

**New York State Department of Health
State Camp Safety Advisory Council Meeting**

**Empire State Plaza Concourse
Convention Hall Meeting Room 1
Albany, NY, 12242**

**AGENDA
October 21, 2025
10:30 A.M.**

1. Roll Call/Quorum Determination
2. Welcome/Council Administrative Business
 - Council Membership Update
 - Approval of Past Meeting Minutes
 - Bylaws Discussion
3. Overview of 2025 Season
 - Camp Swimming Incidents
4. Status of Proposed Amendments
5. Safety Plan Template Updates
6. Other Business
7. Public Comments
8. Next Meeting
9. Adjourn

Go to health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/camps/scsac for information about the State Camp Safety Advisory Council and any available materials for the meeting.

State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC)

October 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members

Present: Dawn Ewing (Chairperson), Eric Bacon (Vice-Chairperson), Randy DeFrank, Jamie Sirkin, Kevin Kung, and Michael Clarke

Members

Absent: Thomas Welch, M.D.

Department of Health Staff

Present: Christine Westerman, New York State Department of Health (DOH)
Darby Greco, DOH
Dan Lang, DOH
Eric Wiegert, DOH
William Sacks, DOH
Kathleen Bush, DOH
James Maurer, DOH
Amanda TARRIER, DOH
Emily D'Angelo, DOH
Taylor Rijos, DOH
Elizabeth Brower, DOH
Keith Graham, DOH
Charles Sturm, DOH Metropolitan Area Regional Office
Tim Lennon, DOH Metropolitan Area Regional Office
Halex Jones, DOH Capital New York Regional Office

Mr. Maurer called the meeting to order at 10:40 A.M. at the Empire State Plaza Concourse Convention Hall Meeting Room 1, Albany, New York. A quorum was present with six members in attendance.

Council Administrative Business

The meeting minutes from February 4, 2025, were unanimously approved by the Council.

Mr. Maurer welcomed new member Kevin Kung to the Council, who is representing For Profit camps. Mr. Kung introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his work and experience.

Mr. Maurer provided an update on Council membership. There are two vacancies. He asked that any recommendations or applications of those interested be submitted to the Recreational Environmental Health Section.

Mr. Maurer announced the appointment of the new Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection Assistant Director, Deanna Laney.

Bylaws Discussion

Mr. Maurer discussed the draft of the bylaws shared with the Council ahead of the meeting that incorporated the recommended revisions discussed at the previous meeting. These included clarifications to term length of Council seats, extension of the term length for chairperson and vice-chairperson from two to four years, and clarifying expectations on in-person meeting attendance by Council members. Additionally, the bylaws were revised to specify that the public could submit questions in writing before each meeting, which could facilitate remote attendance. Mr. Maurer discussed the remote meeting technology being tested at the meeting which could facilitate remote attendance by interested parties in the future. Ms. Ewing thanked Mr. Maurer for taking this action and Mr. DeFrank acknowledged the value to improve interaction with the public.

Mr. DeFrank made a motion to approve the amended bylaws, which would then be finalized by the Department and shared with the Council after the meeting. Mr. Clarke seconded the motion, and the amendments to the bylaws were unanimously approved.

Preliminary Overview of 2025 Season

Ms. Tarrier gave an overview of the 2025 children's camp season. The number of camps permitted statewide was consistent with previous years. She mentioned notable incidents that had been reported during the 2025 season, including a fatality, two fires, and five non-fatal drownings. Cocksackievirus was noted as the most reported cause of individual illnesses and outbreaks.

Ms. Tarrier gave a brief overview of an incident where multiple staff were exposed to a rabid feral cat and discussed the need to keep in mind that animals besides bats and raccoons can be vectors for rabies. She reported that there were fewer beach closures at children's camps due to harmful algal blooms than in 2024, but overall, there were more beach days lost due to harmful algal blooms at beaches statewide in 2025 than any other year. Ms. Tarrier emphasized that incident data is still being analyzed and that a more comprehensive report will be presented at the Council meeting in the spring.

Ms. Tarrier then provided a synopsis of each non-fatal drowning incident, discussed preliminary contributing factors, and presented slides comparing the 2025 season with historical trends. Discussion was opened to the Council and all members contributed to the conversation. Mr. Bacon commented on how impactful the synopses were. Mr. DeFrank highlighted the importance of supervising young children around water in all settings. Additional points were raised about best safety practices, code implementation, and the role of lifeguards and other staff. Ms. Ewing suggested that the very young age of campers in these incidents provides a target for interventions.

Mr. Maurer discussed the camp safety plan and training and asked the Council for recommendations on how to ensure all staff are following the camp's safety plan. The Council discussed the importance of supervision ratios, the struggle to find qualified staff, and the importance of facility management and staff training. Mr. Kung asked if pools and beaches are required to know if a camp using their facility has a permit. Ms. Westerman responded that there is no specific requirement in the pool or beach regulations, but that facilities need to consider the impact of large groups visiting and have plans for accommodating groups. The children's camps regulations require pre-arrangement with the facility the camp will visit including determining details of supervision and the roles of camp and facility staff.

Mr. Maurer asked for suggestions on training of counselors. Ms. Sirkin mentioned that the Westchester County Department of Health holds an annual training that all camp operators must attend that includes an aquatics module. Mr. Clarke mentioned a local health department that will provide on-site training at a camp upon request. Ms. Tarrier indicated that the Department is looking into updating existing camps swimming guidance and developing new guidance, and in the longer-term hope to redo the 2001 children's camps aquatic safety video "Not Just Horns, Bells, and Whistles."

Status of Proposed Amendments

Ms. Tarrier said the proposed amendments to Subpart 7-2 are continuing to move through the regulatory approval process. She said there was a possibility that they could be effective by next season. She added that most of the proposed amendments have associated Public Health Law requirements that camps are already implementing.

Ms. Tarrier mentioned that the Department is starting to think about potential future amendments and asked the Council to note additions or changes they feel are needed as they go about their routine business for consideration in future discussions.

Safety Plan Template Updates

Ms. Tarrier stated the Department is working on updates and improvements to the camp safety plan templates including adding climate and extreme weather resources and recommendations, incorporating guidance for compliance with recent Public Health Law provisions, and adding information and guidance regarding harmful algal blooms. The Council suggested many operators are updating their safety plans now, so releasing revised safety plan templates in early fall would be better timing.

Other Business

Mr. DeFrank referenced a previous presentation to the Council on stocking naloxone at camps and suggested the information be presented again. Mr. Maurer stated that the Department could see if staff from the Opioid Overdose Prevention Program were available to present at the next Council meeting.

Ms. Sirkin asked about the status of implementing the legislation to create a registry of children's non-regulated camps. Ms. Westerman stated that there were no updates but that the Department intends to fully comply with the legislation. Ms. Sirkin asked about proposed legislation on medication administration. Ms. Westerman said that the Department cannot comment on proposed legislation.

Public Comments

No public comments were posed.

Next Meeting

Mr. Maurer asked the Council if they had any proposed agenda items for the next meeting, or other topics/trends they are seeing in camps. In addition to a presentation on naloxone, the Council was interested in continuing discussions on climate and swimming safety.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2026, with a snow date of March 5. The Fall 2026 meeting was tentatively scheduled for the month of October. The location for both meetings is to be determined.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 P.M.