

**2005 Council of Delegates Meeting
Issue Overview**

Issue: ACA Standards Revision

SUMMARY

The National Standards Commission is seeking input on proposed standards content revision, prior to a field test of those revisions in summer 2005. The majority of ACA standards and the ACA accreditation system remain the same. Influenced by ACA research, the revised standards expand requirements beyond physical safety to better address emotional safety in camps.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

None this year; vote on revised standards will be in 2006. However, feedback and input is critical at this point to be able to field test requirements that reflect the best thinking of the field.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the formation of the Camp Directors' Association in 1910, the leadership of organized camps in the U.S. has directed resources and efforts toward health and safety concerns affecting camps. From the 1935 listing of "Suggested Tentative Standards," through the 1948 first set of officially adopted Camp Standards, to the current revision adopted in 1998, the ACA accreditation program has grown to keep pace with expectations of the public, changes in the camp industry, and the challenges of operating a business in today's highly regulated society. Courts of law and government regulators recognize ACA standards as THE standards of the camp industry.

The primary purpose of accreditation is education – leading camp directors and staff through a process of evaluation and validation designed to strengthen camps' systems for health, safety and program quality. Parents and other youth-serving organizations also look to accreditation to assist them in selecting camps that meet industry-accepted and government-recognized professional practices. As ACA looks to impact more camps – and help them enrich more lives – the National Standards Commission seeks to raise the bar on developmental practices that affect real outcomes for young people.

ATTACHMENTS

NSC Field Test Draft of Standards Revisions.

Updated: January 31, 2005

american **CAMP** association™
NSC Field Test Draft of Standards Revisions - January 2005

Influenced by ACA research and a renewed focus on the value of the camp experience, the National Standards Commission is proposing revised standards to expand requirements beyond physical safety to better address emotional safety in camps. Revised requirements for staff training, camper/staff interactions, and intentional programming seek to “raise the bar” on the quality of camp experiences.

Proposed Timeline:

Summer 2005

- Field test of revisions in camps
- Regularly scheduled visits on current standards (3rd visits in current standards)

Winter/Spring 2005/2006

- ACA National Conference – Council of Delegates adopt revisions
- Write and publish new standards materials and tools
- Develop new standards training curriculum

Summer 2006

- Regularly scheduled visits on current standards (3rd visits in current standards)

Fall/Winter/Spring 2006/2007

- Retraining/updates for camps and standards personnel

Summer 2007

- First visits under revised standards

Field Test

Following feedback and input sessions at ACA national and regional conferences, the NSC will distribute the final version of the field test draft. The standards revisions will be field tested in volunteer camps across the country in summer 2005. Many camps will voluntarily score several revised standards at the end of their regularly scheduled accreditation visits. Some camps and visitors have volunteered to test the standards outside of regular cycle visits. Field test results will NOT affect the accreditation status or visit results of camps who participate.

Revision Highlights

- New standards on playground safety, skateboard safety, horse medications
- Expanded requirements in Human Resources/Personnel and Program Design related to positive youth development.
- Expanded target sport requirements – separate archery and rifle safety
- Added MANDATORY status to some standards:
 - Staff screening process
 - Helmets for horseback riding, climbing, bicycling, and skateboarding
 - PFDs (lifejackets) for boating

Field Test Drafts Available

Go to <http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/stdsprogram.htm>