

Ohio 4-H Camp programs: OSUE Best practices for those serving as Camp Directors
11/10/09 for OSUE Administrative Cabinet

The establishment of the OSU Extension Education and Research Areas (EERA) may necessitate adjustments to the personnel who serve as 4-H Camp Director to implement county 4-H camp programs. It is recognized that programs such as 4-H camps contain the greatest risk to the well-being of individuals and to the reputation of the good name of the 4-H program of the Ohio State University Extension.

The role of the 4-H Camp Director includes the leadership of the following:

- the implementation of effective selection, educational preparation, and supervision of teens serving as camp counselors,
- the recruitment, selection, training and supervision of adult volunteers, in compliance with the OSUE volunteer selection policy,
- the development of safe and age appropriate camp program plans, and
- the actual conduct or provision of the camp program.

Should the leadership of these youth development functions be delegated to a volunteer Camp Director (including those who receive no financial reimbursement as well as those who may receive a one-time payment or stipend**) the following alternatives should be followed to provide better assurance to clientele and volunteers that the programs are planned and implemented with safety as the highest priority.

*(**Volunteers who receive a one-time payment or stipend, paid through the OSU Business office payment request, are NOT considered OSUE employees.)*

The following best practices meet the standards put forth by the American Camp Association. Therefore, Ohio 4-H camps that are ACA accredited will be able to maintain that accreditation.

Practice 1: Extension professionals serve as Camp Directors

It is the expectation that as much as possible, paid Extension professionals (educators, program coordinators, program assistants) will serve in the 4-H Camp Director positions.

- A. In situations where the regular paid Extension professions (educators, program coordinator, and program assistants) will not be serving as Camp Director, it is recommended that the County Director hire a **temporary employee** paid a monthly stipend to serve as camp director. This decision would be made cooperatively by the Extension professional responsible for the oversight of the 4-H program, the County Director, and the Regional Director.

Note about temporary part-time employee: This would be someone not already on the county staff. This type of position would likely be on the payroll for several months, to be involved with and/or provide leadership for camp counselor selection through the end of the camp program. While at camp, they would not have the same hourly

restrictions as the program assistant. Extension HR can assist in setting up this type of position.

- B. Program assistant: If the decision is that the current county Program Assistant will serve as 4-H Camp Director, the best practice is that he/she serves as the camp director 24/7. The employee will be compensated for every hour he/she works, thus accruing overtime hours which will be compensated at 1 ½ times the usual hourly rate. If the employee chooses to receive the overtime compensation as time off rather than pay, according to university policy, the employee has 180 days to use that time.

Practice 2: Volunteer serving as Camp Director & Extension professional on full time camp program staff

In situations where it is not possible for an employee to serve as Camp Director, the Extension professional responsible for the oversight of the 4-H program will discuss the situation with the county director. The Regional Director and 4-H Assistant Director will be involved in reviewing and approving the use of a volunteer to serve as the Camp Director and the satisfaction of the best practices outlined.

- It is the next best expectation with a volunteer serving as camp director that an Extension professional will be on the camp program staff, and will be present at the program for the entire duration of the camp.

Practice 3: Volunteer Serving as Camp Director & No Extension professional at camp 24/7

In situations where it is not possible for an Extension professional to either serve as Camp Director or to be present at the camp program 24/7, the Extension professional responsible for the oversight of the 4-H program will discuss the situation with the county director. The Regional Director and 4-H Assistant Director will be involved in reviewing and approving the use of a volunteer to serve as the Camp Director and the satisfaction of the best practices outlined. Additionally, the:

- volunteer agreeing to serve as camp director will sign, as part of the position description and agreement, an acknowledgement of his/her understanding of the personal liability issues which could arise;
- camp board and camp facility manager will be notified 8 weeks in advance that the Camp Director will be a volunteer, and provided their name;
- Camp Director and camp facility manager will be provided phone numbers where the Extension staff responsible for oversight of the camp program can be reached at all times;
- Extension professional responsible for oversight of the camp program will contact the camp director at least once a day during the 4-H camp to maintain an awareness of how the program is being conducted and concerns that need to be managed.
- Parents enrolling a child in the camp will be informed in writing that a volunteer will be directing the camp, and that the camp director meets the standards set forth by the American Camp Association.

