

Frequently Asked Questions for Accreditation

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[Notification from the ACA National Standards Commission – 4/3/2020](#)

ALL CAMPS WITH 2020 VISITS

We had the majority of our written documentation complete and ready for our 2020 visit. Can we still use it for the 2021 visit now?

We appreciate how much work you’ve done to prepare for your on-site visit. The answer to this question varies based on the stated compliance demonstration for each standard. Any documents shared with your 2021 visitor team will need to be specific to your 2021 operation. Translated, when the time comes, review your 2020 written documentation prior to summer 2021 and determine if any changes should be made for 2021.

If we have document links and information in the Accreditation Portal, will it carry over to next year?

Yes. Any work you’ve done on your Written Documentation Review in the Accreditation Portal will remain through 2021 for you to continue your work. However, we recommend you download a summary report of all work and comments before November 1, 2020, as any comments and feedback by visitors will be removed after November 1. Take a [closer look at the methods for organizing your written documentation](#) to work toward 2021.

Will the work we’ve done to prepare for a 2020 visit count in 2021?

The accreditation process does not allow for partial reviews or on-site visits, so there will not be a “carry over” into 2021. However, your preparation is valuable, and your work can be modified or updated to apply to your 2021 visit. You’ve built a great foundation up to this point!

Can we work ahead so that anything we prepare now will count for our visit in 2021?

Yes. Anything you prepare for your next visit will need to be specific to the 2021 season.

We were planning on doing a visit in the fall, is that still possible?

For camps that have a primary operation in nonsummer months, visits can resume after November 1, 2020. Please work with your local standards staff member to coordinate a site-visit in a nonsummer season.

Do we need to complete the Written Documentation Review to get our extension?

No. While we appreciate that many camps had this task nearly complete, it is not a requirement to receive an extension.

Do we have to retake the Accreditation Process Workshop?

No. Camps with a visit now scheduled for 2021 must have completed an Accreditation Process Workshop after September 2018 to meet the requirement. If you need a refresher, an online version is available. Please reach out to your local standards staff member.

Want to brush up on some of the standards? You can view the recorded [Accreditation Office Hours](#) to get a better understanding or review of the standards.

Will we have to turn in a Camp Information Form again?

Yes. After November 1, 2020, all camps with a 2021 visit date will have access to the [Camp Information Form](#) and can update it based on any changes to your program. A new signature and date will be required to ensure that information is up to date. Reminders will be sent out this fall.

Will we have to complete an Annual Accreditation Report (AAR) since we aren't having a visit?

The [Annual Accreditation Reports](#) (AARs) for 2020 are complete. Camps that had a visit scheduled in 2020 do not have to complete an AAR; they only need to complete the [Statement of Compliance](#) by June 1 (even if not operating). AARs will open again in December of 2020 and are required for all camps that do not have an on-visit scheduled for the 2021 season.

Will the same visitors be assigned to our visit next year?

We understand that you may have been in the process of building a relationship with your assigned visitors. Because things change from year to year, your assigned visitors may be different next year. We hope these changes are minimal, and we can't guarantee you that your visitors will be the same in 2021. We encourage you to continue to use your 2020 assigned visitors as an educational resource (as they are available) during this time.

Can we still work with our visitor to receive feedback for our written documentation?

Yes! If visitors are available and willing, this is a wonderful opportunity to participate in an educational review of your documents. Any review or feedback given during this time is for mentorship and education, and will not eliminate the requirement of doing a Written Documentation Review (WDR) in 2021. If your assigned visitors are not available and you would like to continue working with a volunteer, please let your standards staff and/or standards chair know.

We received an extension last year, so this will be the second year of extension. Does that mean we lose our accreditation status?

Accreditation status for all camps currently accredited, including those seeking reaccreditation, will be extended by one year.

ALL CURRENTLY ACCREDITED CAMPS (Including camps scheduled for 2020)

We didn't have a visit scheduled in 2020, how does COVID-19 affect my camp's future on-site visit date?

All camps currently accredited by ACA will receive a one-year extension. All camps with anticipated on-site visits in 2021 through 2024 are extended by one year. The condition of the one-year extension for all currently accredited camps is the review and signing of the [2020 Annual Statement of Compliance \(SOC\)](#) by June 1, 2020.

When is my camp's next expected visit year?

You can verify your expected visit year in the [Accreditation Portal](#). If you have questions, please reach out to your local standards staff member.

