and quality. Deviations are not failures, and may be appropriate where the camp has incidentally missed an item. If other aspects suggest the program or operation is in good shape, the staff should not feel penalized for an incidental deviation. An example might be a temperature chart had not been kept current and the food service staff did not appear to be fully aware of the importance of these charts. Multiple instances, suggesting a systemic problem, must be scored noncompliant.

The score sheet will reflect the nature of the deviation and any comments from the camp assessment team on how the deviation could be remedied.

**Upgraded from noncompliant.** A standard, initially scored as noncompliant, is corrected by the camp prior to the departure of the assessment team to the assessment team’s satisfaction. If the deficiency cannot be corrected prior to departure, but the camp has a corrective action plan approved by National NCAP staff advisor, this score may also be used. The score sheet should reflect the nature of the noncompliance and the camp’s steps to correct it.

**Failing scores:**

**Noncompliant:** A standard, authorization term, conditions, or commitment, variance, or waiver is scored as “noncompliant” if the facility does not meet the requirement and does not meet the criteria for a deviation (discussed above). The score sheet should reflect the nature of the noncompliance and any comments from the camp assessment team on how the noncompliance could be remedied.

**Other:**

**Not Applicable:** A standard is scored as “not applicable” if it does not apply to the camp property or camp program. A standard that is “not applicable” does not affect accreditation status.

## **Examples:**

This section provides guidance on frequently asked questions concerning whether a practice that does not conform to a standard constitutes a noncompliant (failing) or a deviation (passing) score.

- Failure to have a required certification (e.g., National Camping School card, approved lifeguard status, etc.), or an approved alternate (listed in the standard, authorization, or a variance or waiver) warrants a noncompliant finding.
- Failure to meet an age standard is a noncompliant finding.
- A single instance of not having a first-aid kit prominently marked in an otherwise well-marked camp is a deviation.
- Failure to have a certificate of insurance, when other proof of insurance is available, is a deviation.
- Minor changes from the approved training plan, but where the material elements were met, is a deviation.
- Multiple fire extinguishers that are expired is a noncompliant, but if all are fixed prior to the assessment team's departure, may be scored as "upgraded from noncompliant".

Any standard, authorization term or commitment, variance, or waiver that is not met at the time of assessment, but which is corrected during the assessment to the satisfaction of the assessment team, should be scored as a "upgraded from noncompliant" and not as "noncompliant." This is to assist the National Council in tracking standards of concern and the local council in reviewing its camp procedures to ensure that the issue is not repeated in the future.

**Scoring Recommended Practices:** The following scoring options are available for scoring recommended practices:

- Compliant
- Not applicable

A recommended practice either is met or is not met.

## **The Narrative: Subjective Assessment and Recommendations**

The second part of the camp assessment process consists of the narrative assessment. This part of the assessment is more subjective and is where the camp assessment team should do its best to provide constructive comments to improve the camp's program.

## **The Narrative Assessment:**

The narrative assessment should address:

1. How well the program delivers the promise included in its written descriptive materials, advertising, and leaders' guide
2. How well the camp is implementing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program
3. How well the program delivers the promise of Scouting to participants

In order to prepare for the narrative assessment, the camp assessment team should review written descriptive materials, such as the camp's website (if any) and leaders' guide (if any). Any divergence between the described program and the delivered program should be noted to assist the council in ensuring that it is delivering on the promises it made. Similarly, it is appropriate for the team to note whether, in the team's view, the camp is delivering the promise of Scouting to its participants. If the team concludes that there may be an issue, concrete examples of specific problems should be identified for the council's consideration.

The assessment team should remember that it has seen the camp and its program only briefly and should couch its recommendations in a respectful, helpful tone. It is important for the camp assessment team to recognize that the narrative assessment and recommendations are there to be considered and acted upon by the camp staff and local council. A camp's or council's disagreement concerning a recommendation is not a basis for denying or conditioning accreditation. A camp's accreditation status is determined solely by the objective scoring portion of the assessment.

The narrative assessment should also review the camp's implementation of the Continuous Camp Improvement Program. The description should include a note of the results of the prior year program (not applicable during the first year), number of goals selected, some representative goals, how goals are being tracked, and whether the camp seems to have integrated continuous improvement into its program or if additional support may be needed.

