

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual



Camp/Special Event Planning Part 7

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Camp and Events

This section covers general lesson type events. Organized competitions are covered in the chapter on surf coaching.

In 2007, an estimated more than 10 million children and youth benefited from a camp experience at the more than 12,000 camps nationwide. Within the surfing community, the availability of day or overnight surf camps for both young and old have grown at a tremendous rate throughout the world. Some surf camps cater to beginners while others cater to everyone from inexperienced to professionals.



NSSIA Surf Camp Position

The NSSIA actively promotes and supports camp safety. We endorse the continuous training and certification of all surf camp instructors and the full accreditation of surf schools sponsoring the camps. The NSSIA instructor certification process requires both Red Cross First Aid and CPR certification on an annual basis. Additionally, the NSSIA requires criminal background checks for all camp/school owners plus all senior and master level instructors. NSSIA school accreditation requires schools have emergency response plans on hand plus maintain full insurance coverage.

The NSSIA instructor certification training program provides camp owners and instructors with well-tested programs and services that advance a continuous and regular improvement process that goes well beyond fundamental protection of the individual surfer. The NSSIA also believes that states should collaborate with non-governmental national organizations, such as the American Camp Association (ACA), in order to further advance a higher level of care and wellbeing during the surf camp experience.

Camp Regulations

There currently exists no organization that can verify the safety, expertise or well being of campers who attend these camps, particularly those in remote locations outside the US. Within the US, state laws vary significantly in their oversight of camp operations. In many states, camps fall under the jurisdiction of the state health department; in others, social or human services departments provide licensing or permit rules. Today, courts of law recognize the ACA accreditation requirements as the standard of care for camps. The NSSIA has followed the ACA lead with similar camp standards to complement and strengthen the camp profession.

Medical Parental Authorizations

Surf camp parental authorizations are more detailed than traditional surf school authorizations. Below is an example. Information on meningococcal meningitis disease

is contained at the end of this module.

Parent's Authorizations

Camp Notification: I will notify Camp _____ if my son or daughter is exposed to any communicable disease during the three weeks prior to camp or has had recent injury or medical issue that the camp should know about. If your child has a chronic or acute medical condition, it is imperative that the camp be notified. If your child is being treated for asthma, please send along the nebulizer and tubing, as well as all inhalers. If your child has had an anaphylactic reaction, please send along an epipen that has not expired. It is important that the nurse is notified before camp begins. To speak to camp personal regarding confidential medical information regarding your child, please contact _____.

Medical Treatment Authorization: The health history listed on this medical form is accurate. The person herein described has permission to engage in all prescribed camp activities except as noted by me. I hereby give permission to the physician or registered nurse selected by the camp director to order X-rays, routine tests and treatment for the health of my child, and in the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp director to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection and/or anesthesia and/or surgery for my child as named above.

Community General Hospital Authorization: I/We, the undersigned, parents of the above listed minor at Camp _____ do hereby authorize Camp _____, and/or designee, as our agent(s) to consent to any diagnostic procedure or medical care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under the general supervision of, any licensed physician and surgeon when such diagnosis or treatment is rendered. It is understood that this authorization is given in advance of any specific need for treatment but is given to provide authority on the part of the aforesaid agent(s) to give specific consent to any and all such diagnoses, treatment or hospital care which the physician in the exercise of his best judgment may deem advisable. The authorization shall remain in effect unless revoked in writing to said agent(s).

Contacting Parents: It is understood that this hospital and medical treatment authorization will only be used in an emergency. Every attempt will be made to contact the parents before the authorizations are used.

Meningitis Immunization: My child has had the meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past 10 years.

Date received: _____ [Note: The vaccine's protection lasts for approximately 3 to 5 years. Revaccination may be considered within 3-5 years.]

I have read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I understand the risks.

Camp Risk Analysis

The risks resulting from unexpected, controversial or crisis situations can expose your program and employees to significant public attention with potentially damaging consequences to your business. Sometimes even well-intentioned camps or lessons raise community concerns that can prevent you from holding future events. Early identification of potential issues that can lead to negative or controversial situations provides an opportunity for you to implement plans that will facilitate avoiding a crisis. Some of the important considerations are:

- Know where the nearest hospital is
- Have a cell phone with emergency numbers handy
- Bring along a first aid medical kit
- Scout ahead of time to make sure parking is easy to find
- Use a less crowded beach area for your lesson
- Have a simple tire repair kit and jack in your vehicle
- Know where the closest restroom is
- Bring a shovel, sunscreen, tent, beach chairs, etc.

