



# **Guide to Preparing the Authorization to Operate**

National Camp Accreditation Program  
National Council, Boy Scouts of America

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# Guide to Preparing the Authorization to Operate

A complete authorization review package ready for submittal to your national authorization coordinator for review and processing includes both (1) an authorization review analysis and report (“Authorization Report”) and (2) an Authorization to Operate based on the National template. The Authorization Report is discussed elsewhere.

This Guide provide instructions to authorization reviewers on how to prepare the Authorization to Operate issued to a council at the conclusion of the application review process using the National template. Guidance is provided on how to craft the specific conditions and commitments included in the Authorization to Operate to help ensure that the council elevates the performance of its camp properties and camps over the authorization period. Careful attention to these guidelines will help provide a better camping experience for future generations of Scouts.

## PURPOSE OF THE AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

The purpose of the application and authorization review process is to encourage councils to think strategically about their camping program, camp properties and camps. As part of the review, councils should be encouraged to think about the following issues:

- Does the overall camping program, each camp property and camp, support the council in delivering an effective, exciting Scouting program to the youth we serve?
- Is the overall camping program, each camp property and camp, sustainable as presently offered?
  - By sustainable, the BSA means that the overall camping program provides a positive financial return to the council that supports Scouting’s mission and does not drain resources away from the Scouting mission. An overall camping program creates a positive financial return if it either: (a) returns cash to the council each year, preferably in excess of depreciation on camping assets, or (b) any shortfall is offset by restricted or dedicated funding known to and approved by the council’s executive board.
- What improvements should the council make to the overall camping program, any camp property or camp, that will continue to improve the programs offered and quality of the Scouting experience? Is the council better served by focusing on a particular property or properties with greater potential or mothballing or selling a property to create resources to improve the remaining properties? Improvements should consider the following areas for the camping program as a whole, each camp property and camp:
  - Staff quality;
  - Program;
  - Program equipment;
  - Facilities; and
  - Marketing and communication.
- Are the proposed improvements achievable, affordable and sustainable? Does the council have a plan to achieve them?

Critical elements of this process will be included in the *camp strategic improvement plan*, which sets forth the council's long-term goals for improving the camp properties and camps, and the *commitments*, which are self-designed targets the council sets for itself to achieve its program goals. The final *camp strategic improvement plan* and most important *commitments* will be captured by the authorization reviewer and attached, in the case of the *camp strategic improvement plan*, or included, in the case of *commitments*, in the Authorization to Operate issued to the council.

The authorization process thus serves as a place for the council to think about its camping program, focus its thoughts, and develop a plan and commitments toward carrying out that plan. The Authorization to Operate then formalizes the plan and crystallizes the commitments, providing benchmarks to measure council progress and, it is hoped, preventing backsliding as council build from one authorization period to the next.

## GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE AUTHORIZATION TO OPERATE

The Authorization to Operate consists of the following major parts.

**Introduction.** The introduction states that the Authorization to Operate allows the designated council to operate its listed camp properties and camps using the name, trademarks and trade dress of the Boy Scouts of America. It reminds the council that issuance of the Authorization to Operate does not guarantee accreditation. This section is fixed in its language and requires only the addition of the council name.

**Camp Properties and Camps Authorized.** This section ("A") of the Authorization to Operate lists each camp property and camp authorized to operate using the name, trademarks and trade dress of the Boy Scouts of America. Day camps and family camps are authorized as a group. It also contains a reminder for when an amended application or amended Authorization to Operate must be obtained. This section requires action by the authorization reviewer.

**General Terms and Conditions.** This section ("B") lists the general terms and conditions that all councils and camps must meet, including compliance with applicable law, operation in accordance with the BSA National Camp Standards and the Authorization to Operate or an applicable variance or waiver, and participation in the Continuous Camp Improvement Program. This section is fixed in language and does not require action by the authorization reviewer.

**Specific Terms, Conditions and Commitments.** This section ("C") list conditions and commitments specific to each camp property and/or camp. Briefly:

- *Specific Terms and Conditions.* These are terms and conditions required by appropriate BSA leadership, the camp accreditation committee with jurisdiction, or a required plan of improvement after an authorization review or conditional accreditation. The other common source of specific terms and conditions is variances issued for a specific camp property or camp. For most councils and camps, there will be no specific terms and conditions.
- *Commitments.* These are undertakings by the council to improve its camping program in discrete ways. NCAP requires a commitment to improved financial performance,

improved or maintained facilities quality, and improved staff, program or program equipment quality. These commitments will be carried over from this Authorization to Operate to the next, unless the council requests a change in an amendment or during the next application and that request is approved. Guidance on how to prepare commitments is found in this document.

**Additional Terms and Conditions.** This section (“D”) states the consequences of a council’s failure to participate fully in the authorization process. This language is fixed and does not require any action by the authorization reviewer.

## COMPLETING THE AUTHORIZATION TO OPERATE

An authorization reviewer generally will prepare the Authorization to Operate form after completing a thorough review of the application and ensuring that all required elements were submitted and fairly satisfy application requirements. It is recommended that a draft of the Authorization to Operate be shared with the council prior to issuance of the final document so that there are no surprises.

### Preparing the Template Form and Introduction

Working with the National Authorization template requires access to a current version of Microsoft Word. This Guide assumes working familiarity with Microsoft Word.

**Step 1. Header.** Open the template form and move to page two. Double click on the top to open the header row. It will turn dark when accessible. Enter the council’s legal name (e.g., “Boy Scout Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America”) to replace the “[Council Name]”. Enter the council number from the Application for Authorization to Operate in the next line. The Authorization to Operate number works as follows:

NCAP = indicates this is an authorization issued by NCAP and not another part of BSA.

ATO = indicates it is an Authorization to Operate

-20XX = year. Replace with current year.

XX – Council Number

The NCAP-ATO-20XX-[Council #] provides a unique reference for the Authorization to Operate and avoids the need to refer to the issue date in all references (remember: councils will have many of these over the life of their camping program). SAVE the document using the following format: [Council name] NCAP-ATO-20XX- [Council #].

**Step 2. Introduction.** Remove your cursor from the header area and double click on the main body of text. The header should turn a lighter color and the main text a darker color. Move to the top of the template. Insert the council’s name where the template states “[council name]”. SAVE the document.

This completes the template and introduction work.

## **Preparing Section A. Camp Properties and Camps Authorized**

This is an important section of the Authorization to Operate because it lists the specific camp properties and camps authorized to use the name, trademarks and trade dress of the Boy Scouts of America. We do not want to omit any camp properties or camps so that the council can make full use of its properties that it wishes to make available for Scouting purposes.

### **Section A.1 – Camp Properties and Their Camps**

**Step 1.** Identify each *camp property* and *camp* conducted at the camp property. A camp property is defined in the Standards, but is basically a property controlled by the council. You need to review the application, identify each camp property by name and address or location.

**Step 2.** For each *camp property*, identify each *camp*, by type, under that camp property. You do not need to list day camps and family camps – they will be authorized separately in Section A.3. Remember: each camp property is also a “camp property” for Standards purposes. In addition, all *COPE and Climbing courses* must be listed either with their camp property or, if stand-alone, as a camp property. The template includes *bracketed italicized guidance language to assist you in getting the right information in the right format*. **All of the bracketed italicized guidance language should be deleted as you complete each section.**

**Step 3.** Now open the template. Under Section A.1, list each camp property and its corresponding camps using a separate “alpha” identifier (e.g., a., b., c., ...). For example:

- a. Camp Geronimo, 2599 W Webber Creek Rd, Payson, AZ 85541
  - i. Camp Property – year-round use
  - ii. Long-Term Scout Camp
- b. Camp Raymond, 7709 S Boy Scout Camp Rd, Parks, AZ 86018
  - i. Camp Property – year-round use
  - ii. Long-Term Scout Camp

Continue entries until all camp properties have been addressed. Remember to delete the bracketed and italicized guidance. SAVE the document.

### **Section A.2 – Long-Term Camps and Stand-Alone COPE/Climbing Courses Not Located on Camp Properties**

In some cases, councils may operate long-term camps or stand-alone COPE/climbing courses not located on property that they own or lease. The most typical examples are trekking-style camps, which may operate on public land and may not have a base operation “on trek”. Section A.2 is for any long-term camp or COPE/Climbing courses not operated on a camp property.

**Step 1.** Identify each long-term camp and COPE/climbing course that will operate off of a BSA camp property.

**Step 2.** Now open the template. Under Section A.2, list each off-property long-term camp or stand-alone COPE/climbing course alphabetically using a separate “alpha” identifier (e.g., a., b., c., ...), followed by camp type, and then address or location. For example:

- a. River Run High Adventure Base, Long-Term Camp, operates on Black River from Falafa State Park to US Highway 52 bridge outside Springfield.
- b. Ranger school, Long-Term Camp, operated under contract by Action Adventures, 2451 Action Camp Rd, Fayetteville, NC.

Continue entries until all camps have been addressed. Remember to delete the bracketed and italicized guidance. SAVE the document.

### **Sections A.3 and A.4**

These sections do not require any action by the authorization reviewer unless you receive direction from the NST Key 3 or your national authorization coordinator. Section A.3 authorizes the council to operate day and short-term camps in accordance with the BSA National Camp Standards. Section A.4 states when the council must file an amended application due to addition of a camp property or program not covered by the current Authorization to Operate. A council can add day camps and short-term camps without filing an amended application.

### **Preparing Section B. General Terms and Conditions**

This section lists standard terms and conditions applicable to all camp properties and camps in the BSA. The language is fixed and the authorization reviewer will not make any changes. The following paragraphs provide the rationale for the general terms and conditions.

- **Condition B.1 – Compliance with laws.** Standard AO-801 requires that all camps comply with applicable federal, state and local law, regulations and permit requirements. This provision reiterates this requirement to make it clear that the Authorization to Operate does not authorize noncompliance with law.
- **Condition B.2 – BSA authorization.** Standard AO-802 requires that camps operate in accordance with the terms and condition of the BSA Authorization to Operate and any Local Council Authorization and Assessment Declaration. This provision repeats this admonition and reminds councils that the Standards, variances and waivers may similarly govern operation of a camp property or camp.
- **Condition B.3.a – Camp strategic improvement plan.** Standard AO-810, Specific Requirement B, requires councils to develop a camp strategic improvement plan. This condition restates this obligation. Authorization reviewers need to see that a camp strategic improvement plan is attached for all long-term camps (which may be addressed in a single group plan). See the *Guide to Reviewing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program* for details on what constitutes an acceptable camp strategic improvement plan to attach to the Authorization to Operate.
- **Condition B.3.b – Annual camp improvement program.** Standard AO-810, Specific Requirement C, requires camps to participate in an annual improvement program to ensure good customer service. This condition reminds them of this fact.
- **Condition B.4 – New activities.** This condition reminds councils and camps that if they add a new activity requiring approval under Standard PD-111, they must submit required documentation to [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org) and receive approval before initiating the activity.
- **Condition B.5 – Reports.** This condition lists some of the major reporting obligations that the council and camp must undertake.

## Preparing Section C. Specific Terms, Conditions and Commitments

Section C is an important section of the Authorization to Operate because it is where NCAP's general requirements are tailored to the specific council and camps. The authorization reviewer should consider with care the requirements of this section and seek guidance from their national authorization coordinator or staff advisor if there are questions.

### Preparing Section C.1 – Specific Terms and Conditions

Section C.1 is used where additional terms or conditions are applicable to a council or a camp. Except as outlined in this *Guide*, the authorization reviewer does not have authority to establish specific terms and conditions. These are usually the responsibility of the national NCAP committee or applicable BSA leadership and communicated to the authorization reviewer during the application review process, usually by your camp accreditation chair or staff advisor.

***Common external sources of specific terms and conditions.*** The most common source of specific terms and conditions is when a council has struggled with its camping program and applicable BSA leadership has determined that the council must prepare a plan of improvement. A plan of improvement is a series of binding commitments that the council makes to improve its camping program. These typically arise out of the following circumstances:

- **Conditional accreditation.** If a council and camp are unable to complete a satisfactory corrective action plan to resolve a conditional accreditation situation, authorized BSA or NCAP leadership will require a detailed, enforceable plan to assist the council and to help prevent it losing its camping franchise under NCAP. Plans of improvement that have not been completed should be incorporated into the Authorization to Operate.
- **Conditional charter.** If a council receives a conditional charter, authorized BSA leadership may provide camping related provisions from the conditional charter for inclusion in the authorization to operate.

