



NCAP Circular No. 20

NCAP elevates camps to new levels of excellence...

National Council, Boy Scouts of America

April 15, 2024

NCAP Requests Comment on Proposed 2025 Standards

As announced in **NCAP Circular No. 19**, the National Camp Accreditation Committee is changing the process for periodic updates to the BSA National Camp Standards. In addition to soliciting input from relevant BSA national committees, staff, local councils and outside experts, NCAP generally will solicit formal comment on proposed changes from all local councils, camps, and individual professional and volunteers engaged in BSA camping. NCAP generally will provide notice of proposed changes to the National Camp Standards, an explanation of the reason the change is under consideration, and request comment on whether the change is needed or should be modified to achieve its purpose. This notice and request for comment will be published in the **NCAP Circular**. The National Camp Accreditation Committee will then vote to accept, reject or modify the proposed standards after considering these comments. The approved

revisions will then be published in the **NCAP Circular** in redline fashion with an explanation.

When this approach was used previously, NCAP received useful feedback and commentary on how the proposed standards would apply in various camps. This helps NCAP avoid unintended consequences and fine tune the standards to reduce the burden on local councils and camps while still achieving BSA's safety and program quality objectives. Local council comments also improved the clarity of the standards. NCAP is hopeful that local councils and camps will use this opportunity to collaborate on improving the National Camp Standards

While it is NCAP's hope to follow this process generally, there may still be times when NCAP will act to revise the National Camp Standards directly, such as when directed by the National Executive Board or the National Leadership Council. Any revisions to the standards will be published in the **NCAP Circular**.

Process for Submitting

The text of the proposed standards revisions for 2025 and some requests for additional comment on program direction are found starting on page 3 in *courier font*. Plain or

boldface font represents proposed standard language; *italicized font* represents editorial and explanatory language that will not appear in the standards.

Commenters may submit comments in three ways:

1. Placing comments on the PDF text using Adobe's comment function.
2. Copying the standard into a Word document and using the track changes function with an explanation of why the change is made.
3. Sending an email stating the standard and changes requested with an explanation of why the change should be made.

Please include your name and email in the event there are questions about your comment.

Comments should be submitted to Eric Hiser, the National Standards Chair, at Eric.Hiser@scouting.org. Comments must be received by **May 7, 2024** to be considered.

NCAP appreciates the assistance of all BSA councils, camps, and camping volunteers and professionals in improving the National Camp Standards!

NCAP Circular No. 20

PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL CAMP ACCREDITATION PROGRAM
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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Future NCAP Developments

August or September 2024. NCAP Circular forecasting program changes and requesting camp and council feedback

October 2024. NCAP Circular setting forth finally adopted changes to the National Camp Standards for 2025

NCAP is always open to feedback and questions. If you have questions that cannot be answered by your council NCAP chair or zone NCAP coordinator, please email **NCAP@scouting.org** or reach out to a relevant member of the NCAP national leadership team.

Please always download and use current NCAP forms from www.scouting.org/NCAP

The following revisions and additions are being proposed to the BSA National Camp Standards. All councils, camps, and camping professionals and volunteers are requested to submit comments on whether the proposed changes should be made or how they could be improved following the instructions at the end of this document.

SA-001. NATIONAL CAMP STANDARDS APPLICABILITY

STANDARD:

The BSA National Camp Standards apply to any BSA-branded *camp property* or *camp*. All *camp properties* and *camps*, regardless of type, must comply with the standards applicable to the facilities and programs offered. When applicable, at *camp properties* and *camps*, the National Camp Standards take precedence over other national or local council policy or requirement except as provided herein.

[Add a new Specific Requirement C as follows]

- C. **Covered personnel.** All NCAP and National Camping School personnel and card holders, as described in Standard SA-006, and all camp staff and camp personnel, as described in Standards SQ-401, must comply with the National Camp Standards in the exercise of their duties.

[Add a new paragraph before "Long-term control" in the Interpretation]

When multiple councils collaborate to hold a camp, unless otherwise agreed in writing by all participating councils, the council upon whose camp property the event is held is responsible for NCAP compliance or, if the camp is not held on a camp property, the host council is responsible for NCAP compliance.

Rationale for the change:

The standard is changed to make it clear that all NCAP, National Camping School (NCS) and camp staff/camp personnel must comply with the national camp standards. The interpretation is expanded to clarify which council in a multi-council collaboration is responsible for ensuring NCAP compliance. The preferred alternative is for all participating councils to agree among themselves; if not, it is the responsibility of the host council to file the necessary local council authorization to operate and declarations. This interpretation applies to multi-council events, such as Order of the Arrow events except for NOAC.

