

Frequently Asked Questions for Accreditation in 2021

Written Documentation

Is a camp expected to submit written documentation before the visit?

Yes, camp written documents are due to the ACA volunteer visitors by May 15. It is highly recommended for camps to organize documents in a shared cloud storage space of their choice (e.g., [Dropbox](#), [Google Drive](#), [Box](#)) and use the [Accreditation Portal's Expanded Written Documentation Review \(E-WDR\)](#) space for sharing document links. See the E-WDR information outlined on the [visit detail](#) documents.

We have only used the traditional "binder" preparation for a site-visit. How do we prepare digitally/electronically?

Historically, camps have organized for the site visit by preparing a binder(s) of paper copies of their documents. However, document sharing technology with the site-visit team has increased since the 2012 version of the standards. The good news for your accreditation documentation organization is that cloud file storage systems are widely available today. See these tips on your [organization of written documentation](#) and watch for the [Closer Look video on written documentation](#).

We strongly encourage all camps to create and use cloud file storage ([Dropbox](#), [Google Drive](#), [Box](#), etc.) to organize ALL written documentation related to accreditation standards. If your camp still prints paper copies of documents and places them in a binder to review on the day of the visit, that can continue; however, you should also have the digital organization of the documents.

During virtual scoring (for hybrid or virtual visits), does all the written documentation for standards need to be shared in a digital/cloud system, or can some be shared on-screen during the visit's scoring portion?

As much documentation as possible should be shared before the visit for review and feedback by the ACA visit team. Understandably, there will be some documents that might be better shared during the virtual score meeting.

Do camps upload documents to an ACA site?

No, it is strongly suggested that camps organize documents in a shared cloud storage space of their choice (e.g., [Dropbox](#), [Google Drive](#), [Box](#)). Camps can use the [ACA Accreditation Portal](#) to share links to those documents. These documents should be shared by standard. If the visit is planned to be hybrid or virtual, this is an excellent option for maximum scoring efficiency. If a camp does not use the ACA portal but shares the shared drive of documents, the ACA visitors can still use the ACA portal to review and provide document feedback.

If a camp can provide written documents only in hard copy (paper), a camp, at their own expense, shall mail to each visitor COPIES of their organized written documentation. CAMPS SHOULD NOT MAIL THEIR ONLY COPY OF DOCUMENTS.

If the camp uses the ACA Accreditation Portal for the E-WDR, do all assigned visitors have access the camp's written documentation?

The camp is responsible for providing access to their written documentation to all assigned visitors. If the camp shares links in the [ACA Accreditation Portal](#), all assigned ACA visitors will have access to the camp's comments and links. Contact the camp directly if you do not have access. Visitors should not assume a camp will use the ACA portal; it is essential to for the camp and visit team to communicate and make a plan together.

Is it OK for camps to share photos?

In a virtual visit, it is essential to remember that there is no observation compliance demonstration. Visitors will need to ask the camp and key staff questions to get a good description and understanding of the program and processes. Camps are not asked to share photos or videos of their programs. However, some camps might do so to help ACA visitors understand an aspect of their program. Visitors should not request this of their camps.

How does a visitor handle written documentation that is incomplete?

It is crucial for visitors and camps to communicate early and often to plan, receive, and complete the Written Documentation Review. A visit team must make a cooperative plan with the camp to receive and review the documentation. This process is the key to the educational aspects of accreditation. Visitors should use the ACA Accreditation Portal to provide feedback to the camp on the camp's written documentation. The system is designed for indicating visitor-perceived compliance and feedback. For any documentation that is not complete, visitors should write specific comments to aid the camp and the visit team; this will allow the camp to better prepare for the site visit. A comprehensive PDF report can be accessed and downloaded to take to an in-person site visit. Additionally, for hybrid and virtual visits, visitor comments and feedback are easily accessible during the scoring process.

In-Person Observation

It can be challenging to see all of the activities that a camp offers. How important is it to see all program activities?

The expectation for observation during an in-person visit or hybrid visit is no different than in any prior year. Review the 2021 safety guidelines for in-person visits. Camps are expected to share a visit-day plan that includes visitor observation of as much of the camp operation as possible. As in any other year, if a specialized or aquatics activity is not observed, the visitor must note on the score form comments that it was not observed.