***Variances.*** From time-to-time, a council may request a variance from a national camp standard for a specific camp property or camp. If granted, the variance should be included in the authorization to operate. In most cases, the relevant portion of the variance may be incorporated verbatim. In case of doubt, please contact the national standards chair or the NCAP staff advisor.

***NCAP-lead sources of specific terms and conditions.*** In some cases, as outlined in the *Guide to Reviewing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program*, the authorization reviewer may determine that a council and/or camp has not made material progress on continuously improving, either by not substantially achieving one or more of its camp strategic improvement plans or by not meaningfully participating in the annual camp improvement program, without adequate justification for the lack of progress or participation. In this case, the authorization review, after consultation and with the approval of the their camp accreditation chair, may write specific conditions to ensure that the council and/or camp will make material progress during the next authorization period. Any such conditions will typically be written in conjunction with the authorized BSA leadership.

**Form of a specific term and condition.** An authorization reviewer crafting a specific term and condition should keep the following guidelines in mind:

- The condition should clearly state whether it applies to the council, a specific camp property, or specific camps. There should be no ambiguity in coverage.
- The condition should clearly state what is required. There should be little doubt in the mind of the reader about what is required.
- The condition should only require what the council (or camp) can control. NCAP can require a camp to apply for a missing permit, but it cannot require the camp to obtain that permit because the choice of awarding a permit is in the hand of the permit writing authority. In appropriate cases, NCAP may provide that if a result is not achieved by a time certain, certain consequences will follow, but adequate time must be provided in such a case.
- The condition should provide any applicable timeframes in which the condition must be accomplished.

Finally, it is not NCAP's general intention that councils and camps operate in the long-term subject to specific terms and conditions, except for variances which the council has sought and NCAP has granted. The goal of any specific terms and conditions should be to solve an issue in a timely fashion and then, if the council achieves the goal, release the council from the specific term and condition to restore its freedom to craft its own program as it sees fit. Specific terms and conditions should be written with this goal in mind.

### **Preparing Section C.2 – Commitments**

Commitments were an important part of NCAP's original program design and as NCAP enters its second five-year cycle, commitments will begin to play an increasingly important role. Therefore, it is important for authorization reviewers to be familiar with NCAP's goals for the commitment process to provide guidance to councils as they prepare their commitments.

### ***Overview of the commitment process***

A commitment is an undertaking by a council that it will achieve a result, either financial, program, or facilities related. Unlike a continuous camp improvement goal, where councils and camps are encouraged to stretch to see if they can work significant change in camping quality with a relatively free hand, a commitment is a fully accountable goal against which the council will be assessed. Accordingly, councils should be encouraged to choose commitments that will continue incremental improvement in their program, prevent backsliding, and with which they have sufficient experience to know that the commitment will deliver the intended result.

### ***Commitment 2(a) – council financial sustainability commitment***

The first commitment that each council is required to make is financial sustainability. The council's camping program should support its overall program, not detract from it. Therefore, over time, NCAP has a goal that all camping programs should provide positive return to the council primary program and generate sufficient revenue to pay for program renovation and equipment and facilities renewal. NCAP does not expect all councils to achieve that goal at the same rate, but it does expect all councils to begin making progress toward that goal, while not



making camp unaffordable for those of lesser means. Accordingly, authorization reviewers need to work sensitively with councils to assess their current position and what steps they can meaningfully take.

What revenues are considered in assessing whether a council is achieving this goal? All camping revenues, summer camp and year-round, should be compared to year-round camping expense, including professional and support staff expense, insurance, and mortgage expense (if any). In addition to direct camping revenue, councils may include, with appropriate documentation, income from any restricted or designated funds that are devoted to their camping program.

What is NCAP's goal for financial sustainability? A reasonable goal is a 5% or greater return on annual expenses and 5% return on the assets in the camping program to fund replacement of equipment and facilities. Most councils demand at least this rate from their endowment; the camping program assets should be held to a similar standard. The optimum goal would be a council that knows what its annualized capital expense is for program equipment and facilities and is fully funding that annualized expense.