## **The Recommendations:**

The recommendations should address the following:

- Specific recommendations for improving the quality of the existing programs and activities
- Specific recommendations for improving the quality of facilities provided
- Recommendations for improved program design or additional programs or activities that would enhance the camp program

This part of the assessment is where the camp assessment team can provide recommendations to the camp on how to improve its program based on the assessment



team's experience and knowledge. Recommendations should be constructive and made in the spirit of improving the camp's programs in light of the physical and other restrictions imposed by its environment. Recommendations should be made with the knowledge that it is the role of the camp and council to decide whether they should be implemented, and not the role of the assessment team. The assessment team's role is to provide a third-party review to assist the council in implementing its program. Careful, constructive comments will likely be well received.

## **Council Response to Noncompliant and Deviation Findings**

The purpose of the National Camp Standards and NCAP is to ensure that all youth receive a safe, high-quality camping experience and that the quality and safety of the experience continuously improves. Findings of "noncompliant" reflect a departure from the standard established by the BSA for a Scout facility and must be promptly addressed. Findings of "deviation" reflect a weakness in meeting the standard that should be addressed prior to the next season. This section discusses the camp assessment team's options upon making a finding of noncompliant or deviation.

**Noncompliant finding:** If the camp assessment team notes a standard as "noncompliant," the team leader shall promptly notify the Camp Director and Scout Executive or designee. The team leader should encourage the camp to correct the noncompliant finding before the assessment team completes its assessment. If the noncompliant finding is remedied to the camp assessment team's satisfaction, the standard should be scored as "upgraded from noncompliant" and the issue noted in the score sheet. If the noncompliant finding cannot be remedied to the camp assessment team's satisfaction, the Zone Assessment Coordinator or designee and National NCAP staff advisor should be notified and a corrective action plan or plan schedule drawn up to address the noncompliant finding as expeditiously as possible. If the corrective action plan can be completed promptly, the camp will be conditionally accredited while the corrective action plan is in place. The camp cannot be restored to accredited status until it demonstrates that it has completed the corrective action plan to the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor's satisfaction. The report of the successful implementation of the corrective action plan shall be submitted in accordance with the schedule developed in conjunction with the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor, and in no event later than the declaration of readiness for the following season.

In the rare event the Zone Assessment Team finds a situation that constitutes an imminent danger to life or health, the team leader should close that activity or area in consultation with the Camp Director and Council leadership. The NCAP staff advisor and zone assessment coordinator shall be notified immediately. If there is disagreement, the NCAP staff advisor and zone assessment coordinator will provide leadership. A camp in

this situation must immediately resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the National NCAP staff advisor in accordance with the terms and time schedule set forth in a corrective action plan developed in consultation with the NCAP staff advisor and zone assessment coordinator. The report of the successful implementation of the corrective action plan shall be submitted in accordance with the schedule developed in conjunction with the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor.

**Deviation finding.** A camp that receives a deviation is on notice that there is a weakness in its program. The camp should correct the deviation prior to the start of the next camping season. Second and subsequent deviations for the same standard may be scored as a noncompliant at the discretion of the assessment team. The report of the successful implementation of the corrective action plan shall be submitted in accordance with the schedule developed in conjunction with the zone assessment coordinator.

If a camp exceeds 10 deviation findings in any assessment, the camp must prepare a timely corrective action plan and submit it to the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor. If the corrective action plan can be completed promptly, the camp will be conditionally accredited while the corrective action plan is in place but may be restored to accredited status upon demonstrating that it has completed the corrective action plan to the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor's satisfaction. The report of the successful implementation of the corrective action plan must be submitted no later than the declaration of readiness for the subsequent year.

**Upgraded from noncompliant (UNC).** In some cases, an assessment team will discover that a camp or camp property was not compliant with the National Camp Standards upon arrival. If the noncompliance was more than trivial, but the camp is able to correct it prior to the assessment team's departure or, with the approval of the national NCAP staff advisor or zone assessment coordinator, if the council creates a corrective action plan that will resolve the deficiency in short-order (less than a week), the assessment team may score the standard "UNC" in lieu of noncompliant.

