



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Dear Overnight Children's Camp Operator:

On June 12, 2020, New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D. announced a decision that overnight children's camps would not be exempt from ongoing restrictions on non-essential businesses this season in New York State, and are therefore prohibited until further notice.

Unlike day camps, which are approved to open June 29, 2020, overnight camps are a difficult setting in which to manage social distancing, face covering and infection control practices. Overnight camps have congregate settings and close quarters sleeping arrangements that present too many risks. In such a setting, even a single positive case in a camper or staff member would create an untenable quarantine situation and overwhelm camp health personnel. Most camps would not be able to handle a serious infectious outbreak of this nature.

The prohibition of overnight children's camps applies to all overnight children's programs regardless of whether they meet the criteria in Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code to qualify as a regulated overnight children's camp. Children's camps that are not regulated under the State Sanitary Code carry similar COVID-19 risks as the regulated camps. Overnight children's programs are considered non-essential businesses. Executive Order (EO) 202.8 requires all non-essential businesses to reduce their in-person workforce by 100%. Accordingly, the prohibition against overnight children's camps applies even if the camp alters its operations to offer programs of less than 72 consecutive hours.

Many overnight children's camps are now applying for and obtaining permits to operate Temporary Residences, which are considered essential services and are allowed in accordance with EO 202.6. While these types of businesses are allowed to operate, they are subject to restrictions and reopening guidelines pertaining to social distancing, use of face coverings, food service, swimming pool/beach use and gathering size limitations applicable to the reopening phase that the region is in. Additionally, the responsible party must develop a written Safety Plan outlining how its workplace will prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please refer to the [NY Forward Safety Plan template](#).

Temporary Residence operators are reminded that all children staying overnight at their facility must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The operator may not accept responsibility for overnight supervision of a child. Meals served at the facility must be in compliance with current COVID-19 restrictions which includes individuals seated at the same table must be members of the same party (but may be from different households), with a maximum of 10 people per table. Congregate meal service is prohibited.

Businesses that operate in violation of the EO are in violation of 10 NYCRR § 66-3.2 which is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 per violation per day. Local health departments enforce EO pursuant to PHL 324(1)(e), which authorizes local health departments to enforce relevant provisions of the Public Health Law and associated regulations. Camps operating in violation of the EO may also be subject to other civil penalties and closure, and may be denied permits to operate in future seasons.

If you have any questions about this, please contact the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health at 845-486-3404; office hours are 9AM-5PM, Monday through Friday.


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