

**ALABAMA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

**CHAPTER 320-5-1
YOUTH CAMP SAFETY**

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320-5-1-.01 Definitions.

\$\$\$AGENCY: The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)

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CABIN: Any structure where overnight campers sleep, including but not limited to a cabin, dormitory, or bunkhouse, regardless of camper capacity.

CAMP: Any dedicated site in the State of Alabama whether operated for profit or nonprofit purposes the site provides cabins for campers to stay overnight.

- Campers temporarily gather for the following:
 - Recreational
 - Religious
 - Social

- Educational
 - Therapeutic purposes
- The term does not include a dedicated location or structure for the following:
 - Hunting or fishing
 - The use of available dormitory space or other residences at an educational institution.

CAMP OPERATIONS: Physical custody of campers outside of the presence of parents or legal guardians for a period of days which requires staying overnight, during which the camp operator and staff supervise campers' participation in recreational, religious, social, educational, or therapeutic activities.

CAMP OPERATOR:

- An individual or entity that administers camp operations, including the provision of staff, regardless of any ownership interest in the camp operations, assets, personal property, or the site on which the camp is located.
- An individual or entity that maintains a camp that includes staff members who may service dining, recreational, or other facilities, but which otherwise does not administer camp operations and leases the camp to other organizations to conduct camp operations.

Camp Operator does not include any of the following:

- An organization that leases a camp from a camp operator for the purpose of administering camp operations.
 - A person that leases a camp for a retreat, seminar, or training in which the majority of participants are individuals who are 19 years of age or older.
 - An owner of land that leases the land to a camp operator but does not engage in camp operations on the land.

CAMPER: An individual who is **16 years of age or younger** who is present and lodging at a camp for the purpose of participating in the recreational, religious, social, educational, or therapeutic activities provided under the supervision of the camp operator and staff.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LICENSE: The license issued by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency to a camp operator which certifies that a camp complies with this act.

FLOODPLAIN: Any area within a 100-year floodplain as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency pursuant to the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 4001 et seq., including a letter of map revision based on fill, or a similar administrative process by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION: The local emergency management organizations as authorized in Section 31-9-10, Code of Alabama 1975. Each political subdivision of this state shall establish a local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state emergency management plan.

STAFF MEMBER: An individual who is retained on an employment, contractual, or volunteer basis by a camp operator to provide camp operations that require the individual to stay overnight, including security, maintenance, orientation, organization, scheduling, instruction, hospitality, emotional support, counseling, worship, meals or refreshments, first aid, or supervision of recreation, sports, or crafts.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: **New Rule:** Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.02 Emergency Preparedness License Requirements.

Who Must Obtain the License

- Any camp operator conducting camp operations (overnight stays for campers aged 16 or younger) must apply for and obtain an emergency preparedness license from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency as a condition for operation, starting January 1, 2027.
- If a camp operator administers operations at more than one camp, a separate license is required for each camp.

Application and Renewal

- The license is valid for five years from approval, unless there are material changes to the camp (e.g., boundary changes, cabin additions/removals, renovations affecting capacity).

- Material changes require a supplemental application within 45 days.
- The agency will notify operators of renewal deadlines, and licenses remain valid pending agency determination if renewal applications are submitted on time.
- The agency will specify the license expiration date in the notice of approval, which becomes the deadline for license renewal. Camp operators must submit a supplemental application for renewal by this deadline.

Changes Requiring a Supplemental Application

- A camp operator must submit a supplemental application to maintain an emergency preparedness license within 45 days of any of the following material changes to the camp:

Alteration of Camp Boundaries

- If the physical boundaries of the camp are changed in any way.

Change in Number of Cabins

- If the number of cabins is increased or reduced by any means, including construction of new cabins, renovation, closure, demolition, or conversion of cabins to another use.

Renovation Affecting Camper Capacity

- If any renovation to an existing cabin results in a change of more than three (3) in the number of campers that can be accommodated (camper capacity).

Prerequisites for Application

- The camp must be regulated by the Alabama Department of Public Health for sanitation (evidence by a valid permit).
- The camp and its operations must be covered by liability insurance.

Equipment and Operational Requirements

- Camps must have a NOAA Weather Radio, emergency notification systems (audible indoors and outdoors, not reliant on internet or cellular service), and protocols for alerting staff.

- Camps must provide designated sheltering spaces for all campers and staff.