## **Multiple Programs at the Same Camp Property**

Many councils operate multiple camps at a single camp property. For example, a camp property is used for Scouts BSA Long-term Camp followed by a Cub Scout Long-term Camp. In general, each of these programs requires a separate assessment. However, if two camps share all of the same facilities, and share much of the same staff and substantially similar program, it is possible to conduct a shortened assessment for the second camp program.

Day Camps that are offered at different locations, but which share a common staff and program, do not require a separate full assessment. The council must have a process for ensuring that each program location is assessed for safety.

## Council Self-Assessment of Designated Camps

### Process for Day Camps and Properties & Areas of Camps not assessed during the Zone Camp Assessment

The Boy Scouts of America requires that each Day Camp as well as Camp Properties not assessed by the Zone will be self-assessed by the council. Each council will assess each of these on an annual basis.

Designated council volunteers conduct the assessments of Day Camps. The Council NCAP Chair oversees and supports the work of the Council Camp Assessment Coordinator, as indicated below. No current Day Camp Director, Program Director, or Professional Staff administrator for Day Camps should serve as Council NCAP Chair, Council Camp Assessment Coordinator, or Council Assessment Team Leader or member.

Council Assessment volunteers may be recruited from the Council Executive Board, camping or other council committees, key community leaders, and previous Day Camp Directors or staff members.

### Suggested annual action plan - Council Camp Assessment Coordinator:

Task	Suggested Timing
1) Orients council personnel to the NCAP self-assessment procedures. Communicates the plan to all appropriate council and district leadership.	Fall
2) Reviews council calendar, determining camps to be assessed and ensuring that each has been locally approved to operate.	Six months prior to opening
3) Prepares an NCAP Certificate for presentation. *	Ongoing
4) Recruits volunteers to assist in on-site assessments. Ensures that volunteers are approved by the Scout Executive and listed (with contact information) in a database.	Ongoing
5) Recruits council representative to attend Day Camp Assessor Session at a Zone Assessment meeting.	Spring
6) Meets with each Camp Director and designated council personnel to finalize the standards for each camp (including recommended practices and any self-developed standards). Asks each Camp Director to designate a camp staff member to serve as safety/standards officer.	Four to six months prior to opening
7) Selects and appoints a team leader for each on-site assessment.	Three months prior to assessment

8) Trains on-site assessors (after online orientation and self-study), using information from the zone meeting for self-assessment chairs.	Two to three months prior to assessment
9) Prepares a schedule of on-site assessments (usually on the second day of camp) and sends to Camp Directors and team leaders for review.	Two months prior to assessment
10) Customizes Standards-At-a-Glance for each camp or property	Two months prior to assessment
11) Assigns the members of each assessment team, seeking an unbiased evaluation.	Two months prior to assessment
12) Oversees the council's on-site assessments, following recommended best practices for camp assessment.	Summer and other times of operation
13) Collects and maintains records of each camp's on-site assessments, submitting reports to the camping committee and council leadership. Copies of all self-assessments should be kept for future review by the zone.	Summer and ongoing
14) Meets with Council Assessment Team Leaders, Council NCAP Chair, and others to debrief on the season's assessment process.	End-of-Season

\*Pennants for self-assessed camps are no longer available from National. The template for the certificate will be available from the Zone Assessment Coordinator or requested through [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). Each council will printout their own certificates using this template.

Selection/recruitment of assessment team leaders and team members should be accomplished as early in the program year as possible. Council and district committee members, former camp staff volunteers, and interested Scout parents/volunteers are among those who might make effective camp assessors. The Council Camp Assessment Coordinator will need to exercise careful judgment in assigning volunteers to particular on-site assessments to ensure that each team has a balance of experience and can be helpful and unbiased in its decision-making.

One of the most important parts of the NCAP Council assessment process is conducting training for Assessment Team members. The following agenda is recommended.

