



West Virginia 4-H Camp Operations Manual

4-H CAMP PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES	2
West Virginia 4-H Camping Program Mission and Objectives	2
Mission	2
What 4-H Camping Is NOT	3
RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL	3
STANDARDS FOR 4-H CAMPS IN WEST VIRGINIA	4
Program Design and Activities	4
Operational Management	5
Health and Wellness	7
Site and Food Service	7
Transportation	8
APPENDICES	9
A. WVU Extension Service Policies	9
1. Nondiscrimination	9
2. Volunteer Application, Screening, and Selection Process	9
3. 4-H Money Management	9
4. 4-H Code of Conduct	9
5. Sexual Harassment	9
6. Alcohol and Drug Use	9
7. Tobacco Use	9
8. Weapons	9
B. Forms	10
C. Child Development in Camp	10
D. Staff Development in Camp	10
E. History of West Virginia 4-H Camping	10
F. Additional Resources	10

4-H Camp Philosophy and Objectives

4-H camping is cooperative group living in a natural environment, which focuses on the individual's social, spiritual, mental, and physical development. 4-H camping is camper-focused. It is also one of seven recognized Extension delivery systems for youth education, along with club, project, activity, special interest group, school enrichment, and television delivery systems.

4-H camp participants may spend 40 hours in various learning experiences. This is probably at least as much time as they would spend with any other single 4-H delivery system. Not only can 4-H camping be an extensive delivery system, but it is generally the most intensive as well. A camp's setting and program should permit freedom for both active and relaxed ways of living. This allows opportunities for campers to try new activities and roles.

- Learning is concentrated into one brief action-packed time frame.
- All elements of the camper's existence are coordinated to encourage personal development, which is the goal of the camp.
- Camp is a great leveler. At camp it makes little difference if the camper came from a wealthy family or a non-supportive one, from an active or inactive club, or a progressive county. All take part on an equal basis.
- Camp provides opportunities for development of skills and interests in the constructive use of leisure time.
- Camp is a place for making new friends – youth and adult.

West Virginia 4-H Camping Program Mission and Objectives

The West Virginia 4-H Camping program has provided youth with opportunities for four-fold (Head, Heart, Hands, Health) life development through cooperative group living in the natural environment since 1915. While many things have changed in the past 87 years, the emphasis on a camper-focused educational experience has remained an integral part of the West Virginia program at state and county levels.

Mission

The West Virginia University Extension Service 4-H camping program provides youth the opportunity to acquire knowledge, develop life skills and form values that enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society.

Objectives

The West Virginia University Extension 4-H Camping program will:

1. Provide participants with a safe and secure environment both physically & emotionally where they can participate in educational, recreational, and social experiences that offer opportunities to understand and appreciate cultural diversity and tolerance for others.
2. Promote appreciation for the natural environment and teach environmental stewardship.
3. Teach participants personal life skills and values of fairness, caring, citizenship, trustworthiness, respect, and responsibility.
4. Provide opportunities for participants to learn and practice leadership, decision-making, and teamwork through group activities.
5. Utilize caring adults as role models, teachers, and mentors for youths.

What 4-H Camping Is NOT

- A reward or recognition for achievement in other parts of the 4-H program.
- A conference that totally ignores the natural surroundings.
- Cheap babysitting, with no specific educational purpose.
- A program that can be made up as it goes along, without advance planning.
- So easy to manage that counselors don't require specific training.
- A waste of professional staff time.
- An unchanging tradition continued because, "We have always done it this way."
- An attempt to influence youth toward any particular set of religious beliefs.

Responsibilities of Extension Professional

The WVU Extension Service professional responsible for 4-H camp is fully accountable to WVUES for the successful operation of the camp including planning, implementation, and evaluation of the total camping experience. It is the duty of the WVU Extension professional responsible for camp to:

- Ensure that WVU ES Policies and Procedures are met, this includes but is not limited to
 - Standards for Camping Programs described in this manual;
 - Volunteer Application, Screening, Selection & Supervision;
 - 4-H Money Management;
 - 4-H Code of Conduct;
 - Sexual Harassment;
 - Alcohol and Drug Use;
 - Tobacco Use;
 - Weapons;
 - Non discrimination.
- Ensure that camp programming is developmentally appropriate

- Ensure that camp programming is consistent with the WVU ES Guiding Principles for Positive Youth Development
- Ensure that camp menus and schedules provide adequate nutrition and rest for campers and counselors

Standards for 4-H Camps in West Virginia

The policies and procedures in this manual are applicable to all WVU Extension Service professionals and volunteers working with 4-H resident camping programs, regardless of location. The intent of these procedures is to guide the faculty member and protect the health and safety of every camper.