SA-003. ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

[Proposed change in scoring nomenclature]

NCAP seeks input from the field on whether the scoring of Recommended Practices could be clarified. NCAP seeks input on which of the two following scoring regimes is clearer and easier to understand in application:

Scoring System 1

Yes = recommended practice is applicable and satisfied

No = recommended practice is applicable and not satisfied

NA = not applicable (e.g., does not apply to the camp at all)

Scoring System 2

A = Achieved = recommended practice is applicable and achieved

DNA = Did Not Achieve/Attempt = recommended practice is applicable but was not attempted or not achieved

NA = recommended practice is not applicable at this camp

SA-006. TRAINING OF NCAP PERSONNEL~~NCAP TRAINED AND CERTIFIED PERSONNEL~~

Rational for the change:

The change is being made to make Standard SA-006 the training standard for personnel serving in NCAP roles.

[NEW] SA-007. RESPONSIBILITY OF PERSONNEL WITH CAMP RESPONSIBILITIES

STANDARD:

All NCAP personnel, camp staff, camp personnel and council staff with camping responsibilities shall comply with and uphold the National Camp Standards in the performance of their duties. All NCAP and National Camping School (NCS) certificated personnel shall apply the standards and specific requirements in a manner that achieves the goal of the standard. Failure to comply with and apply the standards in their intended fashion may be grounds for revocation of NCAP or NCS certificates, banning from service as camp staff or camp personnel, or loss of membership.

INTERPRETATION:

BSA expects all individuals involved in BSA camping to uphold the standards of the BSA as set forth in the National Camp Standards to

maintain the quality and safety of BSA camping. Standards and their Specific Requirements are to be interpreted to achieve the health, safety and program quality purpose of the Standard. If a Specific Requirement specifies that the camp has an item such as, but not limited to, a helmet, bow, refrigerator or other item, that item must be present, maintained, fully functional in a safe fashion, and staff or participants, if applicable, expected to use it are trained or instructed in its use and the use of any accompanying safety gear or procedures. Similarly, when a Standard requires a plan or procedure, that plan or procedure must be up-to-date, reflect current facilities, equipment, and staffing, and address the purpose of the relevant standard or requirement. Disregard of the National Camp Standards and camp policies and procedures that implement them is grounds for a noncompliant finding and, if willfully, recklessly or grossly negligently maintained by an individual, for banning from future service as camp staff or camp personnel or loss of membership.

If a standard is unclear, camp staff or personnel must seek guidance as directed by their camp director. If a camp director is unclear, they should seek guidance from the council NCAP chair and/or professional advisor. If the standard remains unclear, guidance should be sought from NCAP@Scouting.org or by calling the National NCAP Staff Advisor. In appropriate circumstances, a written NCAP interpretation may be issued by the National Camp Accreditation Committee. Such interpretations are binding on both NCAP and the camp. A form is available as part of the assessment packet to bring unclear standards to NCAP's attention.

If an NCAP assessment team finds that an individual has willfully, recklessly or negligently disregarded a National Camp Standard and refuses to correct the violation when counseled, the assessment team shall notify the zone assessment coordinator and the National NCAP staff advisor. If a camp believes an NCAP assessor has willfully, reckless or grossly misconstrued the National Camp Standards, it should contact the zone assessment coordinator immediately. The NCAP Committee will investigate and take appropriate action in both cases.

If, after investigation, a panel of NCAP Committee determines that NCAP personnel have acted contrary to the National Camp Standards or the Scouter Code of Conduct, the panel may revoke the individual's NCAP role. If the NCAP panel determines that an NCS certificate holder, member of camp staff or camp personnel has acted willfully, recklessly or negligently in failing to apply the standards, the NCAP panel may ban them from service as camp staff or as camp personnel at a BSA accredited camp. The NCAP panel will give written notice of such determination and the affected individual(s) may appeal the

initial decision to the National Camp Accreditation Committee. The decision of the National Camp Accreditation Committee is final.

The NCAP panel may also recommend revocation of an individual's NCS certificate, if any, or in egregious circumstances, revocation of membership, to appropriate BSA authorities. The NCAP panel's recommendations shall be acted upon and appealed in accordance with applicable procedures.

Rationale for the change:

The NCAP standards are part of the BSA's Commitment to Safety and the BSA's Strategic Road Map Imperative to be a "Leader in Youth Safety". Compliance with the NCAP standards is a critical step toward meeting this organizational imperative.

The BSA and NCAP are fortunate to work with many high quality professional and seasonal staff and Scouting volunteers. These individuals strive to fulfill the intent of the National Camp Standards and bring a high quality, safe program to our Scouts and participants. In a few cases NCAP has encountered staff or volunteers who have disregarded the purpose and requirements of the standards and potentially placed Scouts and participants at risk by their actions. An example of disregard of concern would be interpreting a standard or its specific requirements in a way that defeats the objective intent of the standard. In such cases, it may be necessary for NCAP to act to preserve the health and safety of BSA participants and the integrity of the BSA brand.

PD-112. COUNCIL PROGRAM DESIGN, SAFETY AND RISK REVIEW

[Add Specific Requirements to the Standard as follows]

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

- A. Plan for review.** The council committee responsible for the overall camping program has adopted a plan providing for review of each long-term camp activity, each day camp activity, and a generic list of short-term camp activities that results in each activity being actively reviewed at least once every three years or more frequently. The plan shall also call for a review of any significant incidents at the camp or a camp activity during the prior season. The plan shall indicate the council committee or team responsible for completing the review.
- B. Review scope.** The council committee or team responsible for reviewing an activity under the plan must review the activity, any syllabus, any program hazard analysis and any relevant BSA

standards, policies or insurance requirements with an understanding of where and how the activity is usually conducted. For an incident, the council committee should review the incident, the activity at which it occurred, and any safety procedures or risk mitigation measures in place, and any relevant BSA standards, policies or insurance requirements. If the committee finds that additional safety or quality measures are required, these must be specified and, if necessary, approved using the council's normal procedures.

C. Recording. The council committee or a staff member must record the review and any adopted measures on a tracking sheet.

D. Camp director's or leader's responsibility.

1. For long-term camps and day camps, the council must communicate any required safety and quality measures to the camp director, make them available to the assessment team, and must ensure that the camp is adequately resourced to implement them. The camp director has primary responsibility to ensure that the measures are executed at the camp.
2. For short-term camps, the council must communicate any required safety and quality measures to the camp leader, short-term camp administrator and the staff advisor, who share responsibility to ensure that the measures are executed at the short term camp. The council must ensure that the camp is adequately resourced to implement the required measures.

VERIFICATION:

- The assessment team shall review the tracking sheet to ensure that the review is occurring.
- If the council has adopted additional procedures, the assessment team shall review a representative sample of those measures to ensure that they are being implemented.

Rationale for the change:

The purpose of these changes is to clarify the process for review of camp programs at long term camps, day camps, and short term camps. NCAP recognizes that it is not feasible for enterprise risk management or similar committees to review every activity at every camp every year and engage in a meaningful review, particularly where the council operates multiple camps. Instead, NCAP requires that councils develop a plan that will enable their enterprise risk management committee (or other committee charged with this responsibility) to review each year's incidents for trends and corrective actions and to review a set number or percentage of overall camp activities so that all activities are reviewed at least once over a three year cycle. The plan for

review should be written and available for assessment team inspection as should the tracking document showing that the review was completed.

NCAP is not mandating a specific form of review. For some councils it may be advantageous to bring in outside experts or additional volunteers to assist the primary committee where specialized knowledge of the program or risks may be needed. NCAP supports processes that councils find meet their needs.

Assessment teams should focus on whether the council has a plan and that there is evidence that it is implementing the plan to review incidents and camp activities and has considered risks in its decisions. It is not the role of the assessment team to second guess the council's decisions but assessment teams should hold councils accountable for implementing their self-designed program. If a council is implementing its program and an assessment team believes that the program is inappropriate, the program should be score "compliant" and the issue forwarded to the zone coordinator or the NCAP Staff Advisor, who will reach out and discuss the team's concerns with council leadership. Only after such a discussion would NCAP decide if any additional action is necessary. On the other hand, if a council has completed failed to undertake any review under its plan, that would warrant a noncompliant finding.

RP-159. TRADING POST

[Revise bullet point list by adding a new fourth bullet as follows]

- Provide appropriate menstrual products with sensitivity that needs vary

Rationale for the change:

As Scouting serves more girls and young women, it needs to ensure that their needs are met. For many girls, the camp environment may cause periods to occur erratically, making planning difficult. If the camp has a trading post, it should be prepared to address such needs. If no trading post, it may be appropriate to consider keeping some supplies at the health area. A variety of sizes and types of product may be needed.

PS-206. COPE AND/OR CLIMBING PROGRAMS

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

[Revise Specific Requirement C.9 to read as follows]

C.

9. Until December 31, 2025, a consistent process is used by all COPE and climbing staff to ensure that clothing, head protection, environment, connections, and knots are double-checked in any belayed events for staff members and participants. This requirement must also be followed by staff at all times, including setup and takedown of life safety systems.

Not later than January 1, 2026, a consistent posted process is used and verbalized by all COPE and climbing staff to ensure that clothing, head protection, environment, connections, and knots are double-checked in any belayed events for staff members and participants. This requirement must also be followed by staff at all times, including setup and takedown of life safety systems.

Rationale for the change:

BSA and other COPE and climbing providers have determined that mnemonic processes enhances compliance and safety. Based on experience and observation, NCAP is moving to further the benefit provided by these programs by making two enhancements: first, posting the mnemonic process, such as CHECK, used at the COPE/Climbing site to remind staff and participants to use the process; and second, requiring the parties going through the CHECK or similar mnemonic process to call out each step in a call/response format. Addition of a vocalization step helps ensure that all participants use the process.

One year of phase in time is provided to allow development of training, signs, and other aids to implementation. Councils and camps are encouraged to implement this change as soon as the training and aids are ready.

PS-222. ADVENTURE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

[Delete Specific Requirement C.11.g]

C. Programs and Activities Covered.

11. Any of the following activities when they also meet the definition of a "trek program":

~~g. Winter camping~~

Rationale for the change:

NCAP has determined that the basic Scouting program provides sufficient safeguards for winter camping (e.g., camping during the winter season). The adventure threshold is triggered only if the camp is delivered using skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, sledging or sledding as part of the program.