## **Suggested Agenda for Council Assessment Team Training:**

<b>Training for Council Assessment: Day Camp and Camp Properties</b>	
Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Register participants</li><li>Provide refreshments</li><li>Display calendar of Day Camps</li><li>Distribute training outlines</li></ul>
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Explain the purpose of NCAP</li><li>Note the learning objectives for this training</li><li>Ask participants to introduce themselves</li></ul>
NCAP Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review position descriptions</li><li>Present process overview</li><li>Introduce Standards-At-a-Glance for Day Camps and Properties</li></ul>
On-Site Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review assessment best practices</li><li>Discuss do/don't expectations</li><li>Consider the types of questions to be asked</li></ul>
Using the Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Look closely at the standards</li><li>Discuss applying the standards to selected case studies</li></ul>
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review of on-site assessment schedule</li></ul>
Thanks and recognitions	

Whenever possible, the Council Camp Assessment Coordinator plans the assessment process so that information on upcoming on-site assessments can be shared at the training.

The on-site assessment is conducted soon after the Day Camp opens, often on the second day of operation. The self-assessment of Camp Properties can take place any

time the property is available. The Council Camp Assessment Coordinator facilitates the process and appoints a Council Camp Assessment Team Leader to guide the process at each camp. Whenever possible, it is useful for the Council Assessment Team Leader participates in the Zone Assessment Meeting.

The preparation, communication, and actions of the Council Assessment Team Leader and Council Assessment Team members are among the keys to success in Council self-assessment.

The following best practices are recommended for the Council Assessment Team Leader and the Council Assessment Team members:

### **Best Practices: Council Assessment Team Leader**

#### **One week before Assessment:**

1. Review camp-specific information.
  - a. NCAP standards applicable to the camp
  - b. Information from previous assessments, if available
  - c. The council/camp website
2. Confirm and finalize on-site assessment plans.
  - a. Communicate with the Camp Director to discuss team representation, timing, check-in procedures, and the general plan for conducting the assessment.
  - b. Contact Council Assessment Team members to review expectations and arrangements.
  - c. Council Assessment Team leaders assign tasks to Council Assessment Team members prior to the camp visit so they are prepared and familiar with the standards they are to review and assess.

#### **Day of the Assessment:**

1. Set a positive example in representing the Boy Scouts of America.
2. Meet the team off-site and arrive together or be punctual if meeting on-site.
3. Follow camp visitor control procedures (sign in, show Youth Protection and camp assessment training cards, and any other identification requested).
4. Meet briefly (10–15 minutes) with Camp Director, council/camp personnel, and assessment team members.
  - a. Set a positive tone by briefly explaining the purpose of the visit and the intent to observe the camp in action, and ask questions without disrupting program.
  - b. Ask all council/camp representatives and assessment team members to introduce themselves.
  - c. Assign sub-group members and areas of responsibility (ex. waterfront,

- kitchen/dining, health facilities), based on organization of standards, physical location, and team member expertise.
- d. Arrange for a time and place to meet back together to share notes on assessment.
  - e. Review assignments and move out to areas to be assessed.
5. Coordinate team assessment of all aspects of the camp governed by standards.
    - a. Observe program, procedures, and facilities in assigned areas.
    - b. Talk with staff and participants about what they are doing/learning (without disrupting program).
    - c. Refer to the interpretations and verifications in the full text of the standards as needed.
    - d. Check off standards met and record notable observations.
  6. Deal effectively with any situations requiring immediate attention.
    - a. Allow camp staff to correct any safety problem that can be promptly fixed.
    - b. Notify and consult with the Council NCAP Chair and/or Scout Executive in any case where serious issues occur.
  7. Review the assessment findings. Assemble the Council Assessment Team members, Camp Director, Scout Executive, and other staff members invited by the camp leadership:
    - Note which standards were met or not met.
    - Discuss team member impressions about general camp program, procedures, and facilities.
    - Discuss overall impressions.
    - Review score sheet and identify standards that were met or not met.
    - For unmet standards:
      - Explain how the team arrived at that conclusion.
      - Reach a written agreement about any corrective actions to be taken and in what time frame.
      - For situations not easily corrected, arrange consultation with Zone Assessment Coordinator to work with the Council to develop a written plan and time frame for addressing the problem.
  8. After consultation with the Camp Director, present recognition (perhaps at lunch).
  9. Ensure that team members leave camp promptly after the assessment and recognition (and perhaps lunch).