Emergency Plan Requirements

- Camps must submit an emergency plan for agency approval, covering procedures for lost campers, fires, severe weather, health emergencies, unauthorized individuals, natural disasters, and transportation incidents.
- The plan must designate evacuation and shelter-in-place locations, including communication protocols, and be updated as needed.

Staff Training and Background Checks

- All staff must undergo annual training and review of the emergency plan.
- Staff must pass background checks.

Inspection and Compliance

- By receiving a license, camp operators consent to on-site inspections by the agency at any time.
- The agency maintains a public list of licensed camps.

Notification of Renewal Deadline

- The Alabama Emergency Management Agency will remind camp operators of the renewal deadline at least 90 days before it occurs, via written or digital notice.

Validity Pending Renewal

- If a camp operator submits a renewal application by the deadline, the license remains valid while the agency reviews the application.

Extensions

- If a supplemental application is approved due to a material change, the agency may extend the renewal deadline, but no extension can exceed five years from the date of approval of the supplemental application.

Agency Review and Timelines

Initial Application Review

- When a camp operator submits an initial application for an emergency preparedness license, the agency must notify the camp operator of its determination (approval or disapproval) within **90 days**.

Supplemental Applications

- If a camp undergoes material changes (e.g., boundary changes, cabin additions/removals, renovations affecting capacity), a supplemental application must be submitted within 45 days of the change. The agency reviews these applications as part of ongoing compliance, but the 90-day notification period applies to all application determinations.

Emergency Plan Review

- If the agency finds deficiencies in the submitted emergency plan, it must notify the camp operator in writing, specifying what needs to be remedied.
- The camp operator then has **45 days** from receiving the notice to remedy and resubmit a revised plan.

License Validity Pending Review

- If a supplemental application is submitted by the deadline, the existing license remains valid while the agency completes its review and makes a determination.

Appeals

- If an application or emergency plan is disapproved, the applicant has **30 days** to submit a written appeal to the agency director for reconsideration. The director may offer an informal hearing and must issue a final decision after reconsideration.

Penalties and Legal Action

Emergency Suspension of License

- Any license issued pursuant to this regulation may be suspended prior to a hearing if the licensing agency has

reasonable cause to suspect that the continued operation of the licensed youth camp facility constitutes a substantial hazard to the health and safety of the children entrusted to or cared for by such facility.

- Whenever a license is suspended, pursuant to this section, the holder of the license or person in charge shall be notified, in writing, that the license is, upon service of notice, immediately suspended and that an opportunity for hearing will be provided if requested in writing within ten (10) days of the receipt of the notice of suspension. If no written request for hearing is filed within ten days, the suspension is sustained.

- The AEMA may reverse the suspension at any time if the reasons for the suspension no longer exist.

Denial, Revocation, or Suspension of License

- The AEMA may refuse to issue or renew, or may suspend or revoke the license of any facility upon one (1) or more of the following grounds:

- Fraud or misrepresentation by the owner or operator in securing the issuance or renewal of a license.

- Failure to successfully pass an inspection.

- Violation of any of the provisions of the Camp Safety HB381 Youth Camp Safety and Health law or of the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to that act.

- **Notification** Prior to the denial, revocation or suspension of a license, written notice of the contemplated action shall be given to the owner of the camp or camp operator. Such notice shall specify the reasons for the proposed action and shall notify the applicant of the right to a hearing on the matter.

Hearings

- If requested in writing ten (10) days of receipt of said notice, a hearing shall be provided in which the owner of the camp or camp operator may show cause why the license should not be denied, suspended or revoked. Any such hearing shall be conducted by a hearing officer designated by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

- Within twenty (20) working days of the hearing, or such time frame as determined during the hearing, written findings

of facts, together with a recommendation for action on the license in question shall be forwarded to the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. Copies of the same shall be provided to the owner or applicant.

- The Alabama Emergency Management Agency shall decide what, if any, action is to be taken on the recommendation within the twenty-day period. Written notice shall be provided to the owner or applicant.

Multi-camp Licensing Rules

Separate License for Each Camp:

- If a camp operator administers camp operations at more than one camp, a **separate emergency preparedness license is required for each camp.**

Applications and Renewal

- The operator must submit a distinct application for each camp, including all supporting documentation (sanitation permits, liability insurance, emergency plans, staff background checks, etc.).
- Each license is valid for five years and must be renewed separately for each camp.

Compliance and Inspection

- Each camp is subject to independent inspection and compliance verification by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.
- The agency maintains a public list of all camps with valid licenses.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.03 Staff Member Requirements.

