

Highlights of Changes to Ontario's Recreational Camps Regulation

Effective July 1, 2018 the Recreational Camps Regulation R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 568 will be revoked and replaced with the Recreational Camps Regulation O. Reg. 503/17. This summary document has been prepared for public health and industry stakeholders to raise awareness about the upcoming changes and assist with implementation of the new requirements.

Background

The new regulation focus on the protection and safety of persons attending a recreational camp who are under eighteen years of age or who have special needs. The regulation adopts an outcome-based perspective and many prescriptive requirement have been removed.

Here are some of the key changes:

Posting requirements of inspection results

Many public health units have existing public disclosure programs, some of them require on-site posting to raise awareness of the availability of inspection results to the public. Under the new regulation recreational camp operators will be required to post the results of inspections conducted by a public health inspector in accordance with the inspector's request.

Definition of Recreational Camps

The new definition of recreational camps focuses on protecting the safety of children, youth and persons who have special needs. The definitions for class A and B recreational camps have been removed along with the occupancy time of 5 or more days to ensure proper health and safety measures are in place for camps with short durations. The number of participants using a recreational camp has also been changed from 10 to 5 or more to ensure health and safety requirements apply to smaller locations.

Notifications

In the new regulation, operator are required to notify the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or Public Health Inspector (PHI) of the operators name, contact information and camp location prior to operating or closing/abandoning a camp. Additionally, the operator must immediately notify the MOH or PHI of an outbreak for suspected outbreak of any communicable disease at the camp.

Camp Safety

In addition to the requirement that there is to be at least one adult supervisor on the premise at all times, this supervisor is now required to have a current first aid certificate. The new requirement for a camp safety plan is a proactive approach for each camp operator to develop safety and emergency response plans based on the camp's activities and needs. The regulation outlines the minimum requirements that the operator must consider in writing and maintaining their camp safety plan.

The camp safety plan must include supervision ratios for campers based on the age and needs of the campers. Additionally, any land-based and water-based activities at the camp must include supervision procedures if appropriate, this could include additional supervision for high risk activities such as horseback riding or zip lining courses. Camp operators may opt to choose ratios based on industry standards, legislation, or best-practice guidelines recommended by industry experts (e.g. Ontario Camps Association guidelines, O. Reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014).

Waterfront Supervision

Operators of recreational camps with a waterfront area that is used for aquatic activities are required to ensure that bathers in the designated swimming area of the waterfront are under the supervision of a lifeguard who is at least 16 years of age and who holds a lifeguard certificate (as defined in O. Reg. 565, Public Pools)

obtained within the past two years, and in accordance with the ratios set out in section 24 (2).

With respect to boating activities such as canoeing and kayaking, operators will need to establish a process or continue to use appropriate safety protocols and best-practice guidelines recommended by industry experts (e.g., Ontario Camps Association, Lifesaving Society, Canadian Red Cross). Details of the safety protocols would be captured in the Camp Safety Plan.

While this is a brief review of highlights in the new Recreational Camps Regulation 503/17, the requirements are intended to move Ontario toward increased transparency, consistency, and strengthen public safety practices based on outcomes that will protect the public.

More Information

It is recommended to work with your public health inspector to learn more about the requirements and how to maintain compliance with the Recreational Camps Regulation. To contact your local public health unit, visit:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

Contact

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