## Follow-up:

1. Prepare a summary of camp assessment results and copies of assessment reports for all council locally conducted assessments should be kept for future review by the Zone. The Assessment report is shared with the Council Executive Board and Leadership.

## Best Practices: Assessment Team Members

(To be shared with team members at training and again just before the assessment visit)

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Represent the Boy Scouts of America to the best of your ability.</li><li>• Wear the field uniform properly.</li><li>• Be knowledgeable about the applicable camp standards.</li><li>• Understand the purposes of the on-site assessment.</li><li>• Be prepared for walking long distances over rough terrain.</li><li>• Bring your own BSA Annual Health and Medical Record, parts A and B.</li><li>• Listen and observe.</li><li>• Be a team player—share impressions and concerns with the team leader.</li><li>• Keep careful notes about standards met or situations needing further discussion.</li><li>• Immediately notify the team leader in any situation where there is a serious safety concern.</li><li>• Identify best-practice camp program ideas you wish to share with other members of the council.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expect extra hospitality such as overnight accommodations, camp tours before or after the assessment, etc.</li><li>• Disrupt program or distract staff members overseeing campers.</li><li>• Be disrespectful to anyone.</li><li>• Criticize camp operations in front of campers or staff.</li><li>• Discuss how the camp compares to others.</li><li>• Talk too much or seek too much attention.</li><li>• Act alone or make decisions without consultation.</li><li>• Forget to enjoy the experience of watching summer camp fun and learning.</li><li>• Discuss the details of the camp assessment later unless requested by the team leader.</li></ul>

Assessors should be friendly in their questioning. While many questions will be asked of staff, assessment teams are also expected to talk with campers and family members participating while on-site. Answers to the following questions might give you an idea of how a camp is operating. Remember that you can have the best facility in the country, but if you don't have a quality and fun program, Scouts and leaders won't come to camp.

## Suggested questions for Assessors:

### For Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, etc.

1. Are you having fun?
2. Which activities do you like most?
3. Which activities do you like least?
4. Have you gone swimming?
5. How is the trading post?
6. Have you shot an arrow or BB gun since you've been here?
7. What is Scouting all about?
8. How many years have you been coming to camp?

### For Adults:

1. Are the youth having fun?
2. Are you having fun?
3. What's your schedule for the day?
4. How many first-time campers are with you this week?
5. How many other adults from your pack are with you this week?
6. How many Cub Scouts did you bring to camp?
7. How many years have you been coming to this camp?
8. Does the camp have a theme?

## Assessing Short-Term Camps

A new designation for short-term camps (any camp of one to three nights and National Training Courses like NYLT, Wood Badge, etc.) now appears in the standards. Each council is required to assess these under the direction of a trained Short-Term Camp Administrator. The details of this process are not included in this document but can be found online at <https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/camping/short-term-camp/>.

## Overall Summary of the NCAP Process

### Application & Authorization Process

#### Preparing the Application

For the Authorization Process, each council will be required to submit an Application for Authorization to Operate to its assigned NCAP Authorization Reviewer. This occurs on the multi-year cycle, most likely every 5 years.

The Council NCAP Chair and the Scout Executive have the responsibility to coordinate the completion of the application, consulting and involving council volunteer leadership as well as staff members. The board must approve and both a council officer and the Scout

Executive must sign the application.

The application has the following sections:

- A. Identification of all the council's long-term camps and camp properties for which it is seeking an Authorization to Operate and the accreditation level sought for each camp and whether the council is seeking authorization to operate day camps or short-term camps
- B. Commitment Application Form
- C. Camp Facilities Evaluation Tool worksheets for each camp property with photos
- D. Camp Sustainability Data Sheet and Council Sustainability Data Sheet for the council's camping program as a whole and for each camp, whether conducted on or off property
- E. Camp Strategic Improvement Plans (CSIP); one for each long-term camp

In general, for each camp, the application will describe the program goals, assess the facilities using the Camp Facilities Evaluation Tool, identify the applicable National Camp Standards and any recommended practices that the council intends to adopt, and set forth additional quality commitments that the council intends to meet to provide the safest and highest possible quality program to participants.

