

HB 3142 -- YOUTH CAMP EMERGENCY PLANS AND PREPAREDNESS

SPONSOR: Parker

Currently, summer or day camps can operate without a license from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

This bill changes the law to require licensure of summer or day camps and updates relevant statutes governing licensed facilities for children, including inspections.

The bill additionally establishes the "Summer and Day Camp Emergency Response Act". It sets specific requirements for license holders, including provisions on submitting renewal applications if certain alterations are made.

The bill requires the Department to review camper-to-counselor ratios for overnight stays at summer camps, or day camps if applicable, and establish minimum ratios by rule.

The bill requires summer or day camp operators to include on their publicly accessible website a clearly marked link to the summer camp or day camp program web page on the Department's website for campers, parents, and camp staff and volunteers to use to report the camp's noncompliance. The Department will investigate each complaint filed.

Each summer or day camp must comply with fire, safety, health, and sanitation inspections that may be required.

The Commissioner shall require a summer camp or day camp operator to establish an emergency plan that:

- (1) Specifies muster zones to gather in an emergency event requiring evacuation;
- (2) Establishes procedures for emergency events, including but not limited to a lost camper, a fire, severe injury or illness, an unknown individual on the premises, or a transportation emergency;
- (3) Establishes procedures to identify and account for each camper affected by the emergency event;
- (4) Establishes procedures to notify and communicate with law enforcement, camp administrative and medical staff, and the parents or legal guardians of each camper; and

(5) Designates a camp emergency preparedness coordinator.

Additionally, the Commissioner shall require a summer camp or day camp operator to:

(1) Maintain an operable radio capable of providing real-time weather alerts;

(2) Install and maintain an emergency warning system;

(3) Monitor safety alerts; and

(4) Certify compliance with these provisions.

An operator is required to annually submit the initial or updated emergency plan to the Department for approval. If it is determined that the submitted plan does not meet minimum standards, the operator must revise and resubmit the plan no later than 45 days after the date the operator receives notice from the Department. If approved, the operator must provide a copy of the plan to the law enforcement agency or county sheriff's office where the camp is located, and the director of the emergency management agency of the county in which the camp is located.

The Department will store each emergency plan in a digital database and provide access to the State's emergency management agency.

Operators are required to provide the most recent version of a summer or day camp's plan to the parent or legal guardian of a participating or prospective camper, to notify the parent or guardian of a camper whether any part of the camp is located in a flood plain, and to ensure that the parent or guardian signs and submits a statement acknowledging receipt of this information.

The bill requires, not more than 48 hours after each camp session begins, operators to conduct a mandatory safety orientation.

Additionally, at least once per year, camp operators must:

(1) Provide each camp staff member and volunteer a copy of the most recent emergency plan;

(2) Ensure each staff member and volunteer completes training on the camp's emergency plan;

(3) Instruct each staff member and volunteer on the proper procedures to follow in an emergency; and

(4) Maintain written records documenting each staff member's and volunteer's completion of the required training.

The proper evacuation route described in the emergency plan must be conspicuously posted in each cabin on the camp's premises.

The bill prohibits the Department from issuing or renewing a license for a summer camp or day camp if the operator is not in compliance with the provisions of this bill, and requires the Department to suspend a noncompliant camp's license; the license may be reinstated only if the Department determines the camp and operator are in compliance.