

KidsCamps.com Newsletter
Issue 1, Volume 4

Welcome to the KidsCamps.com Monthly Newsletter! The subject of the March Newsletter is "Camper Safety".

Topics include:

- * Camp Security
- * Contingency Planning
- * Protecting Campers on Your Website
- * Staff Screening - Protect Your Campers and Your Camp
- * Conducting Background Checks
- * Checking References
- * Deal of the Month

ADVERTISEMENT

ScreenStaff.com provides camps with instant, online background screening reports and drug testing products helping them make quick, secure, well-informed hiring decisions. Visit www.ScreenStaff.com today to learn more and take advantage of the discounted pricing offered for the 2003 summer camp season.

CAMP SECURITY

Due to the events of September 11th and the recent threats of impending domestic terrorist activities, many camps are focusing on increasing their camp security. Increasing security can be a costly undertaking. Use of a professional security company to help you assess your security needs can help ensure you only add those security measures that are needed. This assessment should take into consideration your assets and vulnerabilities, the realistic probability of a dangerous occurrence based on geographic proximity to high-risk target areas or religious affiliation, and your operational, cultural, building code, and cost constraints.

Below are some helpful guidelines for assessing camp security:

1. Assess the susceptibility of your campers to outside threats, such as kidnapping, terrorism, and other dangers.
2. Assess your needs for fencing, lighting, and telephones or cell phones for emergency calls.
3. Design a protocol for handling visitors and the acceptance and transfer of luggage, mail, and other parcels.
4. Coordinate local support systems (police, fire, red cross, etc.).
5. Establish and communicate to parents multiple ways of communication in an

emergency situation that affects the camp or its campers (blast emails, radio announcement, emergency website pages, emergency phone numbers, evacuation routes and safe sites).

6. Train staff in emergency procedures and crisis management.

More information on these topics can be found on the American Camping Association's website at http://www.acacamps.org/campline/02o_security.htm

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Having well-thought contingency plans in place before the summer camp season helps programs guarantee a safe summer. Emergencies, threats and accidents can happen at any time - are you and your staff prepared to handle them?

Evacuation Plan:

When planning an evacuation route, it's best to try and establish a single route to make it easier for your campers and staff to remember and follow. Plan a rendezvous location far enough from the camp to ensure everyone is out of harm's way, so you will be able to quickly establish that everyone is accounted for. Educate your staff on the route, procedures, and policies for evacuation and run a drill with staff and campers.

Weather:

For camp directors severe weather is another risk to be mitigated as much as possible. To combat the risk of injury to campers and staff during storm season it's wise to employ a number of different warning aids and emergency procedures, just in case. For example, the Internet can be a great tool. At www.weather.com you can download a desktop weather-reporting tool that provides you with severe weather alerts, and 12-hour forecasts. Some cellular phone services such as AT&T and Sprint even have features allowing you to be alerted to severe weather in your area. Finally be sure to have your procedure planned for when severe weather does hit.

PROTECTING CAMPERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

While the Internet is a wonderful tool that allows your campers, via your camp's website, a wonderful interactive experience of words, pictures, sound and motion, it also poses many dangers, including people who roam the web in search of readily accessible information on children. Are you protecting the campers visiting your website?

If you collect the name, address, email address, birth date, gender or any other personal information from a child under thirteen years of age on your website, you must meet the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) that became effective in April 2000. To better meet the requirements of this law be sure you follow these simple do's and don'ts:

Do:

- * Develop and post your privacy policy on your website.
- * Obtain and verify parental consent before collecting, using or disclosing information about a child.
- * Allow parents to review personal information collected from their children.
- * Protect children's privacy and safety using a secure or encrypted environment for collecting and transmitting this data via email.

Do not:

- * Identify pictured children by full name and/or hometown
- * Reveal the identity of children participating in chat rooms or online discussions
- * Use photographs of children without their knowledge or consent

Camps should implement a procedure that ensures that pictures appearing on their websites have prior permission for use on this medium before they are posted.

For more information on the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at www.ftc.gov and click on privacy initiatives.

STAFF SCREENING - PROTECT YOUR CAMPERS AND YOUR CAMP

Resumes and employment applications are typically the only resources used to make crucial hiring decisions. Is all this information accurate? Will this job candidate be a potential liability? Does this stranger have any criminal convictions in his/her past? Performing background screens on potential candidates will help you make the right hiring decision the first time.

CONDUCTING BACKGROUND CHECKS

Implementing background screening in your hiring process is sound risk management. The screening process helps you ensure that you select the best possible employees and protects your campers, other staff members and the camp itself from exposure to employees who pose unacceptable, identifiable threats.

Camps are turning to commercial background check services to assist in the time-consuming task of pre-screening job applicants. Use of a professional service requires compliance with federal regulations and results in a more comprehensive and supportable screening of your employees. A screening program demonstrates that an employer has exercised due diligence, proving a great deal of legal protection. Commercial background check companies can provide you with a variety of reports, including, but not limited to, screening of criminal records, sexual offender databases, social security and identity verification, employment/education history, reference checks, motor vehicle reports and credit checks.

It can be very difficult to perform reliable background checks in multiple municipalities and jurisdictions. Fortunately, commercial background checking companies make this easier for organizations by providing access to key databases. Companies providing background-screening information are subject to the requirements so be sure you verify their compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) before proceeding.

For more information on the FCRA, visit <http://www.ftc.gov/os/statutes/fcra.htm>.

CHECKING REFERENCES

Wanting to quickly fill a position can often cause employers to rush through a key part of the screening process - checking references. As everyone knows, applicants select personal references on the basis of the positive impression they will provide to a potential employer.

There are insightful questions you can ask favorable references that can reveal important information about applicants. According to the Staff Screening Tool Kit 1st Edition, by John C. Patterson, there are a few questions you should ask references for applicants who will be working with children:

- * How would you describe his/her personal characteristics?
- * How would you say he/she relates with children?
- * Have you ever seen him/her discipline a child? If so, please describe what you saw him/her do?
- * Do you think there may be any problems or conditions that would interfere with the applicant's ability to care of children or in any way endanger the children under the applicant's care?

DEAL OF THE MONTH

* Notify Quick Corp: Phone Tree Service - call all your parents with one phone call! Mention CampDirectorsMall.com and receive a 20% discount on parent notification plans. Offer expires 4/15/03. To view website, visit www.campdirectorsmall.com and click on 'Communications'.

For more information on camp insurance safety practices, staff training, and background-check providers, visit www.CampDirectorsMall.com.

Let us help you find deals! Want us to pursue deals on certain products and services? Send your request to newsletter@kidscamps.com.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have any suggestions or comments for us regarding this newsletter or would like more information on any of the topics mentioned in this

month's newsletter, please send them to newsletter@kidscamps.com.

If there are other members of your staff or other colleagues in the camp community that you feel would be interested in receiving this newsletter, please ask them to subscribe by emailing newsletter@kidscamps.com directly.

<http://www.kidscamps.com>

We comply with proposed federal legislation regarding unsolicited commercial email by providing you with a method for your email address to be permanently removed from our database and any future mailings from our organization. To be removed, please click on the link below:

<http://www.nichedirectories.com/EmailBlackList/OptOut?EVENT=OPTOUT&EMAIL=admin@canaanacres.org>