Specific instructions are provided with the application form. Councils can access application materials, including an Excel workbook, at <https://www.scouting.org/ncap>.

### **Authorization**

The NCAP authorization team will review the application (including the preliminary analysis), will engage the council in dialogue, and will assist the council in development of its commitments.

If the review of the application determines that the council's camping program merits multi-year permission to operate, the National NCAP Committee will issue an Authorization to Operate for five years except in unusual circumstances.

The authorization sets forth the program quality, facility quality, and financial sustainability commitments the council has made to operate a safe, high-quality, and dynamic program for youth. The terms and conditions of the Authorization to Operate (including the National Camp Standards identified as applicable and the commitments proposed by the council and accepted by the NCAP Authorization Reviewer on behalf of the National Committee) become the governing criteria for accreditation of the council's camps.

In unusual cases, where a council's camping program does not meet the quality and sustainability criteria expected of a BSA Council, a conditional Authorization to Operate may be issued and the council will be provided support by the NST to redevelop its camping program and submit a new application. In many cases, the council will be requested to develop

and comply with a “Plan of Improvement”. If this process is unsuccessful, the Authorization to Operate may be denied in whole or in part by the national NCAP committee.

## **The Accreditation Decision**

The following is intended to provide an overview of the accreditation process. Understanding that the national camp standards are reviewed and revised on a regular basis, see the most current version of the standards for the most up-to-date requirements, interpretations and application.

The accreditation decision is based upon the results of the scoring of the standards, authorization terms and commitments, variances, waivers and equivalencies.

### **Accredited:**

1. A camp property or camp shall be accredited if it has no noncompliants and 10 or fewer deviations.
2. A camp may be accredited if it has one “upgraded from noncompliant” (UNC) score in accordance with Standard SA-004 and has five or fewer deviations and UNC findings. If these conditions are met, the camp is accredited and the camp assessment team should present the accreditation certificate and pennant in an appropriate fashion.

### **Conditionally Accredited:**

A camp property or camp shall be conditionally accredited if any of the following conditions are met:

1. Any applicable standard, term, condition, or commitment of an Authorization to Operate, variance, or waiver is scored “noncompliant.”
2. More than 10 standards, terms, conditions, or commitments are scored “upgraded from noncompliant” or “deviation.”
3. A waiver or letter of relief states that it requires conditional accreditation.

As noted under the subsection *Camp Response to Noncompliant and Deviation Findings*, if the camp corrects a significant noncompliant finding while the assessment team is present, the finding should be scored as an “upgraded from noncompliant” and not “noncompliant.” If this is not possible, but the findings are relatively minor and the camp’s program and corrective action plan is strong, the assessment team may request that the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor obtain approval for full accreditation from the National NCAP Assessment Leadership or, if necessary, an approval of a corrective action plan allowing full accreditation with the concurrence of the zone assessment coordinator and NCAP staff advisor. The camp may be accredited until such time as the corrective action is completed.

As discussed in *Camp Response to Noncompliant, Upgraded from Noncompliant and*

Deviation Findings, the council and camp leadership should develop a corrective action plan with the camp assessment team to correct any noncompliant findings. Most noncompliant findings should be addressed within a week or two, unless the council demonstrates that more time is needed and the additional time will not adversely affect the health or safety of the campers or result in an unacceptable level of program delivery. If a mutually agreed-upon schedule cannot be developed while the assessment team is onsite, the assessment team should consult with the NCAP staff advisor. Once the schedule is established, or upon direction from NCAP national assessment leadership granting more time to develop the corrective action plan, conditionally accredited credentials should be granted.

A camp may terminate its conditionally accredited status by submitting to the zone assessment coordinator and National NCAP staff advisor proof of completion of its corrective action plan. The zone assessment coordinator will schedule a reassessment, if necessary, restore accredited status, or deny the request.

### **Denial of Accreditation:**

A camp may be denied accreditation if:

1. Any applicable standard, any term or commitment of its Authorization to Operate, or the conditions of any variance or waiver, is scored “noncompliant” and
2. Either the camp is already conditionally accredited or the camp poses an imminent danger to life or health, and this danger cannot be eliminated by closing parts of the camp or program.