PS-223. OTHER CAMP PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

STANDARD:

If offered, other programs and activities not addressed in Standards PS-201 through PS-222 are conducted in a fun and safe manner, in accordance with the BSA National Camp Standards, *Guide to Safe Scouting*, and Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities, and with any program- or activity-specific procedures specified by the council pursuant to Standards PD-111 and PD-112.

INTERPRETATION:

Starting with the January 1, 2025, round of authorization review, councils will be asked to submit a comprehensive list of programs and activities for each camp with appropriate program hazard analysis (PHA) (see Standards PD-111 and PD-112) no more than five years old supporting each activity. For programs addressed by National Camp Standards PS-201 through PS-221, current BSA merit badge pamphlets or program guides, a reference to the merit badge pamphlet or program guide is sufficient unless the council or camp has identified a unique issue requiring additional safety procedures. A list of BSA program guides satisfying this requirement is listed on www.scouting.org/NCAP. Any other program, including programs under Standards PS-222 and PS-223, will require a program hazard analysis. See Standard PD-111.

All activities must comply with law. See Standard AO-801.

Rationale for the Change:

In the Standard, PD-111 is added to the list when conditions were adopted pursuant to it prior to the camp's start of the program. In the Interpretation, BSA has already evaluated the activities and their general risks in the development of the National Camp Standards, merit badge pamphlet or other BSA program guides (such as Belay On or Aquatics Supervision). Councils and camps do not need to redo this analysis unless there are site-specific aspect that require additional consideration. A list of BSA program guides satisfying this requirement will be available on <http://www.scouting.org/NCAP> by January 1, 2025.

ADDITIONAL REQUEST FOR COMMENT ON STANDARD PS-223

In addition to the proposed changes to Standard PS-223 discussed above, NCAP is seeking comment from the field on what other pieces of BSA literature, besides the current version of the *Scout Handbook*, *Scout Fieldbook* and merit badge pamphlets should be listed as a "program guide" that satisfies the requirements of proposed revised Standard PS-223 without requiring an additional program hazard analysis. NCAP and the National Outdoor Programs staff will review recommended literature, consult with internal and external experts and, if appropriate, include such materials as acceptable program guides meeting the requirements of Standard PS-223. Please send any literature recommendations to Eric.Hiser@scouting.org.

SQ-401. CAMP STAFF QUALIFICATION: GENERAL

[Standard SQ-401 is revised in its entirety]

STANDARD:

All camp staff are appropriately registered as members of the Boy Scouts of America. All other camp personnel who are not registered members of the Boy Scouts of America meet equivalent criteria pursuant to Standard PD-109.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

A. Additional registration requirements for long-term camp staff and long-term camp personnel.

1. Long-term camp staff 17 years of age and younger during their time at camp must complete a youth application using the registration category "Council Camp Staff Youth" if at a local council camp or "National Camp Staff Youth" if at a national high adventure base.
2. Long-term camp staff 18 years of age and older at any time during their time at camp must complete an adult application using the registration code "Council Camp Staff Adult" if at a local council camp or "National Camp Staff" if at a national high adventure base.
3. The registration requirements in Specific Requirement A.1 and A.2 apply even if the person is already registered in another capacity. Individuals transitioning from 17 to 18 years of age during the camp season must provide both applications and may continue to serve after their 18th birthday while the application is processed and background check conducted.

4. Contractor personnel at a long-term camp must either be registered in accordance with Specific Requirements A.1 or A.2 or meet equivalent criteria under Standard PD-109.

B. Minimum age requirements.

1. Long-term camp staff and camp personnel must be 15 years of age or older at the start of camp except as provided herein.
2. Long-term camp staff counselors-in-training (CITs) and day camp staff must be 14 years of age or older.

C. Compliance with labor laws.

1. Camp staff and camp personnel 14 or 15 years of age cannot perform hazardous duty, such as working on or operating a motor vehicle and maintenance or operation of power-driven equipment. Camp staff and camp personnel must also comply with the SAFE Project Tool Use guidance. Whichever is more stringent controls.
2. Camp staff and camp personnel 14 or 15 years of age may not work more than 8 hours in any day; work more than 40 hours in any week; or work before 7 am at any time or after 7 pm except from June 1 through Labor Day when the evening hour is extended to 9 pm.
3. All camps must assure compliance with both federal and state labor laws. State labor laws vary and may require a seasonal camp staff application, a letter of agreement along with a written position description and access to a camp staff manual prior to starting work and may differ from Specific Requirements 1 and 2 above. Some states require work permits.

D. International camp staff.

1. International camp staff must be 18 years of age or older, have been approved by the BSA International Department, and may not hold any camp staff position for which National Camping School training is mandatory.
2. International youth/visitors may not serve on camp staff.
3. The local council is responsible for adhering to all U.S. State Department requirements.

