

Section 04: Standard Policies and Procedures in Adventure Programs

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**Camp Fitch YMCA
Adventure Programs**



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Camp Fitch YMCA Staff Code of Conduct

Camp Fitch YMCA is committed to providing our campers with the highest quality role models and leadership available. We expect that all our staff will adhere to certain expectations during the length of their employment.

All members of the Camp Fitch staff are expected to uphold the YMCA Values:

CARING HONESTY RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY

A Camp Fitch Staff Member will:

1. Be respectful of all campers, volunteers, and staff and report any form of harassment.
2. Follow the directions of all levels of camp leadership.
3. Adhere to all rules and policies as agreed to in the Staff Agreement.
4. Always adhere to the 5 Rules of CAP: NO Alone Time; NO Favorites; NO Outside Contact; NO Inappropriate Language; NO Inappropriate Touch
5. Immediately report any suspicion of Child Abuse as a Mandated Reporter.
6. Immediately report any violations of camp policy to the camp leadership.
7. Fulfill the requirements of their job description to the satisfaction of the camp leadership.
8. Direct all visitors and guests to Camp Leadership for approval and background checks.
9. Seek mediation of Camp leadership when disagreement with others creates conflict.
10. Obey all Pennsylvania and Federal laws.

Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct will result in the following consequences:

Level 1: Tardiness, unexcused absence, disrespect, inappropriate language or behavior, behavior contrary to YMCA values.

First Incident: Meeting with Camp Leadership

Second Incident: Meeting with Camp Leadership to create a Behavior Improvement Plan and possible change of work schedule and duties.

Third Incident: Meeting with Camp Leadership for possible suspension or termination of employment and/or modification of their Behavior Improvement Plan.

Level 2: Bullying, violence, theft, inappropriate sexual behavior, willful refusal to follow reasonable instructions, and violation of drug and alcohol policies.

Any Incident: Meeting with Camp Leadership for possible suspension or termination of employment and/or modification of Behavior Improvement Plan.

CAMP FITCH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO IMMEDIATELY TERMINATE ANY STAFF MEMBER'S EMPLOYMENT SHOULD THAT STAFF MEMBER'S BEHAVIOR RISE TO THE LEVEL OF BEING DESTRUCTIVE TO THE WELL BEING OF THE CAMPING COMMUNITY.

Five Rules

1. No Inappropriate Touch

- a. Never touch a child around their genitals, breasts or other private areas (generally—anywhere where a bathing suit covers, do not touch).
- b. Do not allow tickling, wrestling, piggyback rides, lap sitting, or face-to-face hugs between adult staff and children. Instead, we can use side hugs, high fives or other similar physical gestures to show affection.
- c. Some seemingly appropriate touches can still be inappropriate. For example, a lingering touch on the wrist or arm on the shoulder can make a child uncomfortable and advance an abuser's plan. If you find yourself unsure about a touch, ask yourself “does the touch benefit the child or the adult?”

2. No Alone Time

- a. No alone time with children that can't be observed by fellow staff members or volunteers.
- b. If you need a one-on-one conversation with a child, our solution is “Private talk. Public view.” The conversation must be observable and reportable.

3. No Favoritism

- a. Staff and volunteers giving gifts to individual children is an example of inappropriate favoritism. If gifts are bought for kids in our programs-like candy, treats, sodas and such. We need to make sure there are enough gifts for everyone.
- b. It is inappropriate when a child or a group of children is singled out with praise and attention, or when staff have secrets with young people.

4. No Outside Contact

- a. No driving children home, sleep overs, inviting children to your house, babysitting, or online contact with children at our organization through social media, email, or cell phones. All electronic communication must be transparent.
- b. If you have a previous relationship with a child, independent of your work or volunteering position, any exceptions require written explanation before the fact and are subject to administration approval.

5. No Inappropriate Language

- a. Do not use profane, sexualized language around youth.
- b. Avoid discussing parties you've attended, your personal dating experiences, or other adult information that would be inappropriate to discuss around youth.

Rights of Campers

- I have a right to be happy and to be treated with kindness and respect.
- I have a right to be myself.
- I have a right to be and feel physically, emotionally, and mentally safe.
- I have a right to grow in Body, Mind, and Spirit.
- I have a right to make Friends, Achieve great things, and feel like I Belong.