Program Design and Activities

Age-appropriate classes, assemblies, special events (e.g., camp party), and expectations of camper behavior must be offered.

Appropriate amount of rest should be provided for all campers and counselors.

Camp store hours and contents should be controlled so that food snacks are available only after meals.

Pool or Waterfront

Provide or ensure that rented facility provides lifeguard with nationally recognized certification to supervise swimming at pool or waterfront (ACA Standard PA-15).

Provide or ensure that rented facility provides appropriate aquatic supervisor for watercraft and swimming instruction (ACA Standard PT-2).

1. For watercraft activities, has:
 - a. Instructor rating in the appropriate craft, or
 - b. Certification as a lifeguard from a nationally recognized certifying body, or
 - c. Other acceptable certification or license; and/or
2. For swimming activities, has:
 - a. Certification as a lifeguard from a nationally recognized certifying body, or
 - b. Acceptable certification other than lifeguard as in Part 1 *and* participants are wearing Personal Flotation Devices.

Operational Management

Risk and Emergency Management

Risk Management Plan will be on file with State office April 1.

Emergency Management Plan will be on file with State office April 1.

Accident insurance for participants (campers and counselors) is obtained prior to camp.

Extension professional in charge and any volunteer camp director(s) understand limits and applications of State Board of Risk liability coverage and have copy of insurance certificate on hand at camp.

Human Resources

Full-time camp staff will have received training in the following topics:

- What To Do In An Emergency: Illness/Injury, Storm, Fire, Flood, Intruder, Missing Camper
- Goals of Camp
- Ages and Stages of Child Development
- Rules of Camp
- Avoiding Child Abuse And Sexual Harassment
- Effective Camper Supervision
- Camp Chain of Command (Who is responsible for discipline, facility, classes, assemblies, cottage supervision)

Camp counselors should receive training, and not be asked to perform any task that he/she is not qualified or trained to do.

All volunteers who have unsupervised contact with children must have completed the application, screening, and selection process for 4-H Volunteers.

Camp Operations

Each camp will comply with applicable WVU or WVU-ES policies, including:

- Nondiscrimination
- Volunteer Application, Screening And Selection Process
- 4-H Money Management
- 4-H Code of Conduct
- Sexual Harassment
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

Extension professional responsible for camp will be on site and will designate another Extension professional with responsibility for camping to serve as backup. Name and contact information for backup is updated in risk management checklist and shared with camp counselors.

1. For absences from camp greater than 2 hours, the backup professional will be on site.
2. For absences from camp less than or equal to 2 hours, a volunteer camp director will be designated in charge for the duration of the absence.

Camper Supervision Ratios – Use camper to counselor ratios in cottages overnight to determine compliance with this standard for residential camping. Adult counselors must be at least 21 years of age for all-age or older camp; adult counselors must be at least 18 years of age for younger camp. These guidelines are established as a minimum. Counties are encouraged to establish their own guidelines, taking their camp community into consideration.

Camper Age	Adult Staff	Overnight Campers	Day Campers
4-5 years	1	5	6
6-8 years	1	6	8
9-14 years	1	8	10
15-18 years	1	10	12

For campers with special physical, medical, or behavioral needs:

Camper Description	Staff	Campers
Needing constant and individual assistance or supervision	1	1
Needing close, but not constant, assistance or supervision	1	2
Needing occasional assistance	1	4
Needing minimal assistance	1	5

Campers are not allowed in cottages without counselor supervision

Counselors are encouraged to work in pairs to supervise campers so that counselors are not alone with campers.

All firearms and ammunition and other shooting sports equipment are stored under lock (ACA Standard OM-1).

Security for residential camps – appropriate night security must be provided.

Each camp will have a written policy on youth and adult camp visitors.

Camp registration forms should have the signature of a parent (guardian) to indicate that they and their child understand the camp rules.

