



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

April 17, 2020

Directive for Camps, Including Day and Overnight, and Faith-based Organizations

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109--110. Based on available scientific evidence, it is necessary and appropriate to take further action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in Arkansas remain safe.

As warmer weather approaches, summer camp operators and their potential camper families are wondering how the COVID-19 public health emergency will affect summer plans. Arkansas is currently operating under a [directive prohibiting mass gatherings](#) (more than 10 people) and [further business and lodging limitations](#). All day camps, overnight camps, and camps supported by faith-based organizations must abide by social distancing protocols implemented by these directives.

Typical camp activities do not allow for appropriate social distancing under the directives, so all summer camps, including pre-camp counselor preparations, cannot operate as usual this year. Some summer camps also typically draw counselors and campers from other states and countries. This must be restricted, as travel is associated with spreading the virus. Camp operators are encouraged to find appropriate alternative methods of offering camp activities.

Can camps be scheduled for later in the summer?

Offering summer camps takes significant planning and scheduling for both summer camp operators and campers' families. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is unpredictable, and a reliable estimate for when the emergency will end is not available. It is likely that community spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur for some time, even after we reach the peak of infections in our state. A return to normal activities may not occur until late summer or beyond. Continued community spread will require continued restrictions on mass gatherings.

This directive will be re-evaluated on May 31, 2020.

Can camps schedule day camp activities offered completely outdoors?

This directive includes canceling/not scheduling day camp activities, even those that take place entirely outdoors. Camps with more than 10 people, including counselors, would violate the directive against mass gatherings, and campers' ability to maintain appropriate social distancing of at least six feet at all times would be impossible for camp operators to ensure.