

Preparing for a Standards Visit

Information for *FIRST-TIME VISITORS*

The goals of the standards visit are to provide an opportunity for camp directors along with visitors to assess their camps, to discuss common concerns, and to share ideas enabling us to continue to improve the quality of our camps for our campers.

We appreciate that you have made the commitment to join a seasoned visitor this summer to learn this important role. Being a standards visitor is not a difficult task; rather it is a very important and rewarding one. The program could not function without you. Camping experience is an asset but not essential for a good visit. A camping colleague who is interested, committed, empathetic and eager to learn from a peer makes the ideal visitor.

Prior to your visit

- Confirm the details of the visit with the "senior" visitor (date, time, directions to camp). An alternate date should be set in advance in the event that the first date has to be changed. Be prepared to spend a minimum of four hours plus travel time for the visit. Don't forget to get clear driving directions!
- Read the camp's promotional information.
- Review the *Guidelines for Accreditation*. This booklet is available from your camp, from the OCA office, or at www.ontariocamps.ca

What to expect during the visit

- a complete tour of the camp property
- brief visits with campers and staff during the tour
- an invitation to an all-camp event (e.g. a meal, program or campfire)
- a conference with the director and senior visitor to review the answer sheet.
 - a. All NO and N/A answers will be discussed and the visitor or director will record the explanation.
 - b. The camp director has been advised to leave blank the answer to any question about which he/she is unsure. These questions will be discussed and the appropriate answer determined.
 - c. Participate in the discussion with relevant comments, questions or suggestions.

It is rare that a contentious issue would arise during a standards visit. However, if there is a disagreement, it is the responsibility of the senior visitor to try to resolve it. If a director has answered "yes" to a question that, from the senior visitor's observation, should be a "no", it is appropriate to ask for clarification. The director's final answer must be accepted. If the senior visitor and the director cannot come to an agreement, the senior visitor can describe the discrepancy on his summation form to be submitted to the Standards Committee for resolution. However, in a frank and open discussion, the senior visitor should inform the director what he intends to communicate to the Standards Committee.

In conclusion, the majority of Standards Visits are enjoyable, educational and beneficial for all involved. The OCA is grateful to the camping leaders who give priority in their busy summer schedule to this important task.



You can help the Standards Committee greatly by:

- helping to check that all questions have been answered
- helping to check that a logical, clear explanation has been provided for all NO and N/A answers
- Reminding the camp director to send the completed forms to the OCA immediately after the visit

Questions or Concerns? Call the OCA Office at 416-485-0425