

Camper Release Plan Overview

Legal Reference:

R 400.11117 Roster of campers; records

(3) A camp shall develop and follow a written plan to assure that a camper is not released into the custody of another person without a written statement of permission from the authorized person. The plan shall include all of the following information:

- (a) When the camper is to be released.
- (b) Where the camper release is to occur.
- (c) How the release will occur.
- (d) To whom the camper is to be released

Technical Assistance:

Campers are *checked in* to the care of the camp and *checked out* of the care of the camp at designated dates and times. The process of releasing campers must be orderly, safe, and clearly understood by all parties to ensure that campers are released to their guardian or designated authorized person.

R 400.11117(3) rule requires both a written plan from the camp operator and a written statement (document/forms) completed by legal guardian. The written plan must include the items identified below:

a) *When the camper is to be released:*

Campers are registered for specific dates and times of care. The registration materials, including camper registration form, must clearly indicate when camp begins and when camp ends. The camper release plan must describe when camp will end. At times, situations arise where either the camp or authorized person need to modify the release terms of a camper. These situations may include family emergencies, scheduled or unscheduled circumstances by the authorized person, camp or incidents or health issues resulting in a camper needing to leave camp. Camps must consider the possible situations of an “early”, “regular”, and “late” release process within their written plan.

b) *Where the camper release occurs:*

The plan must describe the location of each release. Where does a guardian go and what should they expect to experience to “check out” their camper during an “early”, “regular”, or “late” release? The plan must specify the location the camper will be released.

c) *How will the release occur (Camper release process)*

The process to release the camper includes how the guardian notifies the camp of a request for early or late release, who is responsible to handle the request, how is verification conducted of the guardian or campers designated authorized person for check-out, what personal items including medications must be gathered and what are staff documentation responsibilities to ensure the check-out was completed compliant with the plan. The process for regular release may be different than the early and late release process.

d) *To whom the camper is to be released:*

The plan must include instruction formulating whom the camper can be released too. A camper must be released to their guardian or, if in writing, a guardian designated authorized person. The plan must incorporate the camp registration form and guardian's designation of whom the camper may be released too. The plan must incorporate procedures for staff to follow if an unauthorized person attempts to check-out a camper from camp.

Note: To find examples of the forms/documents used for camper release see the Camper Registration Form example. For a sample camper release authorization plan see below.

Consultation:

Camp operator's check-out process depends on many factors including the camp type, staffing, program design, facilities, and camper population. For example, a day camp conducts check-in and check-out processes every day whereas a residential camp has a check-in at the beginning of a session and several days later a check-out process.

Camps could use a centralized check-out process for an early or late release camper by having the guardian or designated authorized person contact a specific camp staff person identified on the registration materials. It may be that staff person, or another designated staff person supervises the check-out process.

In addition, camps could use a decentralized check-out process under regular release due to the number of campers released at one time. This process may include guardian or designated authorized persons check-out their camper from the cabin leader/counselor.

Regardless of the process, the camp is responsible to have a written release plan to ensure the camper is released to the guardian or designated authorized person safely.

It is not advised to have a plan allowing for a camper to check-in or out of camp on their own as it does not ensure a clear transfer of responsibility between the guardian or designated authorized representative and camp staff. Camps should review their responsibility under Child Protection Act 238 of 1975 when faced with request such as these by guardians or designated authorized persons and consider their responsibilities as mandatory reporters of neglect under the act.

Samples:

Camper Release Process – Camp Wildcat

When may a Camper be released to an Authorized Person?

A camper may be released to an authorized person at any time during the camp day. The general camper release window is from 4-6pm. If parents/caregivers will be picking up children outside of the normal window, Camp Wildcat would request that parents/caregivers give advanced notice to assist camp staff in coordination of the release of your child. If there are circumstances that require an early release or a later release than the designated times for regular release, the authorized person must call the camp and coordinate the details of the release.

Where are Campers released from Camp Wildcat to the Authorized Person?

Authorized persons can check-out their campers with the cabin counselor at the designated cabin area at the regular release time from 4-6pm. If the authorized person will be picking up their camper outside of the normal release window, a different release location will be coordinated based on where camp activities are taking place. Please be sure to alert the camp staff ahead of time to ensure that all of the campers belongings, as well as the proper paperwork is available for the campers release.

What is the process when I arrive to pick up my child from Camp Wildcat?

To coordinate a orderly check-out process, all authorized persons or designee's must be prepared to go to the designated area for releasing the campers. At regular release times, this location is at the assigned cabin area. Authorized person will need to show an ID and sign out the camper. If there is an early release request or late release request, the authorized person must contact the camp director to discuss the release plan. If it is an unscheduled release time, the authorized person must report to the camp office upon arriving at camp where all release inquiries are handled by the camp director or designee.

To whom may the camper be released to?

For the safety of your child, s/he may only be released to someone who has been identified as an authorized person by the parent/caregiver of the child against the list established at registration, and confirmed on the first day of camp.

Only the authorized person or designee may take the camper. Camp staff will request ID from anyone picking up a child from camp to ensure they are on the list of people authorized to pick up the camper. If it is **someone different** completing check-out for a child, inquire as to who they are, verify (i.e. phone call, written note) that the parent/guardian authorized this person to pick up their child, and have them sign the check-out line for the corresponding child/date. **Ask child before leaving if they know the person “Johnny who is this new friend picking you up?”**

The authorized person will be contacted if someone comes to pick up a camper and is not on the list of approved persons; if no ID is shown by the person; or if there is no one to pick up the camper at the end of the session. Documentation will be put in the camp health log of the parental contact.