

**Operational Changes in ACA Accreditation**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated September 21, 2016**

**WOW – I've not heard anything about this. What's the history behind these changes?**

Much thought and planning has gone into this change – all focused on how ACA maintains the integrity of the accreditation program and better connects with ACA accredited camps. To learn more about the history of the changes, check out: [www.acacamps.org/staff-professionals/accreditation-standards/future-accreditation](http://www.acacamps.org/staff-professionals/accreditation-standards/future-accreditation)

**Why the changes?**

The ACA Board of Directors recently approved several improvements to the Accreditation Program. These include:

- Strengthening the connections between ACA and professionals connected to accredited camps, as well as those seeking accreditation;
- Acknowledging the needs and time availability of today's volunteers;
- Positioning ACA's Accreditation Program for growth;
- Maintaining the integrity of the program;
- For camps that qualify, on-site standards verification visits to take place every five years.

A key piece of strengthening the connection between ACA and accredited camps is the completion of an Annual Accreditation Report in nonvisit years.

**What was the actual recommendation?**

In nonvisit years, all currently accredited camps will complete and submit an Annual Accreditation Report in conjunction with the Annual Statement of Compliance. This report will be reviewed by trained standards volunteers. After a camp has successfully completed two accreditation visits, it will be eligible to move to a five-year visit cycle. (The first accreditation cycle will be three years; subsequent accreditation cycles will be five years.) All current, eligible accredited camps will move to a five-year cycle.

**I am scheduled for a visit in 2017 (my last visit was in 2014). When will my next visit occur?**

A percentage of the eligible camps currently scheduled for a visit in 2017 will have their accreditation visit moved to 2019 – based on a random selection. Over time this will allow approximately 20 percent of the camps in a given area to be visited each year vs. the current 33 percent. Camps originally to be visited in 2017 will be notified prior to November 1 of their visit year.

**Who can complete the Annual Accreditation Report?**

The individual who completes the report for the camp must be actively involved with the overall camp operation. There is a tutorial that provides the instructions necessary for completing this online report.

**What is included in the Annual Accreditation Report? When will it be available?**

The Annual Accreditation Report includes basic informational questions (e.g., Are you a day camp? Resident camp? Serve rental groups?) and questions specific to a variety of ACA standards (both mandatory and nonmandatory). Through narrative, the individual who completes the report will explain how the camp is in compliance. The report will also ask about staff professional development, and camps will have the opportunity to share what they do above and

beyond the standards, providing ACA the opportunity to capture practices of excellence. This document will be available for completion beginning no later than December 1 and must be completed by February 15.

### **How do I fill out the Annual Accreditation Report?**

The report is available through [ACA's My Accreditation Tool](#). In addition to completing the required Annual Accreditation Report through this tool, it has several additional features:

- Ability to **customize a set of standards** based on the programming and modes of the user's camp
- Ability to **filter the standards** by user-selected areas (e.g., filter to see only mandatory standards)
- Ability to **upload camp documents** to the site
- Ability to **generate custom reports** showing only standards applicable to the user's camp
- Ability to generate **custom checklists**

Please watch the tutorials specific to the area you want to use – including the one about the AAR. Once you log on, you may save the information and return to the form. When the report is complete, it is submitted electronically.

### **How long will it take to complete the Annual Accreditation Report?**

We anticipate the Annual Accreditation Report will take between 1.5 and 2 hours to complete.

### **Who reviews the report?**

Individuals who review the Annual Accreditation Report will be considered reviewers for this purpose and must be currently trained and approved visitors.

### **Does the Annual Accreditation Report take the place of the Annual Statement of Compliance?**

No. The Annual Accreditation Report is submitted annually in conjunction with the Annual Statement of Compliance.

### **Can my accreditation be removed based on this report?**

Accreditation will not be removed based solely on the responses in an Annual Accreditation Report. A follow-up discussion with reviewers and ACA, Inc. staff will occur if the report is incomplete or if the reviewer has questions.

### **What happens if I don't complete the report?**

If the report is not completed by the required date (February 15), you will be contacted and reminded of this requirement and if warranted an extension may be granted until March 1. If the report is not completed by that date, the camp WILL be scheduled for a visit in 2017.

### **My state recognizes ACA accreditation in lieu of state licensing. Will that be affected by this change?**

ACA is aware of the states that provide some sort of regulatory relief for ACA accredited camps and/or offer additional funding opportunities for ACA accredited camps and has had the necessary conversations. We have no indication that anything will change.

### **I'm a visitor. What does this mean for me?**

Volunteers continue to be integral to this program. The Annual Accreditation Report review process allows us to continue to use your expertise of accreditation. If not already trained as a reviewer, contact your standards chair (or staff member who supports standards and accreditation in your area) to learn more.

### **Who do I ask if I have questions?**

Please feel free to contact Abby Burbank, standards training specialist at: [aburbank@acacamps.org](mailto:aburbank@acacamps.org)

*This is a dynamic document. We will add questions and answers as received.*