### ***Guidelines for consideration***

- *Councils that are in the black, camping program is in the black, and are funding depreciation at least in part.* The councils are close to achieving the NCAP goal and should either be asked to stay the course or to make incremental progress toward the NCAP goal.
- *Councils that are in the black and camping program is in the black.* These councils are doing well and should be encouraged to continue to do so. The first place an authorization reviewer should look for improvements is whether any individual camp is losing money. The council should be asked to provide a commitment to reduce the loss on that camp while maintaining the current level of return. If the council does not wish to make that commitment for reasonable program reasons, then the reviewer should encourage the council to make measurable improvement in the rate of return or fund part of depreciation as progress toward the NCAP goal.
- *Councils that are in the black and the camping program is in the red.* These councils should be asked to make measurable improvement in their camping programs. These commitments could take a variety of forms, such as: (1) reduced camping expenses relative to camping revenues by a set percentage (at least 1%); (2) increased camping revenues greater than increase in expenses, making at least 1% improvement in return to council budget; (3) a commitment to increase the return to the council general program budget by a set percentage; or (4) reducing losses or converting a loss-making camp to a net positive return to the council.
- *Councils that are in the red and the camping program is in the black.* These councils have a camping program that is a net contributor to the council's bottom line. These councils should be asked to commit to improving the return from their camps up to the NCAP goal of 5% (camping net revenue/council overall expense) in a reasonable

amount over the authorization period or by further reducing expenses without cutting quality.

- *Councils that are in the red and the camping program is in the red.* These councils should be asked to take a serious look at their programs because the camping program is detracting from the overall council program. Steps that these councils could be asked to take include: (1) review and discontinuance of loss-making camps or camp properties to reduce burden; (2) taking concrete steps to increase revenues or cut expenses from a camp to reduce burden on the council budget to a specific rate of return over the authorization period; (3) a commitment to increase the return to the council general program budget by a set percentage, likely in the range of 3-5%; or (4) reducing losses by at least 5% (as a percent of the council budget) over the authorization period.

**Note on percentages.** Percent of revenues over expenses is Year Round Camping Revenue divided by Year Round Camping Expense. A 1% improvement means that this ratio improves by 1% (e.g.,  $\$470,000/\$500,000 = 0.94$ ; a 1% improvement would be to 0.95, requiring revenues to reach  $\$475,000$ ). Percent return to capital budget is  $(\text{Year Round Camping Revenue} - \text{Year Round Camping Expense})/\text{Overall Council Expense}$ . If the council budget were  $\$2.1$  million, the prior example shows a loss of 1.4%  $(\$470,000 - \$500,000)/\$2,100,000$  and a 3% increase in return to the council budget would require a  $\$63,000$  revenue increase  $(0.03 \times \$2,100,000)$  over the authorization period.

Depreciation is an accounting amount for the decline in value of the council's physical assets. Alternatively, NCAP will accept funding at 5% of original value as meeting its goal. NCAP will also accept other measures (x% of total accounting depreciation) as appropriate but should encourage councils to achieve something similar to 5% of original value.

Authorization reviewers are encouraged to work with appropriate council and BSA leadership in selecting the final financial commitment included in the Authorization to Operate.

### ***Commitment 2(b) – camp property CFET score and improvement***

The second commitment that councils are asked to make in the application process relates to facility quality. As part of the application, councils are to submit a fully completed Camp Facility Evaluation Tool (CFET) form for each camp property. The CFET form will provide a score for facilities quality. Council are asked to commit to improving the quality of camping facilities over the life of the Authorization to Operate. NCAP seeks to drive improvement in facility quality *but does not want councils to incur substantial debt in doing so*. Prior reviews by National design teams suggest that much can be accomplished by improved cleanliness and maintenance.

#### ***Guidelines for consideration***

- *Camps with a CFET score > 4.0.* For these camps, NCAP seeks a commitment to maintain camps in this range at or above the current level.
- *Camps with a CFET score > 3.0 but less than 4.0.* NCAP seeks a commitment to improve camps in this range of 0.1 point over the authorization period.
- *Camps with a CFET score > 2.0 but less than 3.0.* NCAP seeks a commitment to improve camps in this range by 0.3 point over the authorization period.