DIG Camp Fitch YMCA

All kids have the right to be better, forever. Our inclusive culture empowers all of us to connect, belong, and grow.

The Three Daily Questions for Campers

By Steve DelCalzo

Are you having a good time?

Are you making friends?

Is anyone making you feel unsafe?



Standards of Conduct and Adventure Policies

The following are summarized/ adopted standards of conduct taken and adapted from the general Summer Camp handbook, YMCA of Youngstown standards, and other adventure trip programs across the nation. These standards create professionalism and protect individual Trip Leaders from potential legal suits. The Summer Camp Director may alter any existing adventure trips policy if needed.

General

The YMCA is open to all people and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

All adventure staff, while employed, will do their best to adjust (as far as they see fit) personal habits and actions to the customs, policies and ideals of camp in keeping with the Christian objectives of the YMCA. Basically, we try to uphold the mission statement while understanding staff come from different walks of life.

Adventure Staff must strategize and try to rest during off time. This is so that they may perform at higher physical standards than most traditional camp staff are accustomed to. Staff are encouraged to pursue personal habits and practices that will enable physical fitness in performance and mental alertness in all duties of the job.

Injuries

All staff are protected by workers compensation per Pennsylvania law. If an adventure staff member is injured while on an adventure trip, and a hospital or urgent care trip is involved, the injured staff member must submit a claim to workers compensation insurance. Use the policy number and submit the claim by using one of the three options:

Camp Fitch YMCA Policy Number #349159

Email: newclaim@nationwide.com
Phone: 800-228-6700, option 2
Fax: 800-842-1482

Injury to an adventure trip staff member may result in them being reassigned to a different area of camp for employment. An adventure staff member will not be dismissed due to injury.

Injury Prevention

To try and prevent injuries to staff members and campers, a Trip Leader must conduct a ground school of the activity before participating in it. Ground schools can be found in later activity-based sections of the Adventure Manual. Stretching and a brief warm up is also recommended by the American Camp Association before participating in outdoor activities.

Drug Use

Staff that choose to use tobacco, in any form, lessen your example and effectiveness. Tobacco and like products may not be used on camp property or while on a trip. If any product is used, the user must be 21, off camp property, on off time, and not wearing any Fitch apparel. The same said procedure applies to alcohol, medical marijuana and vaping as well. If the staff member chooses to consume alcohol or smoke during time off, they must be ready to go (mentally and physically) for their next trip. Violation of this clause will result in immediate dismissal. If anyone under the age of 21 is found to be drinking alcohol, on camp or off camp, they will be dismissed immediately.

Dismissals

Other Dismissals may include the following:

- Poor example and faulty leadership
- Jeopardizing safety of campers in the wilderness
- Behavior or conduct that negatively influences the trip experience
- Unreliability- not being able to perform tasks
- Any detection of hazing, reckless yelling, physical punishment, taking away food, etc.
- Campers being severely burned or forgetting to wear sunscreen.
- Going 20 mph over the speed limit while driving (intentionally).
- Leaving a camper at a location (trip activity or gas station)
- Engaging in open and sexual activity (in view of others), especially with staff under the age of seventeen (Galley Crew, CIT, etc.) Beecher and off-site trip locations.

***Termination of employment can also be made by Camp Fitch YMCA based on low enrollment of trip(s), medical epidemic, catastrophe, or other unusual cause.**



Poor Performance

In the event of a Trip Leader not performing to professional standards but at the same time does not justify immediate dismissal, Camp Fitch YMCA directors have the right to assign adventure trip staff to other program areas or continue working as a general counselor (Skipper). Examples of this can be:

- Not meeting Trip Leader standards
- Forgetting several policies and procedures and not following them safely.
- Being late
- Not being able to leave camp on time to start the trip (Mondays)
- Failing to clean Beecher cabin before parents arrive
- Failing to give out assigned medications
- Failing to use the SpotX device
- Failing to keep parents in the loop through constant group chat messaging.