Are there any thresholds for how long a visit team should be on site?

The camp and visit team should discussed this issue specifically. There may be regulatory or other restrictions that impact the amount of time a visitor is on site. The camp is expected to share a visit-day plan with the visitors in advance. Keeping communication open and fluid between the camp and full visit team is essential. ACA's intent is to minimize the amount of time a visit team is on site – this will look different for each camp operation.

Scoring

How should the physical score form be handled (as far as getting signatures, allowing the camp to make copies, etc.)?

The score form for in-person visits has been designed to minimize the typical passing around of the form. The camp may take a photo (preferred), copy the score form, or request a copy from the ACA administrative office.

The lead visitor will place all visit documents in a single envelope to mail. The newly designed score form will be available by mid-May.

What will scoring look like for hybrid and virtual visits?

Scoring will take place in the ACA Accreditation Portal. Camps and visitors should be familiar with the Written Documentation Review area of the portal, and scoring will use previsit work from the E-WDR. Camps and visitors will both have access to the appropriate scoring areas for comment and review. A final score form will also be available to the camp. Visitors should watch the Closer Look: Scoring video and attend the Visitor Huddle in May. Remember, the standards and the applicability remain unchanged.

Health Safety

Many questions of health safety can be answered by reviewing the [ACA In-Person Safety](#) guidelines. Contact your staff person for additional assistance.

The camp being visited does not have a mask-required policy. Can an on-site visit still take place?

ACA volunteers and camp director should wear masks (face covering that covers nose and mouth) at all times during the site visit. A face shield alone is not considered an appropriate face covering. Camp staff and campers should wear masks at all times if they are with ACA volunteers. For in-person accreditation visits in 2021, the following ACA guidelines and/or the camp guidelines should be followed, whichever are more strict. See the guidelines for [ACA In-Person Safety](#).

How do the in-person safety guidelines affect a volunteer visitor that is vaccinated?

The in-person safety guidelines apply to vaccinated and unvaccinated ACA volunteer visitors.

If the camp requires visitors to their program to be COVID-19 tested (on their site or provide test result) and there is a fee, is the ACA volunteer responsible for paying?

Contact your ACA staff member if you come across this situation.

Does ACA require COVID-19 testing prior to an in-person accreditation visit?

ACA does not require the testing of volunteers. Volunteers should follow their assigned camp's COVID-19 screening procedures as requested by the camp. Clear communication between the camp and the assigned ACA volunteer team is crucial. Plans with each camp will vary based on camp locations, specific camp operations, and local regulations.

As a visitor, do I have to wear a mask for 14-days or quarantine before an in-person site visit?

Being mindful of the importance of actions before the in-person on-site visit is prudent. As much as possible, practice physical distancing, mask wearing, and proper hygiene during the 14 days preceding an in-person on-site visit. None of these measures guarantee absolute protection, but ignoring any or all could notably increase your risk of contracting COVID-19. Be sure to review the [ACA In-Person Safety](#) guidelines.

Will ACA be providing masks to volunteer visitors?

ACA will not be providing masks. Be sure to review the [ACA In-Person Safety](#) guidelines.

Virtual Visit

What will a visitor "see" for a virtual visit?

ACA volunteer visitors will talk with the director and other staff as needed per the compliance demonstration of a standard. The virtual visit will rely on conversation and interviews with appropriate staff to describe the camp operations and programs. Because the virtual visit will not include on-site observations, camps will need to be as descriptive as possible during the virtual visit day. Think of a virtual visit as when you're in-person and an activity isn't being run that day; the camp will need to talk the visitor through the process. In advance, the camp will send the ACA volunteer visitors the virtual visit day plan for their review; this should include a staff interview schedule. Review the [Virtual Visit Details](#) for guidance.

How is the scoring process handled for a virtual visit? Do the visitors score while interviewing the camp staff or save information to score when the interview is complete?