E. Miscellaneous requirements.

1. The complete, approved uniform is worn by camp staff during formal ceremonies such as campfires, evening meals, retreats, etc., as determined by the council. A staff shirt with uniform shorts/pants may be approved informal staff attire.
2. The camp has a staff organization chart and a policy specifying minimum staff requirements.

INTERPRETATION:

[Revise the first three bullets as follows]

- Camp staff includes all personnel, paid or volunteer, working under the direction of the council or camp management, who work

at a camp or interact with camp participants unless they work for a contractor. Camp staff includes employees, CITs, and continuing volunteers (e .g ., camp commissioners, volunteers asked by the camp management to assist program on an ongoing basis) .

- ~~Camp personnel includes all personnel, working under the direction of the council or camp management and employed by contractors working at the camp, who do not typically interact with camp participants as part of their assigned duties.~~ Examples might include kitchen, commissary or warehouse staff working for a food service contractor or staff working for a qualified scuba contractor.
- Camp staff and camp personnel do not include (1) third parties who come on-site to offer a program to camp participants, are accompanied by camp staff while present, and do not remain on-site overnight; (2) parents and volunteers in day camps who assist in program while day camp staff are present and provide supervision; and (3) parents and volunteers in day camp who assist by walking youth between program areas supervised by day camp staff, so long as there are at least two adults and at least one adult is a registered volunteer in the BSA.

REFERENCES:

The U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division issues "Child Labor Provisions for Nonagricultural Occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act" at <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/childlabor101.pdf> which provides general guidance on child labor issues at the federal level. Consult your state labor department for state laws.

The SAFE Project Tool Use guidelines are available at:

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc/>

The specific guidance is found in the Appendix at the bottom of the page.

Rationale for the changes:

These changes make current BSA policy clearer by addressing registration, age, and special cases separately. It also clarifies the handling of camp staff and camp personnel after September 1, 2023 changes. Camp staff are all employees and volunteers, except as excluded in bullet three, that report directly to the council and its camp director. Camp personnel are individuals who report primarily to a contractor who is responsible to the camp director or council. Camp staff must be registered as outlined in Specific Requirements A.1 or

A.2. *Camp personnel must be registered under Specific Requirements A.1 or A.2 or may meet alternative requirements in accordance with Standard PD-109. Careful attention to the requirements of Standard PD-109 is required.*

These changes do not affect current BSA policy that allows escorted volunteers to provide program during the day while accompanied by camp staff to enrich Scouting programs or to the use of Cub Scout leaders and parents to supplement camp staff when supervised or when walking dens between program areas so long as there are multiple individuals and at least one is a registered leader requiring a background check. Questions should be directed to National Outdoor Programs staff.

SQ-402. CAMP STAFF TRAINING: GENERAL

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD

[Add new Specific Requirement B.6]

6. The camp has an open door policy that encourages staff to raise any youth protection, safety, health or standards compliance concerns with their supervisor or the camp director or, if the camp director is the source of concern, the Scout Executive or designated council executive board member. This policy is communicated to the staff during training.

REFERENCES:

[Add a new bullet to the end as follows]

- An example of the BSA's open door policy is found in the Camp Staff Employee Handbook Template, section 9 and is made available to Scout executives.

Rationale for the change:

BSA's commitment to the safety of its members, participants and staff requires that camp staff is comfortable raising concerns about youth protection, safety, health and standards compliance issues with supervisors and the camp director. In addition, good governance requires that if the problem potentially involves the camp director, an alternative, either the Scout Executive or a designated member of the council's executive board is an alternative resource for these concerns to be expressed. The Scout Executive may designate a senior professional staff member with responsibility for camps, safety or youth protection as an alternate.

SQ-403. CAMP MANAGEMENT

[Revise Specific Requirement B as follows]

B. ~~Program director of a long term or day camp.~~ Long-term camps and day camps must have a program director for the camp, base or reservation (in multiple camp facilities) meeting the following requirements:

Rationale for the change:

Camps have experienced confusion due to the difference in wording between Specific Requirement A for camp directors and Specific Requirement B for program directors, leading some long-term camps and day camps to conclude that a program director is optional. The language change clarifies BSA's position that all long-term camps and day camps require both key leaders, except for trek program camps, which may substitute a trek director for the program director.

SQ-406. AQUATICS STAFF

[Revise Specific Requirement A and B as follows]

A. Program supervision. ~~At all camps:~~

1. The aquatics director is 21 years of age or older.
2. The aquatics director holds either (a) or (b) and meets any additional requirements under (c):
 - a. A current certificate of training as a BSA Aquatics Instructor from a National Camping School; OR
 - b. If an individual trained as a BSA Aquatics Instructor is not available, the camp may apply for and be issued a waiver that would allow a person 21 years of age or older, currently trained by the American Red Cross as a Lifeguard Instructor, in Lifeguard Management, and as a Water Safety Instructor (all three required) and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer or Health Care Worker to fill the position for one season. The waiver will require the individual to review the Swimming and Water Rescue and Paddle Craft Safety PowerPoint presentations at www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs under the Aquatics tab and to review the relevant sections of Aquatics Supervision, No. 34346; AND
 - c. State or local regulation may require previous lifeguard experience and should be reviewed to ensure compliance.
3. The aquatics director is currently certified as a BSA Lifeguard, American Red Cross Lifeguard, or equivalent training recognized by state legislation or regulation (a "valid lifeguard certification") and is currently trained in American Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer or Health Care Worker, or equivalents.

