

IMPORTANT BULLETIN

THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES CHILD PROTECTION LAWS

RULES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Why Is It Important?

The Texas Department of State Health Services, which is the licensing agent for public camps requires a specified criteria for camp workers and adult sponsors. This law requires any adult who has contact with children at camp to be screened for criminal and sex offender records.

In addition, the adults are also required to take a one hour training course and pass a test regarding child protection and reducing the risk of child abuse and molestation. This law applies to all state licensed youth camps, and is meant for the safety and protection of the children. The required "state approved" one hour training course informs all adults of the effects of child abuse, the methods of operation of child molesters, the signs and symptoms of abuse to watch for and the proper method of reporting abuse. The course also focuses on ways for adults to guard against any situation that could put themselves at risk for accusation.

Statistics show that many child molesters are known and trusted by their victims. Many molesters seek out situations and atmospheres where they are trusted and accepted by those around them, such as the local church. They could even disguise themselves as the ideal children or youth worker in churches or other similar organizations. We do not want to give the impression that camp is automatically suspecting or accusing any of our staff or sponsors at camp of this type of behavior. However, we must be aware of how molesters work and do everything within our power to protect the children that God has entrusted to us.

The best way to deter abuse from happening at our camps is to develop an environment that puts the offender, rather than the child, at risk. An adequate screening process, proper supervision and accountability will discourage this type of offender.

Highland Lakes Camp will gladly comply with these state regulations in order to serve the children of our area. We have a responsibility not only to the children, but to the parents and churches we serve to provide a safe and secure environment to learn about God's eternal love.

DISQUALIFICATION CONVICTIONS

Any person with the following types of criminal convictions or deferred adjudications cannot be accepted at camp as a volunteer adult sponsor: a misdemeanor or felony under Texas Penal Code, Title 5 (Offenses Against the Person), Title 6 (Offenses Against the Family), Chapter 29 (Robbery) of Title 7, Chapter 43 (Public Indecency) or 42.072 (Stalking) of Title 9, 15.031 (Criminal Solicitation of a Minor) of Title 4, 38.17 (Failure to Stop or Report Aggravated Sexual Assault of Child) of Title 8, or any like offense under the law of another state or under federal law.

REQUIREMENTS

According to Texas State Law, all adult counselors / sponsors that have any direct contact with underage individuals at a Camp must have:

1. A current (within 365 days of camp start date) criminal and sex offender background check performed prior to contact with underage campers.
2. Attend and participate in a one hour child abuse and sexual abuse prevention and recognition class; as well as pass a written exam prior to contact with underage campers.
3. Proof of criminal and sex offender background checks, along with proof of satisfactory completion of prevention / recognition class, must be secured in the camp office for the duration of the event and become permanent record on file.
4. Upon successful completion of the Child Protection test, the test administrator (church) must keep the original Certificate of Completion on file for two (2) years and supply the camp a photocopy of the certificate.

Child abuse and Sexual abuse, real or alleged, must be reported to proper authorities.

HOW YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH THESE REQUIREMENTS:

The Criminal and Sex Offender background checks may be completed by registering online at <https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/>

1. A criminal background check may be performed online at www.records.txdps.state.tx.us/ for a nominal charge. It is the sponsoring churches responsibility to perform these checks and submit proof of proper documentation with camp registration.
2. A sex offender background check may be performed online at <https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/> for no charge. It is the sponsoring churches responsibility to perform these checks and submit proof of proper documentation with camp registration.
3. Upon request, Highland Lakes Camp can provide a DVD containing the state approved Child Protection Training session and written test material—Price \$10. Call 888-222-3482 to order.
4. The following documents must be submitted with each Camp Adult Registration (Medical/Liability Release form): (1) Criminal background check, (2) Sex offender background check, and (3) A photocopy of the certificate Issued by test administrator upon successful completion of the Child Abuse and Sexual Abuse Prevention/Recognition Class .

The training requirements and other information can be found on the
Department of State Health Services web site at
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/youthcamp/statutes.shtm>

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR ADULT VOLUNTEER SPONSORS

Church: _____ Phone: (____) _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

The following adult (s) will serve as sponsors for the above stated church group. We will be at Highland Lakes Camp over the dates of _____ through _____ attending _____ camp.

		STATE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION		
NAME OF ADULT VOLUNTEER SPONSOR	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX OFFENDER BACKGROUND CHECK W/DATE	CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK W/DATE	CURRENT TRAINING CERTIFICATION PROVIDED TO CAMP
1. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. _____	_/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/> _/_/____	<input type="checkbox"/>

ATTESTATION by the pastor, minister and/or church leader.

The above named individuals are known to me/us, and I/we can attest to the character, integrity and ability of each to serve as a sponsor. I/we know of no reason why any should not serve as a sponsor for children and youth under the age of (18) eighteen. I/we also attest to the fact (and provide mandatory documentation) that each of these sponsors has undergone a current background check as mandated by the State of Texas and has successfully completed the required Child Protection Training. I/we recommend them to you as persons who will represent our church or organization in the supervision of our young people.

Pastor Signature	Name Printed	Date
Church Representative / Position	Name Printed	Date

Refer to the enclosed Bulletin regarding the Texas Department of State Health Services CHILD PROTECTION LAWS and mandatory requirements for Camp Adult Sponsors. Proper documentation must be submitted with HLC Registration Medical/Liability Release form. Individual groups will be held financially responsible for any Health Act violation fee assessed ranging from \$500-\$1,000. per violation/per day.