This decision will be guided by (1) the camp program's complexity and (2) the volume of written documentation that has been submitted and reviewed prior to the virtual visit. Communication between the camp and visit team is paramount to having a solid plan based on the program being scored. Each person's organizational and thinking style will also need to be considered. Keep in mind that the v.2019 standards are not organized by camp function; for example health standards are found in AD, HW and ST. As a reminder, a standard is scored once all compliance demonstration has been met.

What if, during interviews, visitors receive conflicting information from camp staff? How do we verify what is being practiced?

As in an in-person visit, the lead visitor has the final determination on scoring. The visit team needs to have a plan to accommodate a quick check-in if the need arises. When the visit occurs in person, we do not often think about having such a plan, since it can happen organically fairly easily. When making the visit day plan, it is suggested that time is built in for ACA volunteer check-ins with each other.

What if the internet goes out while the visit is happening?

The camp staff and ACA volunteer visitors must have reliable internet access and have working and tested video, microphone, and speakers. However, even the best internet can fail when it is most needed. A virtual visit and the hybrid scoring day are expected to occur on a single day. Be sure a plan is made with the camp and ACA volunteers to accommodate the possibility of loss of technology. Contact your ACA staff to discuss further.

Camp

We are concerned our camp may not operate; what does that mean for our accreditation?

Contact your ACA staff person for assistance.

What if the camp's operations change between setting a date for the visit and the actual visit date?

It is the camp's and the ACA volunteer visitors' responsibility to maintain frequent and responsive communication throughout the previsit and visit process. Decide together the frequency and method of communication, and commit to the agreed-upon plan. Any changes should be communicated to the visitor as soon as possible. Contact your ACA staff person to help with questions or concerns.

We do not have a current health inspection report that includes the kitchen within the last 15 months. What do we do to meet the applicable standards?

To DNA the applicable standards, a camp must have a copy of a health inspection report that includes the kitchen. The report must indicate a passing score for an inspection conducted within the past 15 months. If the report is not available or not conducted in the past 15 months, camps must be scored yes or no for the applicable standards.

Volunteer

If something comes up for follow-up scoring and a visitor is not available, what do we do?

When a visitor does not follow through on the commitment, it impacts other volunteer(s) and the camp. Volunteers are counted on for their visits, and assignments are made intentionally. This year is no different than the past; if an emergency arises for a visitor, the visitor should, as soon as possible, contact their visit team, ACA staff, and standards chair. The lead visitor needs to work with the ACA staff and standards chair for the next steps.

What if a camp changes the visit type? Is this OK?

This is possible as camps adapt to their local/regional regulatory requirements. ACA volunteers need to be flexible. In any visit year, camps (and sometimes ACA volunteers) need to make changes to the visit plan; we always work to accommodate changes the best we can. If a change in type of visit is requested by the camp, the visitor should contact your ACA staff and standards chair.

The camp I work for will not allow me to leave to volunteer this summer and I am concerned about being "not accessible" to my own program while I am volunteering for ACA.

Talking with your supervisor and/or your staff team about your visit responsibility is prudent. You will need to set your parameters for that day, just as you would if you left your camp for the day. Communicate with your team regarding the approximate time you will be available based on the visit day plan.

Due to circumstances beyond the visitor's control, they may not meet the criteria to visit in 2021. Maybe you could be part of a visit team for E-WDR reviewing but not be present the day of the visit. If you are assigned a visit and find you can no longer visit, contact your ACA staff and standards chair immediately.

General

What does *exposure* mean, as referenced in the ACA safety guidance?

Exposure is determined under CDC guidelines that are current at the time for determining [close contacts](#).

Can a camp ask their visitors to take a COVID-19 test and expect them to isolate before the actual visit this summer?

If the camp safety procedure requires this, yes, they can. A volunteer is just that, a volunteer and will need to make their own decision regarding whether they can meet the camp's expectations. A visitor can decline any assignment if they don't feel comfortable or can't meet the camp safety procedures.

What if the camp is running in different modes or fewer modes than they do in typical summers?

Camps that are concerned should contact their ACA staff member as soon as possible to talk through options.

If a camp or ACA volunteer has limited or spotty internet, can they choose a hybrid or virtual visit?

A camp and ACA volunteer must meet the technical requirements as outlined in the [visit details](#).