

New Youth Protection Standards Effective 9/1/2023

This year, the National Council and the National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) are announcing several standards changes affecting youth protection that will go into effect on September 1, 2023. These standards are the focus of this issue of the NCAP Circular. **All councils and camps should carefully review NCAP Circular No. 18 to ensure that these changes are implemented immediately for all camp programs that occur on or after September 1, 2023. In addition, all camp properties should be reviewed to ensure that their programs and facilities are compliant with the revised Youth Protection Standards on September 1, 2023.**

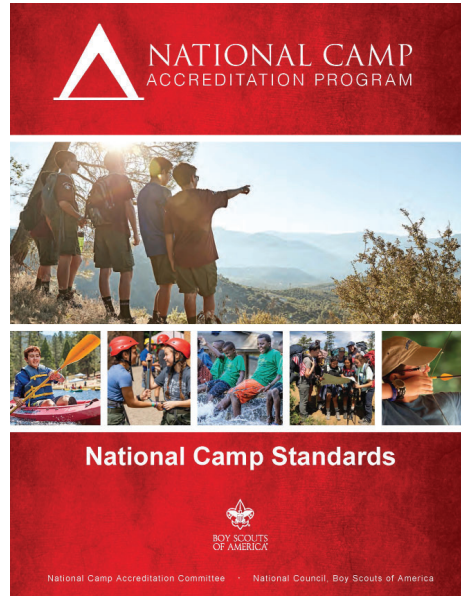
Two National Camp Standards are significantly affected on September 1, 2023: Standard PD-109, Outside Providers of Program, Activities and Services; and HS-501, Youth Protection. Each are discussed.

PD-109. OUTSIDE PROVIDERS OF PROGRAM, ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

STANDARD:

Effective September 1, 2023

If a council uses public or private outside (non-BSA) providers of programs, or activities, or services, the



The 2023 edition of the BSA's National Camp Standards sports a red cover and is available at <https://pdscouting.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2023-NCAP-Standards-430-056-web.pdf>

council has a written agreement with each provider that outlines the responsibilities of both parties consistent with BSA standards and policies.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

[Revise Specific Requirement F as follows]

F. If outside vendor personnel will remain at the camp overnight, will be present regularly

at the camp, or will have unsupervised contact with camp participants, the camp must:

1. Either conduct criminal background checks on such personnel or obtain a written certification from the vendor that such personnel have received a criminal background check meeting BSA's minimum requirements; and
2. Verify that the outside vendor personnel have completed either BSA's Youth Protection Training or received equivalent youth protection training meeting BSA's minimum requirements.

G. Additional guidelines for specific programs.

1. Scuba contractors shall also comply with the requirements of Standard PS-203.
2. Transportation contractors shall also comply with the requirements of Standard PS-216.

INTERPRETATION:

[Add new first paragraph]

Councils and camps arranging for outside vendors required to have criminal background

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checks and youth protection pursuant to Specific Requirement F should contact the National Service Center for current minimum requirements by emailing NCAP@scouting.org. Written agreements must reflect vendor’s agreement to meet or exceed minimum requirements of BSA National Camp Standards or policy.

[Revise existing language as follows]

When accompanying campers to programs or activities presented by outside private or public providers, staff supervisory responsibilities include, but are not limited to, camper behavior management, youth protection, communication, and health and safety–related matters.

~~On-site Overnight off-site and ongoing~~ program providers, ~~or providers providing service exclusively to camp participants,~~ must should demonstrate compliance with BSA Youth

Protection policies. Day on-site providers must demonstrate compliance with BSA Youth Protection Policies or be accompanied by youth protection trained staff at all times. Day off-site providers providing service at a place of public accommodation (e.g., general public swimming pool, public beach) should meet as many of these policies as is reasonably possible, and accompanying staff should ensure maintenance of Youth Protection at all times.

An “ongoing” vendor is one who is present during much of camp; a “day” vendor is one who appears sporadically (delivery personnel or delivers program during only a single day with no overnight or unsupervised access).

Where compliance with the standard as written cannot be achieved due to unusual circumstances, the council should seek a waiver or variance pursuant to Standard SA-0054.