Beecher Cabin

During the summer, Beecher cabin becomes the base camp for the adventure trips program. All gear is stored up there and every camper sleeps up there on Sunday nights before they depart for their trip and Friday nights when they return. This is also where adventure trips staff will sleep and stay.

That said, it is the responsibility of staff that live and stay in Beecher to clean up after themselves. The Camp Fitch YMCA housekeeping crew is usually very busy on the weekends getting traditional camp ready for parent arrival. Housekeeping will do a deep clean of Beecher cabin during the week sometime (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday). During that time, it is suggested that no one be in the cabin and to make sure the cabin is picked up before housekeeping gets in there. Before parents arrive on Sunday, all staff living in Beecher must work together to tidy up and clean Beecher to make it parent ready. Some things to keep in mind are:

- Toilets
- Showers
- Sinks
- Floors (Swept and Vacuumed)
- Common Room
- Outside (any clothes hanging to dry, gear drying)
- All Vehicles parked in designated parking areas
- Any additional work projects listed on traffic light board or white board

***If Skeggs is also used in the event of high enrollment, the same applies.**

Relationships Between Staff

Due to the nature of adventure trips and based on data of other adventure trips programs in the nation, where staff are leading one-week long trips with just one other co-leader, relationships in the form of dating have a high tendency to occur.

While on a trip if two people are dating, the staff are encouraged not to show signs of affection for one another in the open, in front of campers. The suggestion is that campers should never even get the hint that the two staff might be dating. Kissing, holding hands, performing sexual acts should never be engaged in while on a trip. Hugging between staff members is only allowed in response to 'comforting' the other during a bad day on the job. Staff must remember they are working with young teenagers and try to continue the same kind of behavior they would show them (side hugs, high fives, pat on the back).

It is against adventure trip policy for anyone over the age of eighteen to date a camper. It is also against the adventure trip policy for anyone over eighteen to date another staff member, including a counselor-in-training under the age of eighteen.

Beecher cabin is to be treated as a Trip Leader's home. Besides the Climbing Captain, no other Camp Fitch Staff are welcome to stay in Beecher. Any adventure trip staff member allowing a non-adventure staff member to stay in Beecher will be dismissed from the adventure trip program. Sexual activity between staff members in Beecher is not permitted since it is a place where children stay. Beecher could house children at a moment's notice.

***If Skeggs is also used in the event of high enrollment, the same applies.**

Off Duty Trip Leader Expectations

If a Trip Leader is not assigned to a trip during the week they are designated as support staff. If Trip Leaders are not assigned to be Skippers for traditional camp, they will be assigned to assist program areas such as lifeguarding, belaying at the rock wall, running the zipline, or being an extra set of eyes for mountain biking. Trip Leaders must check in with the Summer Camp Director or person assigned to check in on non-trip leading staff.

In addition to running programming, while not on a trip, Trip Leaders will oversee the glamping-to-camping program. Because of the lack of off time Trip Leaders get while on a trip, it is acceptable for a Trip Leader to take every night off during the week if not on a trip. This can only be done, however, if no one decides to campout or request tents. If a cabin does, then follow the procedure on how to supervise glamping to camping.

Tipping

Camp Fitch YMCA, as an accredited member of the American Camping Association, has adopted the official policy of the ACA which states tipping of staff is NOT approved. Fitch Adventures is a professional group and does not approve of tipping even though it's well-intentioned. If a tip is rejected and the customer insists, money can be given to a Camp Fitch YMCA Director or a Trip Captain to be put away to help fund an end of year get together (Gauley River Trip).

Evaluations

A Trip Captain will evaluate each Trip Leader at the end of their trip. It will be an informal conversation regarding how the trip went. These evaluations are meant to help the Trip Leader grow or be made aware of situations for upcoming trips. Three areas of topic will be logistics, campers' behavior, and hard/soft skills. In addition, when a Trip Captain is present on a trip, an end of the day guided talk will take place between the Captain and Trip Leaders.



Use of Personal Automobiles

Adventure staff members may not leave camp property in personal vehicles, except on time off or during a free period. Exemptions are given to staff that live off site. Lending automobiles to other employees is discouraged. At no time whatsoever are campers allowed in a staff's personal automobile. If a personal vehicle is used for a trip on a rare occasion, gas is not provided unless approved by Youngstown, and the vehicle can only be used to haul gear; no campers. Examples of this have been death in the family, leaving to go on vacation from site, and visiting another camp. For other automobile related policies please see Appendix B, labeled "Camp Fitch Staff" in the Youngstown YMCA policies and procedures manual [outside document].

