

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.

FLS 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.

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. Both criminal and sex offender background checks may be performed online for a nominal charge at: <https://records.txdps.state.tx.us>. It is the sponsoring churches responsibility to perform these checks and submit proof of proper documentation with camp registration.
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. Upon request, FLS 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.
3. 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.
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 copy of the certificate Issued by test administrator upon successful completion of the Child Abuse and Sexual Abuse Prevention/Recognition Class, (4) A church letter of recommendation signed by the senior pastor. Child abuse and Sexual abuse, real or alleged, must be reported to proper authorities.

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.

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