Best practices for OSUE employees serving as 4-H Camp Directors based on OSUE and the criteria for camp facilities to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA).**

(This includes 4-H educators, Extension Educators with other program titles, Program Assistants/Coordinators and temporary part-time employees):**

1. Must complete the OSU Extension employee screening and selection process including a background check with no disqualifying criminal offenses, interview by an Extension professional, and reference checks.
2. Must be at least 23 years of age. Must have appropriate experience in supervising volunteers conducting youth development programs.
3. Must complete basic training of OSUE 4-H to understand the roles and responsibilities of 4-H camp directors. Training will be designed to meet the standards set forth by the American Camp Association. Every three years, experienced 4-H Camp directors will participate in a camp director update.
4. Will be supervised by an extension employee (4-H educator, county director, Regional director, assigned mentor) who will provide support and oversight for the delivery of the camp counselor training, and to deal with camp program challenges as they arise.
5. Supervisory individuals will be accessible to the 4-H Camp Director at all times during the conduct of the camp.
6. Should a crisis situation develop, the camp directors of Extension 4-H programs are expected to possess and comply with the written crisis plan of the Camp Corporation. Camp directors need to possess the camp emergency plan or protocol.
7. Should a crisis situation develop, the Camp Director will follow procedures outlined in CFAES Crisis Communications Plan in sections II and III found at (http://commtech.ag.ohio-state.edu/resources-content/crisis-response/crisis_response_0709.pdf).
8. The county director will review with the 4-H camp director the CIMA VIS liability insurance that is currently purchased. It is important for the camp director to have all volunteers involved with camp listed on the roster for this coverage, and to know that the CIMA VIS insurance is a secondary coverage.
9. Extension camp program participants should be covered with medical Accident Insurance. If the coverage is not provided by the site management for the camp program, then it is required that coverage is purchased by the county Extension office to provide accident insurance for all participants (youth and adult) for the duration of the camp program.
10. Should camp facility managers become aware of any unsafe practices taking place during the camp program delivery, they should immediately report any concerns to camp director and to his/her immediate supervisor.

Best practices for volunteer OSUE 4-H Camp Directors based on Best Practices of OSUE and the criteria for camp facilities to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA):

1. Must complete the OSU Extension volunteer screening and selection process including a background check with no disqualifying criminal offenses, interview by an Extension professional, and reference checks.
2. Must be at least 25 years of age, to meet ACA camp standards. Bachelor's degree preferred or appropriate education and training in youth development or related field. Must have appropriate experience in supervising volunteers conducting youth development programs.
3. Must have at least 2 seasons camp experience, serving in a position of leadership for delivering the camp program or other youth development programs.
4. Must have completed training in the last three years that prepares the camp director for the camp leadership position. Training must meet the standards set forth by the American Camp Association. Every three years, experienced 4-H Camp directors will participate in a camp director update.
5. Will be supervised by an Extension employee (county director, or 4-H educator in neighboring county) who will provide oversight to the planning and delivery of the camp counselor training and program delivery. Camp counselor training includes the training before camp, the on-site camp training, and the on-the-job training that happens during the conduct of the camp program.
6. During the camp program, will have daily conversation with the Extension supervisor, (the county director or 4-H educator in neighboring county) to inform the staff person about the camp program delivery, especially any challenges encountered.
7. Should a crisis situation develop, the camp directors of Extension 4-H programs are expected to possess and comply with the written crisis plan of the Camp Corporation. Camp directors need to possess the camp emergency plan or protocol.
8. Should a crisis situation develop, the volunteer camp director will notify the Extension supervisor as soon as possible.
9. The county office will purchase short term primary liability insurance for the volunteer serving as camp director.
10. The county director will review with the volunteer camp director the CIMA VIS liability insurance that is currently purchased. It is important for the volunteer camp director to know that the CIMA VIS insurance is a secondary coverage.
11. Extension camp programs should be covered with medical Accident Insurance. If the coverage is not provided by the site management for the camp program, then it is required that coverage is purchased by the county Extension office to provide accident insurance for all participants (youth and adult) for the duration of the camp program.
12. Should camp facility managers become aware of any unsafe practices taking place during the camp program delivery, they should immediately report any concerns to the volunteer camp director and to his/her immediate supervisor.