



Notice: Written Policy Requirement Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

The Health Inspection Program would like to provide you with information regarding 22 MRS § 4010-A that requires all public or private programs licensed by DHHS that provide care or services for children to develop a **written policy regarding child abuse and neglect prevention**. Because youth camps are licensed by HIP and provide care of children, youth camps are included in this statute. Section 4010-A (2) requires such licensed programs that include youth camps to file a copy of the policy at the time of licensure or renewal.

This law specifies the minimal content that each child abuse and neglect prevention policy is required to include, which are listed here. Ensure your camp's written policy has the four sections outlined and titled exactly as listed below:

- A. A description of how the youth camp and children are managed to prevent abuse or neglect.
- B. The reporting of suspected abuse or neglect or other violations to the appropriate designated authorities.
- C. The youth camp's course of action if allegations of abuse or neglect are made against the youth camp or its staff; and
- D. The youth camp's grievance procedures for staff and for children and their parents or guardians regarding alleged abuse or neglect.

This link to the law is provided for reference:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/22/title22sec4010-A.html>

License renewals: HIP has added an enhancement to the online renewal service to provide a check box allowing licensees to attest that their camp's policy remains in effect, and to provide a feature that allows the licensee's policy/file to be uploaded if components of a camp's policy have been substantially updated, which will require review before a license is issued.

New youth camps: will need to create their own policy with assistance from their insurance providers and/or other consultants. We are recommending that your camp create a single PDF document titled: { insert Camp name} _ Abuse Prevention Policy_{Insert policy date}.

While answers to Sections A, C and D are specific for your individual camp, Section B is universal for all licensed youth camps in Maine. The department has provided the language for Section B (below).

B. The reporting of suspected abuse or neglect or other violations to the appropriate designated authorities.

- Camp staff are required to report any incidents of child abuse to the camp director of that camp, in accordance with its licensing requirements and training.
- The camp director or designee is then required to report suspected child abuse to DHHS **Mandated Reporter Hotline (1-800-452-1999)**, in accordance with 22 MRS § 4011-A (1)(A)(14).

- This mandated reporter hotline is the intake line at DHHS Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS). OCFS Intake then forwards those reports from a youth camp director to the OCFS Out of Home (OOH) Investigation Unit, when any abuse is reported to take place outside of the home. (If inside the home, then the Intake would refer to DHHS Child Protective Services.) The DHHS Out of Home Investigation Team (OOH Unit) will conduct child abuse investigations at youth camps, in accordance with 22 MRS Chapter 1071, Subchapter 18.
- In accordance with 22 MRS §§ 4099-K(4) and 4099-L (2)(C), OOH will coordinate with licensing agencies like the Maine CDC Health Inspection Program, in performing its investigation when the setting is licensed. Upon receipt of notification from OOH, HIP will perform follow-up steps and work to ensure that the camp is not in violation of licensing rules related to this reported incident, like hiring of staff, ratios of staff to campers, appropriate age of staff, training of staff, and confirmation that camps are establishing and training staff on policies to protect campers from child abuse and to report incidents, should the staff observe anything.
- In summary, and in tandem to any required reporting to law enforcement, a youth camp is meeting its licensing requirements for reporting suspected child abuse by contacting the DHHS Mandated Reporter Hotline. That agency will reach out to HIP, as part of its investigative work to alert licensing agencies.

HIP will review the documents to ensure they meet the minimal content required by law. HIP will maintain this policy on file for each youth camp and update any youth camp's file when a new policy is received and approved.

Please reach out to hiplicensing.dhhs@maine.gov should you have questions about submitting the necessary PDF document detailing your camp's abuse and neglect prevention policy.