A camp evaluation plan should be prepared and implemented over a five year period.

Provide information in writing to local law enforcement and emergency response agencies so that they are aware of camp dates and attendance estimates. Share information with them and they with you regarding camp security and safety.

Health and Wellness

Health care personnel with the following minimum qualifications are on duty at all times when campers are present (ACA Standard HW-1):

1. When access to the emergency medical system (EMS) is 20 minutes or less, certification by a nationally-recognized provider of training in first aid and CPR.
2. When access to EMS is 20-60 minutes, certification by a nationally recognized provider of training in second-level first aid and CPR.
3. When access to emergency rescue systems or EMS is more than one hour, certification from a nationally recognized provider of training in wilderness first aid and CPR.

For each camper and counselor, the camp has a current WVU Extension Service health form on file.

Obtain accident insurance to cover every camper and counselor. Keep a copy of policy number and claims address on hand at camp.

Fire and emergency drill training is conducted.

Site and Food Service

All buildings used for sleeping are constructed or equipped with the following safety features (ACA Standard SF-1):

1. At least one emergency exit in addition to the main door or entrance
2. A direct means of emergency exit to the outside from each sleeping floor not at ground level

Gas and liquid flammables, explosives, and hazardous or poisonous materials are (ACA Standard SF-2):

1. Handled only by persons trained or experienced in their safe use and disposal, and
2. Stored appropriately:
 - a. With access limited to trained persons,
 - b. In closed, safe containers that are plainly labeled as to contents, and
 - c. In locations separate from food.

The camp site has been inspected and approved in the current year by the responsible sanitarian.

Transportation

Appropriate insurance is carried for any vehicles used to transport campers – either to and from camp or during camping session.

Supervision of campers during transportation must be provided by an Extension professional and/or volunteer.

Parental permission is required for any off-site transportation as a part of camp program.

Published policy on procedure for campers and adults leaving camp is provided to campers, counselors, and parents (see Camper Release Form).

Signed form by parent or guardian as to who will pick up camper at end of camp, or if excused for any reason, with whom camper will be traveling and at what time (see Camper Release Form).

Transportation of passengers in non passenger vehicles is prohibited.

Camp implements written safety procedures for transporting persons that include (ACA Standard TR-10):

1. Vehicles loaded only within the passenger seating limits estimated by the manufacturer;
2. All passengers wearing seat belts when provided;
3. All passengers remaining seated while vehicle is moving.

APPENDICES

A. WVU Extension Service Policies

- 1. Nondiscrimination**
- 2. Volunteer Application, Screening, Selection, and Supervision Process**
- 3. 4-H Money Management**
- 4. 4-H Code of Conduct**
- 5. Sexual Harassment**
- 6. Alcohol and Drug Use**

The use, consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages (liquor and beer, including nonalcoholic beer) and unlawful items, such as illegal nonprescription drugs, are not permitted during camp. Anyone arriving for camp while under the influence of any of the above substances will not be permitted to register. If an Extension agent has valid reason to believe a person has an illegal item or substance in his/her possession, or is under the influence of said substance, the agent has the right to inspect or search the possessions of the person in his/her presence. The Camp Director/Agent has the right to send the individual home.

7. Tobacco Use

It is illegal to sell tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, to minors. It is also illegal to use tobacco products on University property. West Virginia 4-H has a responsibility to support the law and protect the health of its members. Therefore, we strongly discourage use of tobacco products.

8. Weapons

Written policy on knives, firearms, firecrackers, and weapons of any type at camp is in possession of campers, counselors, leaders, and/or visitors. Recommend that individual be removed from camp immediately.

B. Forms

1. Camp Registration Form

- a. Camp Rules Signature Page
- b. Media Release Form

2. Camper Release Form

3. Health Forms

- a. Youth
- b. Young Adult
- c. Adult

C. Child Development in Camp

1. Ages and Stages

2. Experiential Learning Cycle

3. The Importance of Attitude

D. Staff Development in Camp

1. Volunteer Application Process

2. Camp Staff Job Descriptions

3. Motivating Camp Staff

4. Ideas for Additional Training Topics

E. History of West Virginia 4-H Camping

F. Additional Resources

Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension Service, West Virginia University.