

Director-Camp Manager Relationship

Every campsite has a person to whom the ongoing care of the facility is entrusted. They may be a resident manager that lives on the site year round, or they may be a summer-only employee. Whatever the case, you will want to make sure that you develop a good working relationship with him or her. Your program, staff personnel, and campers will all benefit from such a positive situation.

Get acquainted with the camp director several months in advance of your camp. Take the initiative and communicate early on that you are interested in working closely with him or her so that the camp will run as smoothly as possible. If the manager has been around the camp for any length of time, he or she will have encountered his or her fair share of directors who gave little attention to the care of the facility and treated the resident camp staff like second-class citizens. Determine to be different and to leave a good witness for your organization and all who are affiliated with it.

Good communication, established early on in your working relationship with the camp manager will help ensure a smooth running camp experience for all parties involved. It's worth your time and investment of energies to make this aspect of your varied duties function well.

In order to develop good rapport with the camp manager you need to be aware of his or her expectations and the camp procedures and services. Here are some key areas that one should be aware of when working with camp management.

1. What equipment and facilities is the group entitled to use? Are these included in the lease or do they carry an extra charge? Here are some things you might want to ask about:

Price

- o When is their biggest season? When is the off-season?
- o Are tax and gratuity included in the pricing?
- o Will they exempt the ministry from any taxes?
- o What type of payment schedule does the facility require? What down payment amount will put a hold on your dates, and when do you have to pay it?
- o What are their cancellation policies and penalty fees? What about a last minute cancellation due to inclement weather?
- o What are the deadlines for submitting the total guaranteed number of campers to the camp without penalty? Is there an opportunity to submit a change after the deadline passes?
- o Are there any price breaks for having more than a certain number register? Are there penalties for having less than a certain number?

General Facilities

- o Is the campground clean? In good repair? Is it inspected yearly? When was the last inspection?

- o Is there anything that might be unsafe for students?
- o Is there anything you could not afford to break if your campers broke it?
- o Where can transporters drop off and pick up students? Is there parking to accommodate the vehicles?
- o Will there be other groups at the campground, or will you be the only group?
→ Which group will have priority to which areas?
- o Do you have access to the office area? Phone, fax, email? Photocopying?

Housing

- o Are the sleeping quarters, showers, and rest rooms in good working order and clean?
- o How many beds per room?
- o What is the quality of the beds?
- o How many bathrooms?
- o Are there mirrors in the bathrooms?
- o What is the ratio of counselors to campers in the dormitories?
- o Can the dorms be split by genders?
- o Are there rooms available for program staff, speakers, and musicians? Are linens available?
- o Are the sleeping rooms in an area that might disturb other guests not in your party?
- o Is there a certain time for lights out?

Food Service

- o What does the seating arrangement look like? How does the traffic flow?
- o What are the after-meal clean-up expectations?
- o Do you have any input in the selection of the menu?
- o Are special meals available for those with unique physical needs?
- o Can they feed all campers at one time or do you need to eat in shifts?
- o Are there designated meal times?

Recreation Areas

- o Are the fields, courts, and equipment in good shape?
- o What specific equipment is provided and what will you need to bring?
- o Is there is a swimming pool?
- o Who supplies the lifeguards? Does that involve extra expenses?
- o If the weather is poor, what are the other options?

Worship Areas

- o What options are there for room set up?
- o How many will fit in the room comfortably?
- o What is the seating arrangement? Are there chairs or pews?
- o How are the acoustics?
- o Where are the electrical outlets and what's their capacity? Are adapters needed for your projectors, sound systems, etc?
- o What is available for sound needs? Do you have access to it or do you need to bring your own?
- o Is the area sheltered from the weather?
- o Is there a room you can use as a holding room prior to performances?

Surrounding Areas

- o What other conveniences are available in the surrounding area (stores, fast food, etc.)?
 - o What other type activities are available within a short drive from the campground?
 - o How would the students be transported?
2. What services does the camp provide?
 - Do they handle pre-registration?
 - Will they allow pre-camp counselor training to be done on site?
 - Can materials be shipped to the site and safely stored until your arrival?
 - Are there information pieces provided by the camp that deal with policies, meal schedules, meal menus, that could be distributed to your staff?
 3. What are the camp management's responsibilities to your group?
 - Are maintenance personnel available 24/7? If not, what are their hours and how can they be contacted?
 - To who are problems reported?
 - Is an evening security person provided, or are you responsible for securing one?
 - Is there an emergency vehicle provided by the camp?
 4. Obtain a complete copy of the camp's policies and familiarize yourself with them. If you're renting a campground, once you sign on the dotted line, you are committed to abiding by their policies. If you have any questions, be sure to contact the camp management to work out any differences in order to avoid hassles once you arrive. Always model good stewardship of any facility that you use.
 5. Check to see that the camp is in compliance with all local, county, and state ordinances. Some camping experts suggest that a statement be included in the rental contract that the camp is also in compliance with the regulations established by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of the U.S. Department of Labor.
 6. Be aware of the camp's emergency procedures for things such as:
 - Fire
 - Tornadoes
 - Power failures
 - Flood
 - Injuries
 - Lost camper
 - Camper's death
 - Prowler or intruder
 - Animal intrusion (loose livestock, rabid skunks, etc.)