Camp Planning

Planning is crucial to ensuring that every detail is attended to before the event. Marketing information, checklists, timelines and budgets must be set up in a format that is user-friendly and easy to adapt as you progress. Ensure that checklists are specific and include every task that must be completed. Ask people who perform jobs in certain areas to make checklists that can be given to the person responsible in the future. Strategic communications planning is also essential to a school's ability to meet the internal and external communication challenges that arise on a regular basis.

Regardless of how you approach your surf camps and/or classes, it's important to spend time well in advance of the event addressing the following tasks as applicable:

- Setting goals for the camp and/or lesson.
- Researching what has worked and didn't work at other events.
- Writing a lesson plan and timeline.
- Create a backup plan in case of bad weather or giant surf
- Determining the budget for your event.
- Deciding on the site.
- Organizing food, help and entertainment.
- Planning transportation and lodging.
- Creating, printing, sending, and/or emailing marketing materials.
- Promoting, advertising and budget for each
- Supervision requirements to include overnight arrangements
- Evaluating the event after it is completed.

Although regular lessons are a little easier to plan, the first step in planning a camp is to determine a purpose for the event. Why are you holding the camp? What do you hope it will accomplish, if other than simply learning to surf? Outside of students, who would you have attend the event? Why should people come to your event instead of other events? Answering these basic questions will help you lay a foundation for your event, plus it will help you determine the logistics necessary for a successful delivery.

First set a budget. The amount of money that you have to spend on items not supplied by students will dictate the list of options offered. As well, if you don't have sufficient boards, rashguards, wetsuits, or leashes, then you may need to rent or buy additional items to accommodate all your students.

Next, develop your timeline. Set time blocks for each module, leaving time for the unforeseen problems that inevitably crop up throughout the lesson. These include someone having trouble balancing during paddling, someone getting tired or frustrated early, or someone getting bumped hard by their board.

The final activities to work on are the details for the camp itself. Set a date for the lessons. Establish the overall activity schedule. Determine who your students will be and how it is best to reach them with information about the event (direct mail, advertising, media coverage, partnerships with other organizations, newsletters, e-mails, etc.). Also, determine a last minute emergency contact in case there is a problem with the waves or weather.

Delegate some responsibilities to your other instructors or to people with expertise in certain areas. Allow them to do the outside planning to make your camp successful, but be sure they check back in with the coordinator regularly to ensure that all the plans fit together. If the camp is large, plan to have several people on hand to supervise the day and if overnight, also plan for evening activities. The lead instructor or coordinator cannot be everywhere at once, so he or she will need a team of people helping.

After Camp Review of What Happened

Once your event is over, it is easy to relax and forget about it until next lesson or camp. However, it is highly valuable to bring together all the instructors and other people involved in planning shortly after the event for a follow-up meeting. What worked? What didn't? Take detailed notes so that the next time you set out to plan this type of event or another, you can remember what to change and what not to change. Another way to improve your lessons is to ask students to complete a survey. Survey questions can include:



Most Camps Feature Beach Tents to Relax In

- What parts of the lesson or what camp sessions and instructors did you appreciate and why?
- Were the accommodations comfortable?
- What additional trainings would you like to see in the future?
- What instructors would you recommend for the future?
- What dates and locations would be best for future events?
- How did you learn about the camp or event?

Promoting and Marketing

There are many ways to promote your camps, regardless of your budget. The key to promotion is finding your audience. Who am I really trying to reach and what's the best way to contact these potential students? All of your efforts will get you nowhere if you are spending your time and energy at contests talking to competitors and not to those who might actually take a lesson or attend your camp. Ways to market your camp include:

- Social Media Marketing
- Website Marketing
- Email Marketing
- Article Marketing
- Blog and Forum Commenting

- Traditional (offline) Marketing (i.e. flyers, handouts, signs)

Traditional and social marketing represent two different approaches to the way you approach your potential customer base. Traditional marketing presents an initial one way "monologue" with customers through electronic or printed means. In social marketing there is a two-way relationship building dialogue. You approach a potential customer or resource for customers and they, in turn, agree to either accept your offer, or agree to help you attract others to accept your offer.

One social marketing approach is to develop a dialogue with a business that attracts potential students but does not directly provide surf lessons. This is probably one of the most commonly used methods of reaching potential students. A customer will ask a surf shop owner who they recommend for lessons and if you have an established relationship, they will recommend your school. This relationship must go both ways. Either provide a kick back to the shop owner for customers, or recommend that the students go to that shop to buy things they might subsequently want related to surfing.

