

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Sara Gagné-Hohnes
Acting Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
11 State House Station
286 Water Street
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel: (207) 287-8016; Fax (207) 287-2887
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

Notice: Written Policy Requirement Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

The Health Inspection Program recently became aware of 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, 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.

Due to the sheer volume of policies needing review as camps comply with this law, HIP would prefer that each youth camp submit their policy as soon as it is prepared.

For 2025 renewals, HIP will work on adding enhancements 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 updated.

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>

A 2024 renewal license will be issued once HIP receives the written policy. For each renewal year thereafter, if renewing online, camps may check a box attesting that these policies were not changed and still maintained if such policies remain in effect. If camp policies have changed, camps will need to upload their **updated** policy in this same format to be reviewed by HIP before a license is issued.

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

HIP has set up a distinct Outlook email mailbox for receipt of this policy, with four components, directly from each licensed youth camp.

The email address is: YCPolicies.HIP@maine.gov

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.

The DHHS Maine CDC Policy and Compliance team will assist HIP to 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 one is received and approved. Please reach out to me at lisa.silva@maine.gov if you have questions about submitting the necessary PDF document detailing your camp's abuse and neglect prevention policy for review by the DHHS Maine CDC Policy and Compliance team before the HIP maintains them on file.