



Dear Children's Camp Operator:

Camp season 2026 is upon us! Along with the communication sent by the NYSDOH Environmental Health District Office, I am reaching out regarding topics this Local Health Department is most likely to work with you on over this summer. Our staff is joining Field Staff for pre-operation visits and are available for educational sessions with your counselors upon request, allowing us to cover these topics and forms in more depth with more people.

ILL CAMPERS

As camps welcome campers from across the state, the US and the world, please remember that NYS Sanitary Code requires camps to maintain immunization records for all campers and should also maintain complete immunization records for all camp staff. This facilitates a quick public health response in any instances of suspected or confirmed vaccine-preventable diseases. NYSDOH issued a letter discussing the camp setting and spread of certain vaccine-preventable diseases in the enclosed letter. They recommend awareness of camper, counselor & staff vaccine history following the American Academy of Pediatric vaccine schedule so should someone become ill while at camp, certain diseases may be ruled out or quickly addressed through public health interventions.

[NYSDOH Vaccine-Preventable Disease Camp Letter](#)
[American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Schedule](#)

Individual cases of communicable diseases included on the DOH-389 (below) are reportable. Clusters/outbreaks of any communicable disease are reportable, even if not listed on the DOH-389. Examples include conjunctivitis, coxsackie virus, scabies, strep throat, etc.

If you suspect any acute illness, please institute your isolation protocol. Notify us immediately (within 24 hours) if you have sick camp-community members. Guidance and forms you are likely to use include:

[Communicable Disease Reporting Requirements \(DOH-389\)](#)
[Outbreak Procedures at Camps](#)
[Outbreak Report to DOH](#)
[Outbreak Line List – Send an updated outbreak line list daily if/when an active outbreak occurs](#)

We will collaborate with you on each unique situation to determine if a person-to-person, water or food-borne illness is cause for the illness. Because we know it can be difficult to get campers to healthcare for testing we are increasing our efforts to support your smooth operation. We will:

- * provide specimen collection kits;
- * submit specimens for testing;
- * provide templates to notify parents and/or camp families;
- * work with camp health and administrative leaders on mitigation strategies.



MEASLES

NYSDOH continues to emphasize awareness of Measles for camps in 2026.

The following attachments and link below provide more information.

[Measles Reference Guide for Camp Operators](#)

[Measles Fact Sheet](#)

[Measles Recognizing Measles](#)

[Measles Prevent the Spread of Measles in Summer Camps](#)

More information about measles for camp health and administrative leaders is available here:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/measles/>

It is recommended that all children receive 2 doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine.

Knowing staff and camper vaccination status can help if illness occurs at camp.

PREVENTING RABIES EXPOSURES

As always, it is important to avoid encounters with wildlife, though sometimes this is not always possible.

In 2026 to date, 1 raccoon, 1 skunk and 1 fox have tested positive for rabies. You probably know - most potential exposures to rabies at camps are due to bats. Bats love to nest in cabins and buildings at camps - just like our summer campers! Please safely capture bats at your camp. We will work with you to submit for testing and rule-out rabies.

Ruling out rabies in the bat eliminates the need for costly, time-consuming, and unpleasant post-exposure treatment.

The guidance and forms you may use for bat scenarios & exposure reporting include:

[Batproofing in Children's Camps](#)

[Guidelines for Management of Bat-Related Incidents at Camps](#)

[Bat Capture Kit for Children's camps](#)

[Potential Rabies Exposure Report](#)



PREVENTING TICK BITES

Diseases caused through tick bites, including Lyme, Babesiosis and Anaplasmosis, continue to rise in Essex County.

The greatest risk of tick bites is in the Champlain Valley. Applying bug spray and other repellants and encouraging campers and staff to perform daily tick checks (and removal) is paramount for preventing tick-borne diseases.

The attached posters are handy to post around camp:

[Tick Check Ten Count](#)

[Tick Check Ten Count Teens](#)

LICE AT CAMP

From one of our nurses: "When I was a child, I attended summer camp five years in a row. Every year the Nurse checked my head for lice. All of us kids knew this was part of the check-in process and had to be done.

There was always a twinge of, "Oh my God, what if I have lice?" Thank goodness, I never did, at least on check-in.

Throughout my summers at camp however, I did get lice. The whole chemical treatment and combing out of the nits, was needless to say, "a pain". Little did I know though, the experience prepared me for when I became a parent and my child got head lice. She was traumatized by the whole experience.

Now that she is older, we frequently remind each other of how to prevent getting lice in the first place. No matter how hard we try, those little critters just show up.

[Lice Tips for Camps](#)

EPI-PENS

Our Department often fields calls about Epi-pen protocols. Please find the helpful policy guidance from the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and as available from the NYSDOH Children's Camps Operators website.

[Epinephrine Auto-Injector Guidance](#)



HARMFUL ALGAE BLOOMS (BLUE-GREEN ALGAE)

Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) might arise with increases in temperatures and most especially where water is still or flows slowly. Avoid wading, swimming, fishing or boating in water with blooms. Water with HABs may contain bacteria, parasites, or viruses that may cause illness if consumed. Learn more and kindly report HABs: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/bluegreenalgae/>

[BlueGreenAlgae Brochure](#)

HEAT RISK DASHBOARD

As we all enjoy the summer warmth, stay in tune with heat risk by checking the dashboard on those really hot days. The link below provides a dashboard with risk injuries on a scale of 0-5, who is at risk & what to do.

Heat injuries can be more of a problem for those most vulnerable such as the very young or old, individual's with poor general health and people lacking access to cooling relief/airconditioning during extended periods of heat.

https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/environmental/heat_dashboard/

NYSDOH CHILDREN'S CAMPS WEBSITE

NYSDOH has a page dedicated to you – Children's Camps Directors, Administrators and Infirmary staff.

<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/camps>

Regulations, Required Certifications, Safety Plan Templates, Fact Sheets, Forms and more!

Contact our Department

Health@EssexCountyNY.gov or 518-873-3500

(24/7) for more materials and/or inquiries.

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This letter and all forms available on our [WEBSITE](#)

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