Other social marketing activities currently evolving are Twitter and Facebook. Social networking using this approach or, of course, direct word of mouth, is the most highly effective marketing strategy. A personal face-to-face invitation can make the difference in someone's decision about whether to attend your event. Encourage those who have attended your event or camp in the past to invite new people.

Websites with key words targeted to lessons and surf camps in your region are effective. Make sure you target both adults and younger students, plus absolutely follow up your e-mail questions immediately and with paper invitations if necessary. Surf school banners or signs on vehicles and on the beach during lessons or camps are another effective marketing tool. One of the issues you may have is if there are local regulations about such marketing. You can always simply paint the name of your school on the bottom of your boards and pass out screened T-shirts or hats to students, thus letting the students themselves become the method of delivering your promotions.

Camp Logistics

Surf camps exist to provide outdoor recreational experiences that emphasize skill acquisition, SAFETY, positive group dynamics, environmental awareness and FUN! These quality experiences are usually fostered through smaller groups of 6-12 people on single to multi-day events, but can also include larger camps with many external activities besides surfing.

Overnight Activities

Some surf camps provide overnight accommodations. If your camp is one, make sure all facilities are approved and zoned for such activities. Often, schools use state or public campgrounds which allow for permitted activities. When camping outside, fun activities usually include a luau campfire, someone who plays music and usually sings, and a traditional board sacrifice. Often a Popsicle stick or small carved piece of wood is used for the board. Below is a poem that can be recited for such events.

*Powers of the sky and sea
I have a favor to ask of thee*

*Accept our sacrifice
Hear our request
Give us surf, not emptiness*

*And in the stillness of the dawn,
Our words go out and fall upon
The waiting presence of the sea*

*It understands the importance of this request
Please give us waves; we'll do the rest*

Registration and Refunds

On your registration forms, highlight the READ the REFUND deadline information. Also state that the registrant should contact you to clarify any questions they have, including any special needs that may impact their ability to participate in the lessons. Refund deadlines should specify seven days prior to any pre-camp meeting or camp start date, unless otherwise noted. If your student or camper cancels prior to the stated refund deadline, you should provide the refund (minus a small processing fee if applicable). If your student or camper cancels following the refund deadline, you should state how much, if any, refund will be given. This is important if you have expenses to pay up front prior to the camp date. You also need to make it clear that the refund policy still applies in emergency situations and for illness.

Cancellations

Make sure you reserve the right to cancel group camps or lessons due to minimal sign-up, inclement weather/surf, or scheduling conflicts if you are relying on public parks or beaches. . Specifically state that your event ***assumes no responsibility for notifying participants of trip cancellations or postponements if either no phone number or an incorrect phone number is provided by the camper or student.***

Special Camper Concerns

Transportation Issues for Camping and Schools

If your camp provides transportation to and from the beach, there are some issues you need to be aware of. In the US, legislation (Motorcoach Safety Enhancement Act of 2009) has been introduced that is designed to require changes to motorcoach bus use. These measures include seat belts, better design to prevent passengers from being thrown out of the bus in a crash, stronger bus roofs and better training for drivers.

The safety of campers and staff is the number one priority of every surf camp and school, not only in the water but also when travelling to and from the beach. It is important that camp owners understand the implications these bills might have on camp operation. While designed for the motorcoach industry, there is language that potentially will apply to surf camps including:

- Requiring a Commercial Drivers Licence (CDL) for all drivers of 9-15 passenger vans that are classified as commercial vehicles and are used in interstate commerce for compensation
- Requiring all drivers of 9-15 passenger vehicles designated as commercial vehicles to be involved in the vehicle inspection process.
- Requiring the installation of electronic incident monitors (black boxes) in all passenger vans designated as commercial vehicles.

Homesickness

Homesickness is a common condition caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home. It's characterized by acute longing and preoccupying thoughts of home and other beloved objects. About 95% of all girls and boys miss something about home when they're away at camp. In other words, homesick feelings are normal. Even the adults at camp get a little homesick.

Kids miss all different things when they're away from home. The list below from the Summer Camp Handbook indicates what campers miss most and least when they're at overnight camp.