If we decide we cannot operate this summer, do we need to notify ACA? Will our accreditation remain in place until we can operate again?

We would love to hear from you if this is the decision you make so we can best continue to meet your needs, but it is not required. Accreditation status for all camps currently accredited, including those seeking reaccreditation, will be extended by one year.

Will there be changes to the standards next year?

There are no planned changes to the Accreditation Process Guide v.2019 or Accreditation Process Guide v.2012 at this time. The National Standards Commission reviews any need for updates or changes on an ongoing basis. If there are changes, pull-and-replace pages will be provided for easy updating.

We are not operating this summer. Do we still need to sign the statement of compliance?

Yes. The [Statement of Compliance](#) must be signed annually to maintain your accreditation status. We ask all camps to complete this by June 1 for this accreditation year.

What if we operate camp at a different location than we did at the time of our last visit or the annual accreditation report?

Accreditation applies to all camp programs and services offered under the same camp name throughout the year, except for single-day or single-night events. By signing the annual [Statement of Compliance](#) and maintaining your accreditation fees, your status will not change.

If we do operate, what if we can't meet the standards due to complications related to COVID-19?

The foundation of the American Camp Association program is health, safety, and risk management. We encourage accredited camps to carefully evaluate their ability to maintain continued compliance with the standards. There are no adjustments or changes to any of the v.2019 or v.2012 standards at this time.

We have staff who have not completed a criminal background check for this summer and are experiencing delays in the processing. Is ACA making exceptions for this standard?

AD.25, AD.26, and AD.27 are all mandatory standards that camps must meet to maintain accreditation. There are no exceptions or adjustments to these standards.

If we do operate this summer, does ACA have any recommendations or guidance around additional health screening or procedures?

ACA has [COVID-19 Resources](#) to help camps with the information they are seeking to support their plans to operate. The Health and Wellness section of the COVID-19 resources web page includes information on communicable disease management in a camp setting and guidance from the CDC. Also, ACA encourages camps to connect with their local health authorities and insurance provider.

We are experiencing challenges in meeting some of the health and wellness standards (health exams for participants, health procedures review, etc.) due to the taxed healthcare system and resources at this time. Can we change our policies to meet what is available to us?

The foundation of the ACA accreditation program is health, safety, and risk management. We encourage accredited camps to carefully evaluate their ability to maintain continued compliance with the standards. Changing and adjusting policies should be evaluated and reviewed by the appropriate experts, including insurance providers, legal counsel, and licensed healthcare professionals.

We are having trouble certifying our staff for this summer. What can we do?

ACA continues to monitor the evolving challenges related to certifications. You can find a summary of [current information and resources](#) on ACA's website. Requirements outlined in standards will not be adjusted or changed. We encourage you to reach out to your local regulators, certifying entities, and insurance company to determine the best solutions.

We are unable to get an inspection for our ropes course. Can we still open it?

Requirements outlined in standards will not be adjusted or changed. We encourage you to reach out to your local regulators, certifying entities, and insurance company to determine the best solutions.

Will ACA accept certifications that are done completely online?

It is the responsibility of the camp to confirm the provider meets the needs of and is appropriate for their program, meets the requirements of their insurance provider, and aligns with what is required by their state's regulations.

If we do not operate, I may have extra time to plan ahead. Is there anything I/we can do now, even if my camp's visit is beyond 2021?

If you are currently accredited, with your next expected visit date set for 2021 and beyond, you can begin to plan ahead using the digital copy of the Accreditation Process Guide v.2019 in the members-only [Accreditation Portal](#). You can also use the [v.2019 to v.2012 Standards Comparison Chart .xlsx](#) to help you prepare. The primary contact and standards contact for each camp have access to this. Please be sure this information in your camp's record is up to date. If you need to update contacts or add access for someone, please contact your local membership staff.

NOT CURRENTLY ACCREDITED, SEEKING ACCREDITATION FOR THE FIRST TIME

We are seeking accreditation for the first time this summer. Without an opportunity to go through a visit, will we have to pay again next year?

We look forward to continuing to serve you during the upcoming year. The services and benefits provided to camps and individuals are available to you throughout the year and are not only for your accreditation visit. If you need assistance with this matter, please contact your local [membership staff](#) to discuss possible options.

We are planning to operate this summer. Can we choose to have a visit and not an extension?