Dress and Appearance

During trips, it is expected all staff dress according to the trip or activity they are leading. An example of this could be showing up to a morning meeting decked out in paddling gear; that would be acceptable. It is also suggested that all staff dress modestly while out on trips. It is expected for the Trip Leader to use their best judgement. This might mean wearing shorts over leggings, being aware of types of bathing suits you wear, keeping hair/face well groomed, wearing proper footwear for activities, wearing a shirt over offensive tattoos, etc. Trip Captain(s) and Directors have the right to inform adventure staff of improper dress. One way to help determine appropriate dress is to evaluate what age group of children you are working with and what gender(s).

On opening and closing days of a trip, Trip Leaders must bathe the night/morning before and wear proper Camp Fitch attire. When interacting with parents, Trip Leaders are allowed to only wear piercings in the ears and all large, noticeable tattoos must be covered up. Once the trip begins and all parents have left, Trip Leaders can continue wearing piercings and clothes that may reveal tattoos. The reason for this policy is to establish a professional, first impression to parents that will set Fitch Adventures apart from common outfitters and rafting companies.



Pets

Trip Leaders are not allowed to have pets on an Adventure Trip or on Camp Fitch YMCA property. Staff that live on camp year-round and abide by the current pet policy during the Outdoor Education season(s) are exempt, but pets must remain at the current housing facility. Pets are forbidden to accompany staff on trips or ride in camp vehicles.

Weapons/ Pocketknives

All guns, pistols, metallic knuckles, daggers, straight razors, or any other deadly weapon(s) of any kind, concealed, or open carry are prohibited on all adventure trips as well as Camp Fitch YMCA property.

Pocketknives are always acceptable to have and expected to be on Trip Leaders as they are helpful with work duties. Campers on trips can have a pocketknife if it is no more than 4 inches long. A good rule of thumb is that if a campers' knife is bigger than the Trip Leaders' then it should be confiscated and given back to the camper at parent pick-up.

At any time, a camper uses a stick, rock, or other natural weapon in dangerous play or threatens any other camper at any time, it is under the Trip Captain's or Director's discretion to remove the camper from the trip and send back to Camp Fitch if logistics make sense. Otherwise, necessary punishments need to come into play without the chance to redeem. Parents should also be notified of the behavior.

Pictures, Videos and Promotion

Trip Leaders and Trip Captains have the right to take pictures and videos of trip participants given that they sign a waiver before the trip takes place. Pictures and videos can be used for later promotional materials. These pictures cannot be posted on social media for personal use. Once pictures are forwarded to the Adventure Programs Director, they must be deleted. Pictures of campers are not to be saved on Trip Leaders' personal devices post trip experience or until after the Adventure Programs Director has uploaded them to the correct photo sharing websites. Landscape and nature photos are exempt.

Social Networking

It is forbidden for Trip Leaders to post anything onto social media about a trip while leading it or arriving for support. Nothing should be posted on individual social media accounts until after the trip has concluded. The Adventure Programs Director will have access to Camp Fitch YMCA's social networking sites and will post as needed. Trip Leaders may post things after a trip has concluded but only in a positive manner where it promotes the name of Camp Fitch YMCA. None of the photos or videos can have a camper in them. **It is also forbidden to take pictures and videos of campers to save on personal devices.**

Photo Release Form

Parents must sign a waiver for their children to be featured in pictures or videos on adventure trips due to the program's size and consistency of media presentation. General pictures will be uploaded onto Pixevely.com. Trip pictures will also be uploaded to Smugmug.com due to the traditional camp being slow about uploading trip pictures or forgetting to. Please see the photo release form under 'Section 03: Common Parent Documents.' Sometimes Trip Leaders not assigned to a trip may be asked to upload pictures during the week from the previous trip.