4. For long-term camps, the aquatics director holds no other staff position and lives on-site if youth participants or staff remain on the premises overnight.
5. If a scuba activity is the only aquatics activity at the camp, then the requirements of Standard PS-203 must be met in lieu of Standard SQ-406, Specific Requirements A through C. Specific Requirements D through F continue to apply.

B. ~~Aquatic Area Supervision~~Camps with separated aquatics areas on camp property or reservation. At all camps Each aquatics area shall be supervised by a person, 18 years of age or older, who holds the following training and credentials when the aquatics director is not physically present at the area:

[Revise Specific Requirements 5 and add new B.6 as follows]

5. For adventure or trek activities, other than scuba, comply with Standard SQ-411 for activities that occur on trek and off camp property or Specific Requirement D for swimming activities at a non-BSA owned or operated swimming facility
6. For scuba activities, comply with Standard PS-203 in lieu of Standard SQ-406, Specific Requirement B.

REFERENCES:

The current list of equivalent training for American Red Cross First Aid and American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer may be found at:

<https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/CPR-for-BSA-Lifeguard-Equivalent-Options-02132024.pdf>

Rationale for the proposed changes:

The changes to Specific Requirement A are being made to increase the clarity of the requirements for the aquatics director by making it more clear what the alternative is to the BSA Aquatics Instructor and clarifying that the other requirements must be met by all aquatics directors, regardless of whether they are a BSA Aquatics Instructor or meeting the alternative requirements. The second change clarifies that when scuba is the only aquatics activity, the requirements of Standard PS-203 apply in lieu of Specific Requirement A through C. Specific Requirements D and F would apply if those options are used in delivery of the scuba program although the outside providers under Specific Requirement D must also meet the requirements as a qualified scuba contractor under Standard PS-203. If a PWC program is offered as part of the scuba program, then both Standards PS-203 and SQ-406 must be met.

The changes to Specific Requirement B are being made to clarify that each separate aquatics area requires an area supervisor who is 18

years of age or older and holds current relevant training. NCAP defines a "separate aquatics area" as an area, separated by distance or other barriers, that a single individual cannot meaningfully observe, control, and direct emergency response activities. An example of a single aquatics area might be a regular pool and a shallow play pool within a common fenceline. An example of separate aquatics areas would be a pool and a lakefront separated by a fence and several hundred feet or two pools on either side of the shower house. NCAP solicits comments from the field on ways to make this definition more clear in the typical long-term, day camp, and short-term camp context. Specific Requirement B is also being revised to address scuba programs, which must meet the requirements of Standard PS-203 during the scuba program. Sites that alternate between scuba and other aquatics programs during the same camp must meet the requirements of Specific Requirement B when the non-scuba programs are running.

SQ-412. OTHER PROGRAM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

[Revise Specific Requirement D as follows]

- D. In a Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scout day camp or long-term camp, if a first-year camper program is offered, the first-year camper director is at least 18 years of age and holds a valid certificate of training from the Outdoor Skills section of the National Camping School or has equivalent skills as determined by the council.

INTERPRETATION:

[Add new bullet point as follows]

- First year camper director. Camps offering a first year camper program should have a director with the appropriate NCS certification or equivalent skills. Equivalent skills means prior camp staff experience and prior multi-year experience as a new Scout assistant Scoutmaster or Troop Guide (for Scouts BSA) or den leader or den chief (for Cub Scouts) or relevant experience as a Venturing or Sea Scouting advisor or unit officer.

Rationale for the change:

The change clarifies that for first year camper programs, local councils may determine whether the candidate has "equivalent skills" based upon their prior experience in the Scouting program. The fundamental intent is that the candidate has both prior camp staff experience (so they have experiences to draw upon about camp to help

guide the first year campers) and experience working with "new to Scouting" youth so that they are familiar with common questions and misperceptions and can put the youth at ease to enjoy and gain the most from the camp experience. It is also useful if the candidate has strong experience with the first year program for Scouts BSA (Scout through First Class) and Cub Scouts (Bobcat requirements).

HS-505. MEDICAL CARE POLICIES (COUNCIL AND CAMP)

INTERPRETATION:

[Add new paragraph at end]

Council health care policies should address whether the camp will stock or administer, as appropriate, preventative drugs and devices such as Narcan, epinephrine pens as necessary and appropriate for the camp community. Policies should also address appropriate staffing and sensitivity to the needs of the more diverse populations in camp that may need medical care or intervention.