- *Camps with a CFET score < 2.0.* NCAP seeks a commitment to improve camps in this range by at least 0.5 points over the authorization period or else removal of offending structures.

Councils may commit to more, but authorization reviewers should discourage excessive expenditure, particularly if the council is in financial stress (e.g., council overall budget is in the red). Authorization reviewers may exercise discretion in approving these commitments where council finances are weak, but the bottom line is that some improvement must be shown in all camp properties and stand-alone COPE/climbing courses over the authorization period and if the council's finances are stressed and the council has multiple properties, the council should be challenged whether it needs to keep all of the properties or if some should be sold or mothballed to provide resources to improve the others and the bottom line support for the council's program.

Authorization reviewers should also exercise discretion if a council has recently experienced a catastrophic loss, such as a fire or flood, at a camp property. In this case, the authorization reviewer should not assume that low scores are indicative of lack of care; instead the authorization reviewer should work with the council on including a reasonable recovery program in the camp strategic improvement plan.

### ***Commitment 2(c) – program commitments***

The third commitment that councils are asked to make is a program quality improvement commitment for each long-term camp and for the group of day camps. Unlike the financial sustainability and CFET commitments in Sections 2(a) and 2(b), which seek objective improvements in output metrics (e.g., return to council budget, CFET score), the Section 2(c) commitment may be framed either as an output metric (e.g., improvement in customer survey score) or an input metric (a concrete commitment to improve or maintain staff quality, program, or program equipment). The commitment must be clearly stated and an input limit must be objectively verifiable by a camp assessment team (e.g., the credentials for a staff position or commitment to staff tenure, addition of a new program, provision that certain categories of program equipment will be replaced at least once every x years). The basis for verification should be set forth in the commitment and included in the Authorization to Operate to provide guidance to the camp assessment team.

#### ***Guidelines for consideration:***

- A commitment must be made for each long-term camp, and each stand-alone COPE/Climbing program
- Commitments may take a wide form. Ones that NCAP would encourage would include specialized training, possibly from outside sources, for adventure staff; commitments to replace specified program equipment or all equipment program on a defined schedule; commitments to maintain a certain senior staff: junior staff ratio or instructor: student ratio; or to add a program to a camp or camps by a date certain. Others may well be appropriate. The commitment need not be costly, but it should be aimed at improving the participant experience.

- The commitment must cover staffing, program, or program equipment and may not be facilities based. A commitment to improve program quality by measuring customer satisfaction by a particular amount would be acceptable if accompanied by an objective metric assessment.

## Preparing Section D. Additional Terms and Conditions

This section lists additional standard terms and conditions applicable to all camp properties and camps in the BSA. The language is fixed and the authorization reviewer will not make any changes. The following paragraphs provide the rationale for the general terms and conditions.

- **Condition D.1** states that councils and camps must comply with the Authorization to Operate and the National Camp Standards and that any noncompliance (e.g., a noncompliant finding by a camp assessment team) is potentially grounds for termination, revocation and reissuance, or modification of the Authorization to Operate. Similarly, material misstatement in the application concerning a camp property or camp may require reopening.
- **Condition D.2** sets for the consequences of a council or camp not meeting its commitments. Commitments C.2(a) and (b) are assessed during application and authorization review. Commitment C.2(c) is evaluated during assessment just like a standard. If a camp is not complying with the applicable Commitment 2(c), the first and second years will be scored as a deviation and the third year will be scored as a noncompliant requiring conditional accreditation. A council or camp failure to meet Commitments C.2(a) through (c) may be the basis for refusing to reauthorize a camp or council program. NCAP has deliberately chosen a more relaxed assessment approach for commitments because it recognizes that some commitments may require time to meet or may be upset by unexpected causes. Nonetheless, NCAP expects that, over the course of the authorization period, commitments will be met and that there will be demonstrable improvement or conformance to commitments by the next application.
- **Condition D.3** establishes expectations for the continuous camp improvement program. First, over the course of the authorization period, councils and camps are expected to “substantially” achieve the camp strategic improvement plan. This means that the council should have achieved a sufficient number of items on the camp strategic improvement plan that the camp quality is demonstrably better at the end of the authorization period than it was at the beginning. Councils may amend their camp strategic improvement plan in the interim report, provided that they provide a rationale for the changes. Additional guidance on reviewing camp strategic improvement plans is found in the *Guide to Reviewing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program*. Second, camps must have participated “adequately” in the annual improvement program. This will be assessed by looking at the camp assessment team reports to evaluate whether the camp achieved enough meaningful goals that the annual improvement program has led to improvements in camp quality and participant experience. If it has, then the goal of the program is met. Additional guidance is found in the *Guide to Reviewing the Continuous Camp Improvement Program*.
- **Condition D.4** provides that if the camp submits a timely and complete application for reauthorization, the council and camp may continue to operate their programs even if