Diversity of Adventure Trips

All staff and trip participants come from very different walks of life. On a trip we do not discriminate based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc. We understand that campers primarily come from the Pennsylvania and Ohio regions but can also include campers nationwide and international. Understanding this, there might be trips where adventure staff will have to be prepared to handle situations that might come with high 'tension'. Examples include:

- Internationals trying to fit in with a crew of friends from Ohio, who have known each other since elementary school.
- A camper with a darker skin tone collecting firewood with a camper who casually mentions they own a confederate flag hat.
- A camper that arrives with 100% of their clothing promoting a political figure.
- Campers who casually talk about their high-end, rich parents' living in the same group of campers who are there on scholarship and don't know if their parents' will be picking them up at the end of it.

Transgender Policy

According to Camp Fitch YMCA traditional camp policy, we cannot discriminate against people who identify as a different gender or use different pronouns. Whatever they identify as (when they register for their trip, according to *Campminder*), they are to be treated as and determines what bathroom they may use in public, if family or gender-neutral restrooms are not available. Gender identity cannot change while on a trip. Trip Leaders are to use common sense skills to sort out issues regarding this policy. When possible, one-person backpacking tents will be used for every participant.

It is the policy of the adventure tripping program that conversations regarding LGBTQ+ topics are not started by the adventure staff. If conversations are started by the campers, a Trip Leader may facilitate the conversation, but not give personal input. We respect the right of every camper's parent or guardian figure to have the right of being the first to talk about this topic with their child.

Any new policy made by camp leadership that might affect everything above will become 'standard policy' in the case this *Adventure Programs Manual* is not updated.

Rule of 3 (Adventure Trip Emphasis)

Campers should always travel in groups of no less than three. During adventure trips, adventure staff are to make sure this camp-wide policy is implemented the best it can. When it cannot, adventure staff should self-report it.

All trip leadership should never be alone with a camper. If you are alone with a camper, make sure you can be seen by other staff or campers; this includes times when a camper needs to be talked to in private due to a discipline issue.

When traveling in the wilderness, it is good for a staff member to have two other people with them. Examples include going to purify water, wash dishes, and scout out a trail if lost. For their own safety, Trip Leaders are excused from this only when they use the restroom in the wilderness, by themselves, etc. The Trip Captain and/or Trip Director is expected to be alone during certain situations such as setting up a climb site, hiking to check in on a group, driving the vehicle to a pick-up location, etc.

The rule of 3 should be established with all campers. However, there are times on wilderness trips where this might not be possible due to enrollment numbers. If that is the case, a camper should have one other camper with them (same gender when using the restroom in the wilderness). A staff member cannot be a camper's buddy. If there are chores to be done around the campsite and an adventure trips staff can keep the campers within their eyesight, campers can pair up to perform certain jobs that need to be done. Examples of this include washing dishes, purifying water, gathering firewood, cooking, etc.



Public View and Camper Sickness

Sometimes following the rule of three can get a little tricky. One common example is when a camper may become sick and does not require a medical evacuation. This exception can only happen when using a rental place such as a rafting trip outfitter. The reason for this is that no other campers miss out on the activity for that day and that the group of kids have a staff member present on the activity, especially if there are only two staff on the trip.

In this rare situation where a camper is sick, the staff member with the child must stay with them and provide care while in public view. Examples of this include sitting in a restaurant, sitting in the main welcome lobby, etc. If a hospital visit is necessary, and there are three staff, one staff member must accompany the staff member staying with the camper while transportation is in use. Once arriving at a doctor's office or hospital the staff member that drove may return to the group. This is done to supervise the rest of the group. The staff member staying with the camper will be in the public eye and must remain in a public place. All situations in this scenario are subject to the Trip Captain's or Trip Director's decision.

Further examples of this policy can include a camper being too scared to go into a cave or choosing to forgo the bridge walk. If a camper knows they do not want to participate in an activity, permission for a staff member to be alone with a camper should be communicated before the trip begins. The parents could then even let the Director and the Youngstown office know. In all situations, a self-reporting form needs to be filed.