Staff Member Requirements

Background Checks

- No individual may be retained as a staff member if they have been convicted of a crime involving sexual or violent acts, including those unlawful under Chapter 6 of Title 13A, Code of Alabama 1975.
- Background checks must be performed by the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency or a reliable, agency-approved contractor.
- Camp operators must submit proof of compliance with background check requirements to the agency for each staff member during initial and renewal of license applications.

Annual Training and Emergency Plan Review and Records

- Each staff member must participate in a review of the camp's emergency plan at least once a year or whenever the plan is updated.
- Staff must successfully complete annual training on proper emergency procedures as outlined in the emergency plan.
- Camp operators must maintain written or digital records documenting each staff member's successful completion of annual training.

Safety Orientation

- Within 24 hours of the start of a camp session, staff must conduct a mandatory safety orientation for campers, covering camp boundaries, hazards, behavioral expectations, and emergency actions (including evacuation procedures).

Familiarity with Emergency Plan

- Staff must be familiar with the camp's emergency plan and evacuation procedures.
- If an organization leases a camp to administer operations, its staff must also undergo background checks, review the emergency plan, and provide safety orientation to campers.

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

- The camp may designate one or more staff members as emergency preparedness coordinators to monitor weather, liaise with local emergency organizations, and ensure compliance with training requirements.

Staff Training Records

- Camp operators must maintain written or digital records documenting each staff member's successful completion of annual emergency plan training.

- These records must be available for inspection by the agency and may be required as part of license applications or renewals.

Emergency Plan Submission

- Camp operators must submit the most recent version of the camp's emergency plan to the agency for approval with:
 - The initial license application
 - Any supplemental application due to material changes
 - Immediately, if the plan is updated for any other reason
- The agency stores approved plans in a digital database for access by relevant authorities.

Sanitation and Insurance Documentation

- Camp operators must present documentation that the camp is regulated by the Alabama Department of Public Health (valid sanitation permit) and is covered by liability insurance when applying for a license.

Training and Orientation for Leased Camps

- If an organization leases a camp to administer operations, it must provide documentation that its staff have undergone background checks, reviewed the emergency plan, and conducted safety orientation for campers.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.04 Floodplain Restrictions.

Basic Floodplain Information

General Prohibition

o As of January 1, 2027, no camp may construct, expand, or operate a cabin located in a floodplain.

Exception for Existing Cabins

- The agency may approve continued operation of an existing cabin in a floodplain if:

- The area encompassing the cabin is removed from the floodplain by a letter of map amendment.
 - The lowest finished floor elevation of the cabin is at least two feet above the base flood elevation.
 - One or more high-water markers (HWM) as needed, based upon on-the-ground measures and real-time conditions, are installed at appropriate locations near the affected cabin.
 - The cabin is not located within a designated floodway.
 - The camp's emergency plan includes enhanced evacuation procedures specific to flood risk.
- Removal of a cabin from a floodplain by a letter of map amendment alone does **not** constitute compliance; all criteria above must be met.

Emergency Plan Requirements

- Camps with cabins in or near floodplains must include enhanced evacuation procedures for flood risk in their emergency plans.

Coastal Zone V or VE

- Any cabin located or to be located in a camp that is located in or contiguous to a zone mapped by FEMA as zone V or zone VE in a coastal high hazard area is exempt from the provisions of this section regardless of the FEMA zone classification in which the cabin is located.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: **New Rule:** Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.05 Camp Required Emergency Equipment.

NOAA Weather Radio

Camps must have a NOAA Weather Radio that transmits "all-hazards" notifications. This ensures camps receive timely alerts about severe weather and other emergencies.

Emergency Staff Alert Protocols

- Camps must have a protocol to alert essential staff members of an emergency, including a redundant procedure that does not rely on text messaging or cellular service.

Audible Notification System

- Camps must have a notification system that does not rely on an Internet connection and is capable of providing an alarm and notification of an emergency that is audible both indoors and outdoors to staff members and campers.

Ongoing Communication

- The emergency plan must include procedures for ongoing communication between the camp operator and all essential staff members during an emergency event.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.06 Sheltering Capacity Requirements.

Minimum Capacity Standard

- Each camp must have as many designated sheltering spaces as are necessary to afford capacity for the maximum number of campers and staff members who are overnight residents.
- This means that at any time, all campers and staff present overnight must be able to safely shelter in designated spaces during an emergency (such as severe weather, tornado, or evacuation event).