What kids miss most:

1. parents and family
2. friends from home
3. pets
4. boyfriends or girlfriends
5. home cooking
6. junk food
7. television

What kids miss least:

1. school and homework
2. chores and responsibilities
3. sisters and brothers

Even though homesick feelings are common, most kids enjoy themselves tremendously at overnight summer camp. Fortunately, severe homesickness is rare. Research indicates that only 1 in 5 children has a bothersome amount of homesickness, and only about 1 in 14 children has a truly distressing degree of homesickness. Fewer than 1 in 100 kids have to return home early because of severe homesickness.

There are some things a camp can recommend in preparation for the camping experience.

1. Encourage positive thinking about how much fun learning to surf will be. Surfing isn't an easy sport but reinforce the outcome rather than the difficulty in getting there.
2. Encourage parental support. Parents can significantly influence a child's anticipation. It is best if parents don't present a nervous appearance about the dangers in learning to surf. Make sure they continually stress how professional

- the instructors are and how safe the environment will be for learning to surf.
3. Get to know the camp culture. Going over the schedule regularly with the child to ensure they know everything they can about what to expect and when will greatly reduce initial stress when the camp actually gets going.
 4. Spend some practice time at the beach. A day or two at the beach watching surfers will help familiarize the child about surfing and it's environment.
 5. Pack something special from home. While not as important for older campers, young campers find comfort in having something they are familiar with at the camp.
 6. Read books about surf camps and surfing. This usually helps the camper get stoked for what they will be doing.
 7. Once children recognize the feeling of homesickness, cope with it, and survive a brief separation from home, their confidence about future separations skyrockets. They really do gain independence, and their self-confidence will not only impact how well their surfing progresses, but it will shape their attitudes about future separations. Having a confident, positive attitude is one of the best predictors of doing well at surf camp.

When Blood is Exposed

There are federal laws impacting employers who hire instructors that can potentially become exposed to blood and blood products. Injuries during lessons sometimes happen. If during a lesson a student is injured and you get blood or other potentially infectious materials in your eyes, nose, mouth, or on broken skin, immediately flood the exposed area with water and clean any wound with soap and water or a skin disinfectant if available. Report this immediately to your employer and seek immediate medical attention.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration is responsible for administering the US Code related to occupational exposure to human blood in the workplace including blood products. Fortunately, injuries will usually occur in salt water and this will help decontaminate the immediate area prior to any exposure an instructor may receive. Be that as it may, instructors absolutely must have a first aid kit available and they must follow the US Code guidelines when injuries with blood exposure occur. This also means that camp employees and instructors must be trained to follow proper procedures by their employer, or their employer must insist that their instructors are trained.

Bureau of Communicable Disease Control: Meningococcal Disease

Unfortunately if you run an overnight camp there is one serious issue you need to be aware of, meningitis. It can show up unexpectedly and is a serious medical concern requiring immediate action. Some states require immunization for all campers prior to attendance.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream or meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord).

Who gets meningococcal disease?

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is more common in infants and children. For some college students, such as freshmen living in dormitories, there is an increased risk of meningococcal disease. Between 100 and 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses every year in the United States; between 5 and 15 college students die each year as result of infection. Currently, no data are available regarding whether children at overnight camps or residential schools are at the same increased risk for disease. However, these children can be in settings similar to college freshmen living in dormitories. Other persons at increased risk include household contacts of a person known to have had this disease, immunocompromised people, and people traveling to parts of the world where meningitis is prevalent.

How is the germ meningococcus spread?

The meningococcus germ is spread by direct close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person. Many people carry this particular germ in their nose and throat without any signs of illness, while others may develop serious symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

High fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash are symptoms of meningococcal disease. Among people who develop meningococcal disease, 10-15% die, in spite of treatment with antibiotics. Of those who live, permanent brain damage, hearing loss, kidney failure, loss of arms or legs, or chronic nervous system problems can occur.

How soon do the symptoms appear?

The symptoms may appear 2 to 10 days after exposure, but usually within 5 days.

What is the treatment for meningococcal disease?

Antibiotics, such as penicillin G or ceftriaxone, can be used to treat people with meningococcal disease.

Is there a vaccine to prevent meningococcal meningitis?

Yes, a safe and effective vaccine is available. The vaccine is 85% to 100% effective in preventing four kinds of bacteria (serogroups A, C, Y, W-135) that cause about 70% of the disease in the United States.

Is the vaccine safe? Are there adverse side effects to the vaccine?

The vaccine is safe, with mild and infrequent side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days.

What is the duration of protection from the vaccine?

After vaccination, immunity develops within 7 to 10 days and remains effective for approximately 3 to 5 years. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100% of all susceptible individuals.