No. ACA has decided to implement this extension for all accredited camps and those seeking accreditation. We will not be conducting any on-site visits for the remainder of this accreditation year (ending October 31, 2020).

What can we tell our parents and the public about our accreditation status?

ACA Accreditation serves as an assurance to families that a camp cares enough to submit to a transparent, thorough review of its entire operation. All currently accredited camps can continue to share the value of their accreditation and the accreditation logo.

VISITORS

Can I still work with my assigned camp to review their documents?

Yes! We encourage you to continue the relationship with your assigned camp to provide feedback and education. This is greatly appreciated. Please note that this work is educational and will not eliminate their requirement to complete a Written Documentation Review (WDR) in their next visit year. Take a [closer look at using the Accreditation Portal](#) and options for reviewing written documentation.

The camp I was assigned to visit is asking for me to review their documents still, is it worth it?

Yes! You can review a camp's documents to provide feedback and help them continue their preparation process. Please note that this work is educational and will not eliminate their requirement to complete a Written Documentation Review (WDR) in their next visit year. If this request is made, and you or a member of your visit team are not available for this, please contact the local standards staff member so the camp may be connected with a mentor during this time.

I'm a new associate visitor. If I don't complete a visit this year, will I have to do any of my training again next year?

No. New training will not be required. We do hope to provide refreshers and gatherings for all visitors in the coming year. Check the [Upcoming Events Calendar](#) in the late summer for more details.

I'm a new associate visitor. Is there anything I can do to practice my new skills this summer?

There really is no substitute for going on an actual on-site visit. However your visitor team may be willing to serve as a mentor to you if you have any questions about the process or would like to learn more from them. The power of connection during this time is invaluable.

I would like to be a mentor to camps since I am no longer visiting. How can I help?

Thank you! Please reach out to your local standards staff member to work on connecting with a camp that would benefit and appreciate these efforts tremendously.

Will I still be assigned to the same camp visit next year?

It's possible, however, it's not a guarantee. We understand that circumstances change year to year. There will be a process to determine your availability for visits next year. We will do our best to honor the requests made by both camps and visitors in the next visit season.

This is my second year of not doing a visit. Will my visitor status be affected?

At this time, your visitor status will not be changed based on this extended visit season. Remember, to maintain your visitor status, you must keep your membership up to date and meet all training requirements.

Are there going to be any new training requirements for next year?

No. However, there will be some new opportunities for professional development and refreshers on accreditation for camps and visitors. Check the [Upcoming Events Calendar](#) in the late summer for more details.

I'm unable to renew my individual membership at this time. Can I get an extension?

Your service as a volunteer is invaluable, and ACA is here for you. Please contact your local membership staff to work with you on available options.

MEMBERSHIP, RENEWALS, SERVICES, BENEFITS

Our renewal is past due. Can we request an extension?

You are an important part of our community, and ACA is here for you. In response to the challenges camps are facing, we want you to know we will work with you.

- *If you are able to pay your renewal fees now, we ask that you do so, as ACA will continue to serve camps across the country during this unprecedented time.*
- *If you are unable to pay your renewal fee at the rate on time, please reach out to your local membership staff.*

Where can we find information to help us make the decisions related to operating during the time of COVID-19?

ACA is maintaining and updating daily a [COVID-19 Resource](#) page. ACA members can also connect with each other via [ACA Connect](#) and [local office/regional facebook groups](#).

I need a copy of my camp's ACA accreditation certificate. How can we get that?

You can find a copy of your [Certificate of Accreditation](#) in the Accreditation Portal. This is current for the 2020 year (November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020). Updated annual certificates will be available after November 1, 2020. Note: Membership must be current, and you must either be the primary or standards contact for your camp to access this certificate. If you need further assistance, please contact your local membership staff.

I'm working from home, and I forgot my Accreditation Process Guide in my office. Can I get a digital copy?

Yes. You can log in to the Accreditation Portal and print a copy.

- [Digital access to the Accreditation Process Guide v.2019](#)
- [Digital access to the Accreditation Process Guide v.2012](#)

Note: Your camps fees must be current, and you must be the primary contact or standards contact for your camp to access the digital APGs. If you need further assistance, please contact your local membership staff.

My ACA account is connected to my work phone and email, and I've had a change in employment status. How can I update my account record?

Updating your account will ensure that you continue to receive direct communication, newsletters, and other crucial information from ACA. You can update your information in the [Members Portal](#). For further assistance, please contact your local membership staff.