Rationale for the change:

Some camps may find themselves in situations where campers or camp visitors experience the need for preventative drugs and devices such as Narcan or epinephrine pens. The Interpretation is revised to make it clear that local councils and camps may arrange for provision of such devices if there is a perceived need as part of Scouting's commitment to safety. While Scouting does not condone illicit drug use or prescription sharing, not all Scouting families have access to reliable pharmacies or the ability to fully control access to their medications. Similarly, camps and participants are unable to fully prevent possible exposure to insect stings and bites that may result in an anaphylactic shock.

The council in consultation with the council health supervisor should also evaluate whether its service plan and personnel will alleviate potential patient and staff discomfort that may hinder proper diagnosis and treatment to the extent reasonably practicable. For example, teenagers may find it difficult to discuss certain physiological symptoms with a member of the opposite sex, particularly when they are near the same age. Councils should consider staffing solutions, such as having volunteers of both sexes on call, to help alleviate such situations.

Finally, with the increase in prevalence of wildfires in some areas, affected councils and camps should evaluate whether their state has issued exposure guidelines or whether exposure guidelines should be

*adopted in consultation with their council health supervisor.
Councils and camps must comply with any applicable state or local law.*

RP-551. MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL HEALTH (MESH) SUPPORT

[Replace the existing Recommended Practice in its entirety]

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

- A. Council MESH Implementation Plan.** The council has developed a MESH implementation plan including the following elements:
1. Determination of whether the council health supervisor is willing/capable of addressing camp mental health preparation and, if not, identification of a council health supervisor designee to assist in development of the council camp MESH policies and plans.
 2. Identification of professional MESH resources available within the council service areas, services they provide, and how they can be accessed.
 3. Council needs assessment, which shall review camps, camp populations, camp activities, and locations and determines, with guidance from the council health supervisor or designee, needs and services to meet those needs.
 4. A training plan for council camp leadership that addresses:
 - a. Likely mental health needs of camp population.
 - b. Awareness/recognition of symptoms of frequency occurring mental health problems likely to occur in the council's camps.
 - c. Assessment of available resources.
 - d. Appropriate de-escalation techniques.
 - e. Guidance on when and where to get additional help/resources and whom to notify
 - f. Implementation of camp MESH Implementation Plan.
 - g. Incident reporting.
- B. Camp MESH Implementation Plan.** Each long-term camp and multi-day camp has a MESH implementation plan including the following elements:
1. Training for camp leadership in recognizing and initial support for MESH incidents and awareness training for additional staff, with training on in-staff referral and escalation.
 2. Identification of a qualified mental health professional or network on call to assist camp leadership in responding to MESH incidents. The mental health professional or network should be approved by the council health supervisor or designee.

3. A MESH response guide, including policies or guidance on handling of expected incidents and when escalation to outside resources or transfer out of camp environment is appropriate. Policies and guidance should also address proper communication with council leadership, family, and outside agencies in a way that both protects and respects the individuals with the MESH incident.
4. Identification and training of MESH incident response team.
5. Parent information for inclusion in parent/leader guide, including notes such as camp is not the time to change up medication and risks of omitting information from AHMR, to be determined in discussion with the council health supervisor or mental health designee.

C. MESH Response Guide for Short-Term Camps. The council has a short-term camp MESH response guide for short term activities that addresses elements of Specific Requirement B appropriate for the general short term camp experience. For short term camps that in the judgment of the council health supervisor or mental health designee have unusual risks, a MESH implementation plan specific to the camp is developed.

D. Annual Review. Each year, the council in conjunction with its health supervisor and/or mental health designee, reviews MESH incidents at its camps and makes appropriate adjustments to the council and camp MESH implementation plans, training plans and response guides.

INTERPRETATION:

The Recommended Practice will remain in place for the indefinite future and be updated as Scouting learns more. The prior goal of adopting a standard is deferred until Scouting has a stronger evidence base on what measures are effective.

REFERENCES:

BSA Health and Safety has developed a resource to assist councils and camps in developing a MESH plan that provides general direction and helpful questions as well as lists of resources. It may be found:

[https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-064\(23\)-MESH-Planning-Template.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-064(23)-MESH-Planning-Template.pdf)

Additional information can be found at the Alliance for Camp Health at:

<https://allianceforcamphealth.org/education-and-resources/mesh-resources>

Rationale for the change:

Scouting continues to work to improve and enhance its awareness of and ability to support staff, camper and visitor mental, emotional and social health needs. The first version of this Recommended Practice called on councils to develop resources to assist their camp leadership in addressing this growing issue. Councils and camps have requested additional guidance on the development of appropriate MESH support for staff and participants. At the 2023 National Outdoor Conference, several MESH subject matter experts presented on the elements of a camp MESH plan. This replacement recommended practice provides more detail based upon the experiences shared at the National Outdoor Conference and gained by BSA national support teams. The new recommended practice provides structure and calls on the council to assess the needs of its specific staff and camper population and to develop an appropriate implementation strategy and then to resource its camp leadership with those resources. While BSA initially hoped to convert this Recommended Practice into a Standard in three to five years time, experience has shown that the topic is complex and that Scouting can learn from experts and partners in this area. It is important, however, that Scouting and camps keep moving forward and building capacity to address this area of camper needs. Accordingly, BSA will keep the Recommended Practice in place during this process rather than moving precipitately to a standard.

