

HR-4 STAFF SCREENING

MANDATORY (HR-4A)

A camp must have written evidence of a policy in practice that requires screening for all camp staff with responsibility for or access to campers that includes:

HR-4A: Annually for all camp staff—paid, volunteer, and contracted:

- A voluntary disclosure statement, and
- A check of the National Sex Offender Public Registry, or for residents of states not participating in the National Sex Offender database, a check of the sexual offender registry of any state in which the applicant resided.

A camp should have written evidence of a policy in practice that requires screening for all camp staff with responsibility for or access to campers that includes:

HR-4B: For new camp staff 18 years and older, paid, volunteer, and contracted, a criminal background check.

HR-4C: For new camp staff, at least two reference checks and verification of previous work (including volunteer) history.

HR-4D: For new camp staff, personal interview by the camp director or a designated representative.

INTERPRETATION: All camp staff—volunteer, employed, and contracted, full-time and part-time who could have unsupervised access to children must be included in the screening process. This requirement includes on-site operational personnel, as well as staff members working from a central office who come to the camp as a part of their responsibility. “Contracted” staff working in a typical staff role having contact with campers, such as food service, housekeeping, maintenance personnel, or specialized program leaders, must be screened. Guest-program specialists who provide leadership in a limited area and are never with campers in an unsupervised situation would not be subject to screening.

A “voluntary disclosure statement” is a signed statement that, at minimum, attests to the nonconviction of violent crimes and crimes against children. It may include further information about other criminal behavior, previous addresses, and other data relevant to the camp and position. It should be reviewed by legal counsel. The “voluntary disclosure statement” may be included on the application form or with the release of information form, or may be a separate document. The statement should be secured from *ALL* staff, including international staff. A statement must be signed by all staff annually, regardless of previous or continued employment.

The U.S. Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Registry (a free service at www.nsopr.gov) will only reflect certain types of criminal sexual behavior. A criminal background check seeks additional records of other types of criminal behavior. Criminal background checks are available through a variety

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

of agencies and private vendors, each with its own level of coverage, accuracy, timeliness of providing information, and cost. In many cases, criminal records for minors may also be available if a crime was committed in which the individual was charged as an adult. Consult the *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* for detailed information on criminal background checks.

The camp must have a specific plan for securing criminal background checks based on state laws, availability of data, cost, and type of staff. For staff from other countries, criminal background checks are increasingly provided through the international placement agencies. Availability of criminal background checks for international staff and volunteers vary by the country of origin. The international placement agencies have recommendations concerning the minimum types of checks that should be performed. Consult the *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* for further information on criminal background checks. Securing a criminal background check, references, verification of previous work, and interviews applies to the hiring of new staff, seasonal and year round. Staff are considered "new" upon initial hiring, and if there has been a break in employment of 12 months or more. Year-round staff, including directors, must be screened upon entry and thereafter according to the policy of the camp (see Standard HR-3).

Some "seasonal staff" may be year-round employees of the parent organization (agency staff, clergy, religious educators). These persons may be treated as "year-round staff" *PROVIDED THAT* the parent organization has a policy in practice for screening and supervising that meets the criteria of the standard. "Verification" of work history means evaluation of the timeframes of previous jobs to determine reasons for any gaps in employment and spot checking to verify that the applicant was employed or licensed as claimed. Standards in other areas, such as transportation, aquatics, and program, also call for specific types of record checks or documentation of skills which may be undertaken as part of the screening process. The standard does not require visitors to be given access to confidential files. "Written evidence of the screening process in practice" may include the application or receipt for securing background checks.

"Personal interview" means face-to-face or by phone for all applicants, including internationals, conducted by the camp director or a designated representative. In addition to interviews conducted by a staff placement agency, camps should make their own contact with applicants before hiring to confirm the applicant's language and communication skills, identify their expectations for the job, determine their suitability for the specific job offered, and provide specific information to the applicants about the camp program and location.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for sample forms and additional information on screening practices related to international staff.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written evidence of the screening policy in practice; director description of the screening process.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED