

# Risk Alert

APRIL 2023



## Camp Risk Management

*Camps and excursions are important and enjoyable for many communities and faith-based organisations. They provide an opportunity to engage in new experiences, explore, extend and enrich learning and social development. But they also have risks.*

Planning a camp or an excursion can be complex and needs to be carefully thought out, clearly communicated to staff and volunteers, participants (and parents or guardians), and often booked and paid for in advance.

Many camps include risk activities in their programs, such as sports, adventure programs such as High Ropes or Flying Foxes and Water based activities, e.g. surfing or swimming. The activities can help young people learn valuable life lessons. It is impossible to completely eliminate risk on a camp or excursion.

## DUTY OF CARE

Your organisation has a duty of care to attendees, staff and volunteers when they are on a camp or excursion that you have organised.

Duty of care means you have a responsibility to maintain the health, safety and well-being of others, and can include such issues as providing safe working conditions and offering constructive feedback.

While all parties involved in camps or excursions owe a duty of care to participants, an organisation cannot delegate responsibility to the camp operator or camps you are visiting. Your organisation's duty of care is non-delegable. Thus understanding the risks and having in place systems and processes to manage these risks is important.

As the organiser, your duty of care is to **ensure that reasonable care is taken of those attending**. This involves putting attendees and their safety first, intervening promptly in potentially dangerous situations, informing the camp management of any incidents and assisting in any incident or safety issue immediately.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR CAMP

Preparation is the key to organising your camp and ensuring participants, staff and volunteers have a great experience.

There is a lot of pre-planning that goes into organising a camp, so start as early as you can. We've outlined a proposed time frame to help you with your planning preparation.



**3-6 Months**  
Before Camp

### Do your research on the camp.

- Identify staff-participant ratio e.g. Victorian Department of Education recommends 1:10 staff student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff.
- Identify any outcomes you want from the camp for the participants. Not just when and how, but why are you doing it?
- Work with the camp staff to develop and tailor the itinerary and program.
- Review the camp program to ensure it aligns with these outcomes.
- Visit the camp and undertake a risk assessment, accommodation layout, catering information, and emergency management information.
- Review the camp's policies including safeguarding programs.
- Start identifying roles, skills and experience for staff and volunteers.
- Obtain a copy of the camp's insurance Certificate of Currency.



**2 Months**  
Before Camp

### **Confirm leadership team**

- If you are using volunteers, advertise, interview and engage them.

### **Begin to advertise and distribute camp information to participants and parents or guardians.**

- Camp Dates
- Venue including Accommodation Site
- Activities
- Cost, what it includes & method of payment
- Safeguarding policy and procedures.

### **Undertake Risk Assessments**

- Undertake risk assessments on all activities to be done at the camp. Some camps will have activity risk assessment already done. (CYC Camps <https://theisland.cyc.org.au/risk-management-plans/>)
- Review camps policies and procedures, including incident management and safeguarding



**4 Weeks**  
Before Camp

### **Have a leader's meeting that provides a clear understanding of the following:**

- The skills of supervisory team members, including roles and responsibilities
- The camp program and goals
- Outline incident management processes, medical control, emergency management and safeguarding procedures
- Emergency and contingency plan's
- Individual support and communication needs (where appropriate).

### **Confirm specialised leaders are identified and trained:**

- Safeguarding
- Incident management
- First aid
- Medical (recording and managing any medical, support and commination needs for participants, staff and volunteers).



1-2 Weeks  
Before Camp

### Hold a camp leaders training program that goes through

- Roles, responsibilities, incident and emergency management procedures and safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Emergency and contingency plans.
- Confirm transport and departure times.
- Camp arrival times.
- Camp forms and money collected.
- All participant's individual support needs (where appropriate), and have skills to effectively communicate with them using established systems.
- List of names and emergency contact numbers to all staff members not at the camp.
- Discuss all children and young person's individual support and communication needs (including allergies, illness, disability, or other medical conditions and medicines for participants).
- The environment where the camp or excursion will take place and be skilled at traversing such environments.
- Any hazards and risk controls, including those associated with reasonably foreseeable weather conditions e.g. floods or storms.
- All safe work practices on the site and safe operating procedures that may be applicable

Make sure all leaders and volunteers have signed the organisations code of conduct.



# MANAGING THE RISKS

Community and faith-based organisations should assess risks for all camps or excursions and identify measures to reduce reasonably foreseeable risks. The type and level of risk, and possible consequences, will differ depending on the location, activity and cohort of students.

A good practice is to undertake a risk assessment for all adventure activities or excursions that you have planned for during the camp. This will help you identify any risks and provide you with the controls to manage those risks.

## Risk Assessment:

It is helpful to understand that you have a duty of care to the people on your camp.

After you have booked your camp, you should conduct a risk assessment for the camp and the activities. This will help you plan strategies on how to manage any potential risks. For example, if you have young adults and children attending the camp, what extra precautions and management strategies need to be implemented (e.g., supervision ratios).

Some camps may have risk assessments or plans for activities they hold on-site. However, any offsite activities should have risk assessments (e.g., surf lessons at a local beach).

## Download the Ansvar Risk Assessment template

## Emergency Management Plans

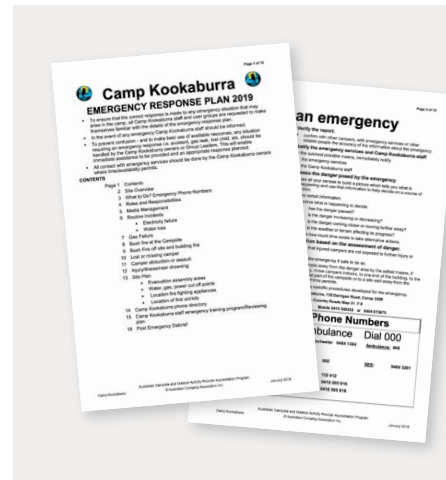
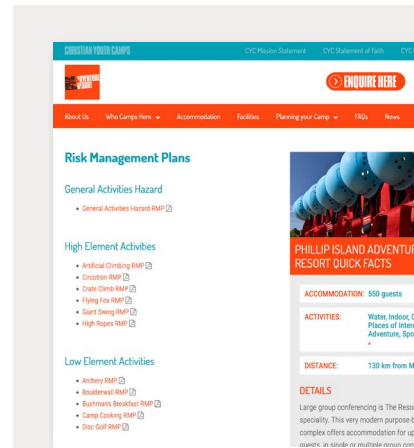
To ensure that the correct response is made to any emergency situation that may arise in the camp, both your organisation and the camp need to have in place an Emergency Management Plan.

An Emergency Management Plan aim is to outline the policies, procedures and resources that will be used to address emergencies involving an accident, injury, illness, property damage, and even the death of a participant. It would also identify responses to changing weather conditions.

All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the details of the Emergency Management Plan for your organisation and the camp.

What does the camp require of you to comply with their risk management policies?

- Make sure you understand what insurance you and the camp have and what you are covered for.
- How is first aid accessed at the camp?
- Have an understanding of local medical services (e.g. ambulance and hospitals) are located and a management plan (including incident recording) if someone sustains an injury or illness.



## Policy and Planning

If you organise camps and excursions, you should have policies and procedures that set out requirements to plan for and safely undertake camps and excursions. The policies and procedures should include (but not limited to):

- Camp policy
- Engagement of volunteers
- Code of conduct for Staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for those attending
- Safeguarding or child safe policy
- Incident management
- Risk management
- Emergency Planning

## Safeguarding

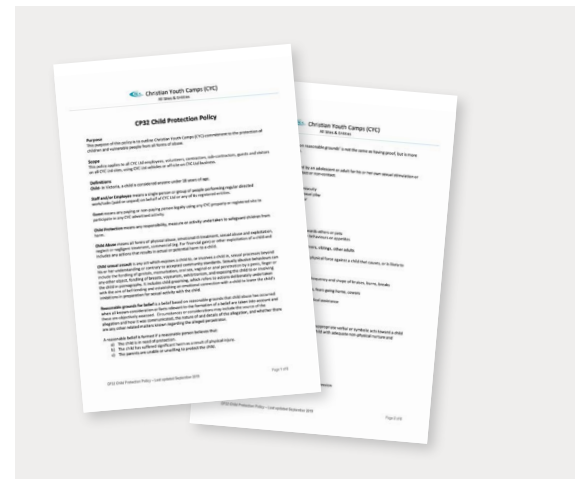
Safeguarding refers to the responsibilities, measures and activities undertaken to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse.

Abuse towards a child or adult should not be tolerated. The welfare and best interests of children and vulnerable adults who attend a camp must be paramount. When organising a camp, you should seek to ensure that all those who hold a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults are aware of their responsibilities to respond to safety concerns that arise.

Prior to your camp you should ensure both your organisation and the camp have safeguarding policies and procedures that have been embedded into the way your organisations protects children and vulnerable people. You should ensure that your leaders and staff are trained in the safeguarding procedures, including signs of abuse or grooming and the incident management process they are to follow.

You should also obtain a copy of the camp safeguarding policy and procedures and make sure the staff and volunteers are trained in their safeguarding program.

Provide safeguarding policy and procedures to parents or guardians.



## Leaders and volunteers

Engaging Leaders and volunteers that have the right skills for your camp important. All leaders and volunteers must be committed to the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults.

To support their contribution, these are some things to keep in mind when engaging volunteers.

- Think about the role your leaders will play, and develop a position description to clarify their role.
- Undertake background checks of all volunteers, such as providing proof of identity or personal references. In some cases, police checks may be a good idea. Working with children or vulnerable persons' checks are required by law if volunteers work with people such as children, people living with a disability or older people.
- Ensure all leaders and volunteers have read and signed your Code of Conduct.
- Support new volunteers with a good induction. Look at what training they need before they go on the camp so they can understand the role and requirements. This training should include safeguarding when working with children, people living with a disability or older people.
- Ensure your insurance policy covers volunteers. They may not be covered by worker's compensation, so ensure you reduce any risks related to the particular activities they do and ensure you have volunteer protection insurance.

## Incident management

You need to have an effective incident management system in place when preparing for a camp or excursion. It provides the leaders with the ability to, in addition to the obligation to manage and prevent incidents, hazards, injuries or near misses it, establishes processes for the period immediately following an incident and for the investigation and management of the process.

Because no information must be left out, it's crucial to start writing the report as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the more difficult it can be to accurately document the details of the incident. It's best to do the write-up when the everyone's memory of the incident is still fresh.

**[Download Ansvar's Incident Report that you can use.](#)**

## Insurances

Do you have insurance for camps and excursions?

Does your insurance cover Physical and Sexual Abuse coverage or General liability insurance should something happen while you are at the camp? Have you spoken to the camp about their insurance?

Do they have the insurance to protect you or do they require you to indemnify the camp should something go wrong?

You should speak with your broker to make sure you have the right insurance in place for your camp.

## Practical steps to help you prepare for your camp

To help you prepare for your camp, our checklists help you identify the key elements you need to consider in order to effectively manage risks on a camp and provide. Our Camp tool kit also provides you with a number of checklists and tools to help you identify any gaps in your camp planning.

## Resources

### Victorian Blue Light Youth Camp – Risk Analysis

<http://www.bluelightcamp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Camp-Risk-Analysis-Register.pdf>

### Thomas Coburn LLP - Summer camps on campus: A risk management checklist for postsecondary professionals

<https://www.thompsoncoburn.com/insights/blogs/regucation/post/2021-11-29/summer-camps-on-campus-a-risk-management-checklist-for-postsecondary-professionals>

### Baptist Camping Victoria – Camps for Church Groups

<https://baptistcamping.com.au/bring-a-group/church-group/>

### Australian Charities and not for Profits Commission – Engaging Volunteers

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/factsheets/engaging-volunteers>

### Camp Kookaburra

<http://campkookaburra.com.au/>

### Phillip Island Christian Youth Camps – Risk Management Plans

<https://piar.cyc.org.au/rmp/>

### Phillip Island Christian Youth Camps – Resources

<https://piar.cyc.org.au/planning-resources/>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Risk Solutions team are here to provide a range of consultancy services to assist clients to review and enhance their systems, processes and practices and the time to act is now.

**For further advice, email us at [info@ansvarrisk.com.au](mailto:info@ansvarrisk.com.au)**



### David Pearce - ERM Product

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As Ansvr Risks' ERM Product Development Consultant, David works to support Ansvr's clients to help management and executives build governance and risk management capability and develop effective approaches that supports decision making, advance performance and optimise objectives.

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