Emergency Plan Designation

- The camp's emergency plan must designate one or more locations for campers and staff to gather in case of an emergency that requires evacuation or shelter-in-place.
- These locations must be able to accommodate the full overnight population.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

Mandatory Emergency Plan

- A camp must maintain an emergency plan that provides for the protection and safety of campers and complies with all requirements in Section 8.
- The plan must be submitted to the Alabama Emergency Management Agency for approval with the initial license application and updated as needed.

Required Procedures in the Plan - The emergency plan must include procedures for responding to all of the following situations:

- A lost camper
- A fire on camp premises.
- An outbreak of severe illness or epidemic.
- An injury, or death of a camper, staff member, or visitor.
- A warning of impending severe weather, such as torrential rain, hail, thunderstorms, or a tornado.
- Any natural disaster that threatens life or property
- Any emergency or incident related to transportation of campers or staff members.
- An incident or condition involving a watercourse, lake, or pond within or near the camp.
- Unauthorized individual on the campsite
- Hazardous material incidents
- Evacuation procedures for the entire camp
- Communication protocols with parents, guardians, and emergency services.
- Enhanced flood-specific evacuation procedures.

Threat-Specific Procedures

- The plan must include procedures for flash floods, wildfires, hurricanes, or other threats as adopted by agency rule. This includes:
 - Communication to campers and staff on prescribed evacuation routes
 - Procedures for safe nighttime evacuation

Shelter-in-Place Procedures

- The emergency plan must include shelter-in-place procedures for tornadoes, severe thunderstorm warnings, or other sudden threats where evacuation is impractical or increases risk.

- Designated sheltering spaces must be able to accommodate the maximum number of overnight campers and staff.

Additional Protocols - The plan must also include:

- Protocol for identifying and accounting for each camper during an emergency
- Notification of the local emergency management organization and ongoing communication as conditions unfold
- Ongoing communication between the camp operator and all essential staff during emergencies
- Notification to parents or guardians of campers about the emergency and safety measures taken as soon as reasonably possible

Plan Updates and Approval

- The plan must be updated and resubmitted for agency approval if there are material changes to the camp or if the plan is otherwise amended.
- If the agency finds deficiencies, the camp operator must remedy and resubmit the plan within 45 days.

Evacuation Requirements

Evacuation Procedures

- The emergency plan must include procedures for evacuating campers and staff in response to emergencies such as fire, severe weather, flash floods, wildfires, hurricanes, or other natural disasters.
- The plan must designate one or more locations for campers and staff to gather during an evacuation.
- It must include communication to campers and staff about prescribed evacuation routes and procedures for safe nighttime evacuation.
- Enhanced evacuation procedures are required for camps with cabins in or near floodplains, addressing flood-specific risks.

Communication Protocols

Staff Alert Protocols

- Camps must have a protocol to alert essential staff members of an emergency, including a redundant procedure that does not rely on text messaging or cellular service.
- Notification systems must be audible both indoors and outdoors and not rely on an Internet connection.

Emergency Plan Communication Requirements

- The emergency plan must include procedures for ongoing communication between the camp operator and all essential staff members during an emergency event.
- The plan must also include notification of the Local emergency management organization, with provisions for ongoing communication as conditions unfold during an emergency.

Camper and Parent Notification

- The plan must include protocols for identifying and accounting for each camper during an emergency.
- Parents or legal guardians must be notified of the emergency event and the safety measures taken as soon as reasonably possible.

Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place Communication

- The plan must include communication to campers and staff about prescribed evacuation routes and procedures for safe nighttime evacuation.

Parental/Guardian Notification Requirements

Emergency Event Notification

- The camp's emergency plan must include a protocol for notifying each parent or legal guardian of a camper about any emergency event and the safety measures taken.
- Notification must occur as soon as reasonably possible in relation to the emergency.

Access to Emergency Plan and License

- Upon request, a camp operator must provide the most recent version of the emergency plan to the parent or legal guardian of a camper registered for a pending camp session.
- The operator must also provide proof of a valid emergency preparedness license to a prospective camper or their parent/guardian.

Floodplain Notification

- If any area of the camp is located within a floodplain, this information must be included in the notice provided to the parent or legal guardian.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.08 Emergency Plan Submission and Approval.

Initial Submission Requirements

- The camp operator must submit the emergency plan to the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) with the initial application for an emergency preparedness License.
- The plan must meet all requirements outlined in Section 8, including procedures for various emergencies, designated gathering locations, communication protocols, and staff/camper training.