Self-Reporting

At Camp Fitch YMCA we have created a culture of self-reporting. This is especially done when the rule of three cannot be followed. In addition to filling out incident/accident reports, Trip Leading staff are greatly encouraged to file a report on their own when:

- They are alone with a camper
- Accidental Speech (bad word, un-appropriate stories, etc.)
- Awkward situation (bathroom exposure, changing clothes in front of)

The purpose of this is to document anything that parents might have questions about later (if their kid talks about it). It is also in place to protect you. Sometimes situations are difficult to explain later, so writing them down as soon as it happens is the best way to go. Trip Leaders are encouraged to fill out paper forms while on the trip (see appendix). If online connection is available, you can fill one out by using the Microsoft Teams app. (see instructions below).

Open Microsoft Teams and click the following tabs:

Microsoft Teams
Summer Camp Staff
General
Self-Reporting



Child Abuse Reporting

While on a trip, if a child discloses sensitive information and there is suspect for child abuse by their parents or guardians the following procedure should be in place.

- Inform the Trip Captain or Trip Director. There might be a backstory that they are already made aware of. An example is there was once a camper on a trip who had abusive parents, but they now lived with their grandparents and the situation was currently being worked out with child protection services. Therefore, nothing more needed to be done because it was already being investigated.
- The Trip Captain or Trip Director will then contact the leadership at the traditional camp to inform them and receive advice on what to do.
- If the camp does not report, the Trips Director or Trip Captain will sit down with the Trip Leader and call the child abuse hotline to get the process started.
- Once the trip returns, the Trip Leader makes sure the child is not picked up by the individual suspected of abuse and must start filling out appropriate paperwork if needed.

Ohio Child Abuse Hotline: **1-855-642-4453**

Youngstown Area/ Mahoning County, OH: **1-330-941-8888**

Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline: **1-800-932-0313**

Playgrounds

Depending on where the trip stays, some campgrounds do have established playgrounds. Given most trips feature teens above the age of thirteen, playgrounds should be avoided due to the potential intermingling of younger age groups. Most playgrounds state that children above the age of twelve are not permitted on the equipment. This policy helps prevent potential bullying to other groups and allows families with younger children to feel safe about letting their children free play at the park or campground.

It is acceptable for a Level 1 trip to explore a playground either at the campground, restaurant stop or even strategically stopping at one for a rest break due to their age range (9-12 years old). All camper supervision and trip rules should be followed at the playground in addition to city and state park regulations. Trip Leaders should be spread out and not talking to one another to keep everyone in line of sight. If there is an obstacle, slide, or structure preventing this line of sight, Trip Leaders must move around for coverage or ban the area from play.

Playgrounds can potentially be used on other trips (Levels 2-5) only under the following two conditions. It must be the two conditions together, not just one.

- If the driver is experiencing fatigue and needs to nap before continuing.
- If there is no one else present (families, groups, young children).

**Camp Fitch YMCA
Adventure Programs**



Backcountry Campsite Organization

Tents

- When setting up a backcountry campsite or tent camping at a campground, individual tents must be split based on gender. If using the one-person tents, try to have campers tent near other tents of the respected gender. It is recommended that a Trip Leaders' tent be set up between the genders and the other Trip Leader perhaps strategically places their tent near a common walkway.
 - At night campers must inform a Trip Leader that they are getting out of the tent to use the restroom and must take a buddy from their tent.

Meals

- When cooking meals, Trip leaders are encouraged to let the campers help. There should never be a situation where both trip leaders are focused on cooking meals and where the campers are not supervised. The only time both Trip Leaders are allowed to be meal preparing at the same time is when the Trip Captain or Director is available to help supervise the kids. Basically, the campers should not be left unsupervised.

Morning Cleanup

Every new morning comes with new challenges and chores that need to be done. It is the Trip Leader's job to make sure campers are woken up and told what needs to be done. Sometimes chores need to be done before embarking the next grand activity. In everything that is done, make sure campers are following the rule of three. Campers can individually work on taking down their own tents and packing themselves. Trip Leaders should wait for direction from the Trip Captain or Director to see how they want the trailer to be loaded. Examples of things need to be done are:

- Taking down tents
- Loading the trailer
- Cooking breakfast
- Getting changed into the right clothing for the day.
- Talking with campground hosts/ outfitters and submitting payment

Nighttime Cleanup

At night there are going to be few chores that need to be done. This can be done by campers and may require Trip Leader supervision and assistance. If kids are doing the chore, they must be with a buddy (if in a Trip Leader can see them) or better- following the rule of three.