If the camp assessment team believes that denial of accreditation may be appropriate, it must consult immediately with the zone assessment coordinator and the NCAP staff advisor. The zone assessment coordinator assisted by the National Outdoor Programs staff will work with council leadership to develop a corrective action plan to restore either conditionally accredited or fully accredited status.

A camp that is denied accreditation is not required to close during its current season unless there is imminent danger to life or health, but it may not reopen the following season using the name, trademarks, or trade dress of the Boy Scouts of America without approval from the National NCAP Committee.

Any denial of accreditation is subject to automatic review by the National camp accreditation committee.

### **Request for Review of Authorization**

If a camp assessment team determines that there are pervasive problems at a camp that draw into question whether its program delivers the promise of Scouting or may injure the Scouting brand—whether or not the camp meets the criteria for accreditation or

conditional accreditation—the camp assessment team shall document those findings in the narrative assessment and request that the National NCAP leadership authorize a review of the authorization. **A camp assessment team is not authorized to issue a conditional accreditation or denial of accreditation unless the conditions outlined in the section on “The Accreditation Decision” are met.**

## **Reopening and Revocation of Accreditation or Authorization**

### **Revocation of Accreditation:**

A camp that has been conditionally accredited and fails to comply with the terms of the conditional accreditation may have its accreditation status revoked at any time by the national camp accreditation committee.

A camp that has been conditionally accredited for three years in a row, regardless of the reason, may have its accreditation status revoked at any time by the national camp accreditation committee. The NCAP committee will provide written notice of such revocation.

Appeal of a revocation shall be to a panel of the national camp accreditation committee. There is no appeal from a decision of the national camp accreditation committee, but the council may request a reconsideration hearing.

Accreditation is automatically lost if the council loses its charter as a local council of the Boy Scouts of America. Automatic loss of accreditation in this circumstance is not appealable under NCAP.

### **Reopening or Revocation of the Authorization to Operate:**

Conditional accreditation of a camp may require reopening of the Authorization to Operate to incorporate additional terms and conditions that the camp must meet to restore full accredited status. Revocation of any camp accreditation will trigger reopening of the entire Authorization to Operate and may result in additional conditions or potential revocation of the Authorization to Operate.

Reopening or revocation of an Authorization to Operate may be initiated at any time by the designated zone assessment coordinator through the national NCAP committee or by the national NCAP committee. Any such reopening or revocation will occur only after notice and an opportunity to respond by the local council and will be decided by a panel of the national camp accreditation committee.

The Authorization to Operate is automatically lost if the council loses its charter as a local council of the Boy Scouts of America. Automatic loss of the Authorization to Operate in this circumstance cannot be appealed under NCAP.

## **Appeals Procedure**

**Informal resolution of a camp assessment disagreement:** If a council disagrees with the decision of the camp assessment team, it should contact the zone assessment coordinator for informal resolution. If informal resolution is not successful, an appeal should be filed.

**Appeal of a camp assessment team accreditation decision:** An appeal of a camp assessment team accreditation decision must be filed in writing to NCAP@scouting.org within five working days of the camp assessment and should set forth the basis for the council's argument for why the findings of the camp assessment team should be set aside or its accreditation decision changed. The appeal will be decided a panel of National NCAP assessment leadership. The panel will determine whether any additional conference or submittals are needed and will communicate its decision to the council and the zone assessment coordinator.

## **NCAP Resources:**

**Additional resources can be found on the BSA NCAP website including:**

- *National Camp Standards (#430-056)*
- Application for Authorization, application instructions, and supporting worksheets
- Camp Facilities Evaluation Tool (CFET) 430-085
- *Guide to the Continuous Camp Improvement Program – January 2021 version*
- *Postcamp/Precamp Inspection Checklist*, No. 430-310 (Fillable- version)

**Other BSA resources:**

- *Guide to Safe Scouting* (<http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety>)
- National Camping School publications (available on jump drive from Outdoor Programs)
- Annual National NCAP training through My.Scouting.





NATIONAL CAMP  
ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015-2079  
<http://www.scouting.org>

430-073  
2022 printing