NCAP does not reissue the Authorization to Operate prior to the expiration of the prior Authorization to Operate. This condition protects councils from unexpected loss of camp authorization due to delays by NCAP. A council that does not cooperate with NCAP in completing the authorization process will forfeit this protection. Please consult with your national authorization coordinator if this occurs during review.

## REQUIRED STEPS PRIOR TO SIGNATURE

Several steps need to be taken prior to submitting the Authorization to Operate to your national coordinator for signature. These steps are:

- **Step 1. Drafting.** The assigned authorization reviewer prepares a draft of the Authorization to Operate ensuring that all camp properties and camps are addressed and camp strategic improvement plans attached.
- **Step 2. Internal Review.** After drafting is completed, the authorization reviewer should send the draft Authorization to Operate, Authorization Report, all camp strategic improvement plans, and copies of all of the council submitted documents to their national coordinator. The national coordinator will then review the documents and, if complete, submit them for national peer review. After peer review, the coordinator will share any peer review comments with the reviewer and have them make changes as necessary. If specific conditions are included, your national coordinator or staff advisor may circulate the draft to other specified members of BSA leadership as well. Any comments should be considered and changes made and then recirculated to the commenter to ensure that the issue was correctly addressed. If the authorization reviewer believes a comment is not correct, guidance should be sought from their national coordinator, national authorization chair and/or staff advisor.
- **Step 3. Affected Council Review.** After internal review is complete, the draft Authorization to Operate should be sent to the council for its comments. Any comments from the council should be given careful consideration, likely in conjunction with the peer reviewer. If comments can be incorporated without undercutting NCAP, the authorization reviewer/national coordinator should consider doing so. Changes to specific terms and conditions should be cleared with involved BSA leadership. Changes to core template language cannot be made without approval of the National NCAP committee.
- **Step 4. Finalization.** Once the final draft Authorization to Operate is reached with the council, the authorization reviewer should sign it and send it and the Authorization Report to their national coordinator. The national coordinator will share with BSA leadership, as appropriate, and approve the final or recommend changes for further discussion with the council.
- **Step 5. Council Acceptance and Signature.** Once the national coordinator has approved the final draft, they will send the final draft Authorization to Operate to the council for acceptance, copying the authorization reviewer. The authorization reviewer

needs to stay in touch with the council to ensure that the acknowledgement page is signed and returned with a copy to the national coordinator, the reviewer and [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). If the council does not return the acknowledgment page, the authorization reviewer should call this to the attention of their national coordinator. If no copy is forthcoming, the issue should be elevated to the National staff advisor at [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org) so that the affected camp assessment chair can be notified to instruct the camp assessment team to mark Standard AO-802 as “noncompliant” and prepare for conditional accreditation. This completes the authorization reviewer role.

- **Step 6. Final Signature.** Once the council has completed the acceptance form and returned it to the reviewer and national coordinator, the authorization reviewer should ensure that their national coordinator signs and submits the final Authorization to Operate and Authorization Report to the council and sends a copy of the final signed form to the authorization reviewer.
- **Step 7. Filing.** The national coordinator should then send the final signed Authorization to Operate and Authorization Report to the national Teams file and delete the draft AR and ATO in Teams. The authorization review process is now complete.

## QUESTIONS

If you have additional questions, please contact your national coordinator or national authorization chair for guidance. If they cannot answer your questions, please contact the national NCAP staff advisor, national authorization chair, or national standards chair (as appropriate) for further guidance. Contact email for all of these individuals is found in the NCAP Circular or they can be reached through [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org).