Updates and Supplemental Applications

- If there are material changes to the camp (such as boundary changes, cabin additions/removals, or renovations affecting camper capacity), the emergency plan must be updated and submitted with a supplemental application.
- If the plan is updated for any other reason, it must be immediately submitted to the agency for approval.

Agency Review and Notification

- The agency reviews the submitted plan to ensure it meets minimum standards.
- If the plan is deficient, the agency notifies the camp operator in writing, specifying what needs to be remedied.
- The camp operator has 45 days from receiving the notice to remedy and resubmit a revised plan.

Approval and Distribution

- Upon approval, the agency provides a copy of the updated or amended plan to the local emergency management organization.
- The agency stores the most recent approved plan in a digital database for access by relevant authorities.

Ongoing Access and Transparency

- Parents or legal guardians of campers may request the most recent version of the emergency plan.
- Proof of a valid emergency preparedness license and the emergency plan must be provided to prospective campers or their guardians upon request.

Appeals

- If the agency disapproves the plan, the camp operator may submit a written appeal within 30 days for reconsideration. The agency director may offer an informal hearing and issue a final decision.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.09 Digital Storage of Emergency Plans.

Agency Digital Database

- The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) will store the most recent version of each approved emergency plan in a digital database.

Immediate Access for Authorities

- This digital database will be accessible immediately by:
 - The Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency . o
 - The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
 - Emergency service providers o
 - Any other department, agency, or political subdivision upon a showing of reasonable cause

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.10 Parents or Legal Guardian Requests.

At the request of a parent or legal guardian of a **registered camper**, the camp operator must provide:

- A copy of the camp's current emergency preparedness license
- A brief written summary of the camp's emergency procedures

At the request of a parent or legal guardian of a **prospective camper**, the camp operator must provide:

- A copy of the camp's emergency preparedness license

At the request of a parent or legal guardian of either a **registered or prospective camper**, the camp operator must:

- Disclose whether any cabin is located within a floodplain

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.11 Safety Orientation and Staff Training.

Mandatory Safety Orientation for Campers

- Within 24 hours of the start of a camp session, the camp operator and staff must conduct a mandatory safety orientation for all campers.
- The orientation must include:
 - The camp's boundaries and any hazards present on camp premises.
 - Behavioral expectations for campers.
 - Developmentally appropriate instruction on the appropriate actions to take in case of an emergency, including evacuation procedures, in accordance with the camp's emergency plan.

Annual Staff Training and Emergency Plan Review

- Each staff member must participate in a review of the most recent version of the camp's emergency plan at least once a year, or whenever the plan is updated and approved by the agency.

Training for Leased Camp Operations

- If an organization leases a camp to administer operations, its staff must:
 - Undergo background checks as required by Section 4(a).
 - Familiarize themselves with the camp's emergency plan and evacuation procedures.
 - Provide developmentally appropriate emergency instruction to campers within 24 hours of their arrival, in line with the camp's emergency plan.

- The camp's emergency preparedness coordinator must provide an orientation and review of the emergency and evacuation plans to the incoming staff upon their arrival.

Documentation of Training Requirements

Recordkeeping for Compliance

- These records must be kept up-to-date and available for inspection by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency at any time.
- Documentation is required as part of the initial emergency preparedness license application and any supplemental application for renewal.

Camp Inspection Requirements

Consent to Inspection

- By receiving an emergency preparedness license under HB381, a camp operator consents to on-site inspection of the camp and camp operations by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) at any time.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.

320-5-1-.12 Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council.

Advisory Council Operations

- Appointments to the advisory council shall be coordinated to assure that council membership is inclusive and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of the state.
- Members from state departments or agencies shall serve terms that coincide with their respective offices or appointments.
- No individual shall continue to serve on the advisory council when he or she or, if applicable, the designating officer, no longer serves in the office to which he or she was appointed.
- Members shall serve without compensation and be reimbursed by their respective departments or agencies or, if applicable, according to the policy of their respective organizations.
- The advisory council shall hold an organizational meeting in person no later than 45 days after the enactment of this section at the call of the chair, who shall be the Director

of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, or his or her designee.

- The advisory council shall meet as necessary to fulfill their advisory responsibilities on the implementation of the camp safety act.
- The advisory council shall dissolve three years from the date this section takes effect.
- Nothing in this act shall be interpreted to change any element of civil liability with respect to any possible claim against a camp nor create a cause of action solely for a violation of this act.

Author: Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Statutory Authority: § 31-9-160 to § 31-9-174

History: New Rule: Published _____; effective _____.