BSA remains committed to providing more resources to councils and camps to support MESH efforts and councils and camps are encouraged to monitor the NCAP Circular, Health and Safety webpage, and NCAP webpage, for more resources. Councils and camps are encouraged to communicate successes and lessons learned to NCAP and the National Health and Safety Team.

FA-713. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

[Revise Interpretation as follows]

If hazardous materials such as pesticides, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, paints, liquid chemicals (other than household products), paints, and chlorine are used, they are government-approved. Use and storage instruction on the labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) of all hazardous materials must be strictly followed. Labels must not be removed or defaced. Current SDS sheets ~~must~~^{should} be available to staff in close proximity to where the materials are used or stored, including trek situations. Disposal of hazardous materials or their containers is done according to label instructions or in accordance with applicable regulation. The camp complies with all of OSHA's

hazard communication standards. SDS sheets for chemicals no longer in use must be kept for 30 years after last use unless the camp keeps another record documenting employee exposure. Current and no longer in use SDS sheets should be kept separately to minimize burden and confusion. Electronic records are acceptable so long as readily accessible to staff and backup available in the event of power or system outage.

It is recommended that at the close of each camp season the camp review all hazardous materials on the property and dispose of those which are expired, unusable, or unsuitable for the camp environment.

VERIFICATION:

[Add new bullets as follows]

- Observation of hazardous material use and storage areas and whether SDS are available within reasonable proximity.
- Cross-reference of observed chemicals with SDS sheets and check a sample of SDS sheets to ensure current (within last three years).
- Discussion of when the camp last reviewed chemicals in storage and retired expired, unusable or unsuitable items.

REFERENCE:

Requirements for hazardous communication are found at 29 C.F.R. 1910.1200

Rationale for the change:

The change to the Interpretation is to clarify the handling of hazardous materials and provide more guidance on expectations for hazard communication. In addition, it is a recommended practice that camps review and dispose, appropriately, hazardous materials that are expired, unusable or unsuitable for the camp environment. This reduces the risk of unintended exposure or release. The relevant OSHA regulation is provided in the reference to assist camps with questions.

AO-808. REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNCIL REPORTING

[Revise Specific Requirement B as follows]

B. **Camp.** At camp, the camp director, or camp leader for a short-term camp, shall ensure that all required reports are filed within the times set forth on the BSA Incident Report page. The camp director or camp leader shall notify the professional advisor of all incidents requiring reporting, including those requiring notice to the National Crisis Communication Support team (PR@scouting.org), occupational

injury reporting, and U.S. Coast Guard reporting. If the professional advisor or Scout executive cannot be reached within the required times, the camp director or camp leader shall make any required reports.

Rationale for the change:

Short term camps don't always have a "camp director" but may have another title, such as camporee chair, conclave director, or similar. The requirement is revised to use the more generic term "camp leader" to cover these variable titles.

CALL FOR ADDITIONAL INPUT ON THE NATIONAL CAMP STANDARDS

In addition to the proposed revisions to the National Camp Standards and requests for additional comment set forth above, NCAP generally is seeking input from local councils on the following questions:

1. Are there any Standards that prevent your council from offering a desired program or which are unduly burdensome? If so, please identify the Standard and the specific aspect of it which prevents or unduly burdens your program. Please provide a clear explanation of the problem and any examples.
2. Are there any Standards or Recommended Practices that are unclear? If so, please identify the Standard or Recommended Practice and the specific aspect of it which is unclear or overly burdensome. Please provide an example of the difficulty and any suggested resolution.
3. Are there any Standards or Recommended Practices that are unnecessary or that could be covered by the proposed revisions to Standard PS-223? If so, please identify the Standard or Recommended Practice and why you believe handling it under Standard PS-223 would be appropriate.
4. Are there any "Verification" provisions that are not sufficiently clear? If so, please identify the Standard or Recommended Practice and the specific bullet or provision that is not clear and how it could be improved.
5. Are there any topics that BSA should consider for development of a Standard or Recommended Practice? If so, please identify the topic and why you believe BSA should address it. Please include references to other organizations that have addressed the issue and where in their websites or materials a discussion can be found.

NCAP will consider all comments received either in response to the proposed revisions or in response to the calls for additional comment. NCAP will publish the final standards with an explanation of the comments received and any changes made in response to the comments. On comments received under the calls for additional comment, NCAP will provide a brief summary of the major comments received and will indicate which ones will be taken up by NCAP in the future.

Questions about the National Camp Standards or the Calls for Additional Comment or Input may be directed to Eric Hiser, National Standards Chair, at eric.hiser@scouting.org or to Brian Gray, NCAP Staff Advisor, at brian.gray@scouting.org.