REFERENCES:

[Add new bullet as follows]

- Current BSA minimum requirements for equivalent background checks and youth protection training can be obtained by contacting: membershipstandards@scouting.org

Rationale for the changes:

These changes implement program standard changes to enhance youth protection as part of BSA’s exit from

the bankruptcy program and agreed steps to improve program safety. These include ensuring that individuals with possible unsupervised access to Scouting youth are properly vetted and trained in Scouting’s youth protection requirements.

New Specific Requirement G reminds councils and camps of additional requirements for transportation vendors.

HS-501. YOUTH PROTECTION

Standard HS-501 is not being changed; however, the underlying requirements on the Youth Protection pages (both under Training and under the Barriers to Abuse) are changing effective September 1, 2023. **Councils and camps must ensure that all programs meet the new requirements as of September 1, 2023.** Highlights include:

- All adults staying overnight in connection with a Scouting activity must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or adult program participant. Registration as a merit badge counselor does not satisfy this requirement.
- There is a limited exception for Cub Scout parents staying overnight with their child/ward.

Councils and camps are encouraged to review the Barriers to Abuse and the Frequently Asked Questions to get the most

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up-to-date answers to many questions that may arise in the long-term camp, day camp and short-term camp environment.

Questions that are not clear-

ly answered by the Barriers to Abuse or Frequently Asked Questions should be directed to National Outdoor Programs Staff or NCAP@Scouting.org, which will endeavor to provide

a camp-appropriate answer to questions. BSA policy questions can also be directed to Glen.Pounders@scouting.org.

NCAP to Require Guard Rails on Bunk Beds in 2025

The National Camp Accreditation Committee is providing advance notice of a planned change to the National Camp Standards taking effect in 2025, when guard rails will be required on all upper bunks consistent with Consumer Product Safety Commission and many state guidelines. National Health and Safety and Risk Management have directed this change to reduce the risks of injury and liability.

The new standard will require the following:

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD

A. Bunk beds. Effective January 1, 2025, if a camp or camp property offers bunk beds, the beds must meet the following requirements:

1. For purposes of this standard, a "bunk bed" is any bed that has the bottom of its mattress foundation more than 30 inches above the floor. The mattress foundation is the based or support upon which a mattress is placed (or would be placed if used without a mattress).

2. Unless fixed against a

wall on one side, bunk beds must have at least two upper bunk guardrails, with at least one rail on each side. Bunk beds affixed to a wall must have a guardrail on the side not adjacent to the wall. Lower bunks with mattress foundations 30 inches or less from the floor do not require guardrails. Guardrails must extend at least five inches above the mattress top. The guardrails must be either permanently fastened or else require movement in two or more different directions, one after another, to release.

3. The guard rail on one side need not be continuous but may have an opening for a ladder or access to the top bunk. This opening shall comply with federal or state law or, if none apply, shall be no greater than 15 inches.

4. The guardrails and bunk bed structure shall not create any entrapment hazard where a youth or adult arm, hand, leg, head or neck could be trapped. The bed shall be free of sharp edges or corners. All bunk bed components must be structurally sound.

INTERPRETATION:

Bunk beds with guardrails that meet Consumer Product Safety Commission standards or state standards are acceptable. If no state standard, then BSA standard applies.

VERIFICATION:

- Visual review of a reasonable sample of beds

REFERENCES:

In general, openings must be less than 3.5 inches or greater than 9 inches to minimize the risk of entrapment. Details on testing for entrapment may be found at 16 Code of Federal Regulations 1213.4 and 1513.4.

Rationale for the change:

BSA is adopting these procedures, similar to those adopted by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and several states, to enhance protection of participants. This standard becomes effective in Calendar Year 2025 so that camps and councils have time to upgrade existing bunk beds to meet this standard.

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2023 Changes

AO-808 Requirements for Council Reporting

Revise “Applies to” on page 808-4 to replace “Family Camp” with “Short-Term Camp.”

SPECIAL NOTICE: Missing Text in Standards

NCAP noted three clarifying changes that did not make it into the National Standards Manual. These are as follows and are shown in **bold face and under-line** in the standard-by-standard discussion. The missed text may be found in the following parts:

- **Opening material**, “The Accreditation Decision” clarification on how UNC counted.
- **Standard SQ-401**, omitted the national staff code “E3”.
- **Standard FA-715**, omitted clarifying text that course **elements** with life safety deficiencies must close.