- Dishes
- Bear bag
- Campfire making
- Tent set up
- Other duties required by location

Campground/ Outfitter Organization

At an outfitter or designated campground ran by an outside organization to where we are paying to use, we must follow their own procedures. Examples include quiet hours, tent platforms, and fire rings. Major affiliated partners are ACE Adventure Resort, Zoar Outdoor Resort, Mauch Chunk Lake State Park, Hungry Mother State Park, Pilot Mountain State Park, and Riverside Canoe.

Staff Runs and Workouts

Staff that wish to take an early morning run or complete an exercise routine must first get approval from the Trip Captain or Trip Director the night before. A Trip Leader that is granted permission must be back in time before the campers are to wake up. Only one Trip Leader can do this because they leave the co-leader responsible for the entire group while they are gone. Workouts can also be done at night if time allows, permission is given, and at least one Trip Leader is present with the group. Early morning runs are not allowed on backpacking portions where camping is required in the wilderness, away from a vehicle.

Ace Adventure Resort Specific Policies

Fitch Adventures frequently visits Ace Adventure Resort in Oak Hill, West Virginia. Nearly every trip that ventures south on Interstate 79 stays at least one night here. It is important to follow every policy that ACE Adventure Resort outlines such as quiet hours and guest behavior.

In addition to following all policies at Ace Adventure Resort, adventure staff members must be sure to follow all existing Camp Fitch YMCA policies and procedures as well as the adventure trip policies and procedures outlined throughout this section and other areas of the Adventure Manual.

Some things to follow through on are:

- Rule of three when visiting the bathroom or shower house.
- Keep an eye out for what families, groups, or individuals are camping near you.
- Do not interact with other summer camps by playing games, shared devotions, and meals. It is okay to greet and welcome. Only agree to playing group games if the other summer camp is affiliated with another YMCA.



Shower, Bathhouse and Public Restroom Procedure

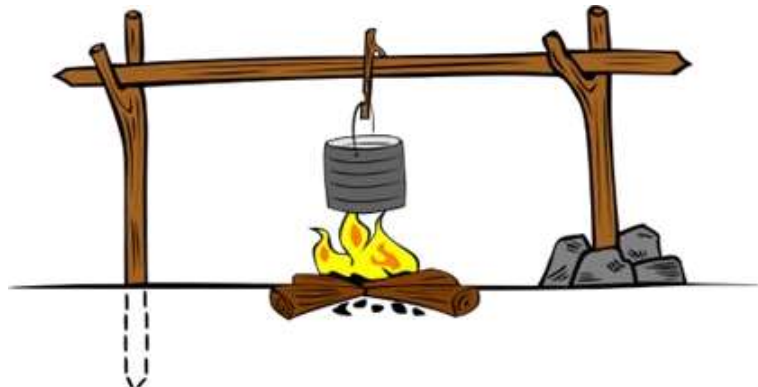
Every campground or outfitter that has a bathhouse or shower facility, the following procedure should be followed:

- Trip Leader must be the first one in and check facility. They must note condition and count people in there. If it makes sense, wait until all other people are out of the facility.
- Campers are then allowed in. Trip Leader must stay by restroom door (outside of restroom with door ajar) to note other people going into the restroom. If it is not a busy place the Trip Leader may want to ask someone if they can wait while the kids finish. (Hold Your Horses Man!)
- Shower facilities must be treated the same way. At no point is it okay to shower with campers in an open facility. Trip Leaders should wait until there is a break given by the Trip Captain or Director to shower. If this cannot happen, after the campers have gone to bed, the Trip Leaders can take shifts going to the shower facility while the other stays and watches the campsite at night, being there for the campers.
- When possible, try to use individual shower rooms and bathrooms where one camper can shower with the door locked (Ex: ACE Resort).

Fires

Campfires must be made in pre-established fire rings at pre-established campsites. If using a primitive campsite without a campfire ring, fires must be avoided.

Firewood can be taken from Camp Fitch YMCA but only used at sites in the state of Pennsylvania, ACE Adventure Resort in West Virginia and Worley's Cavern in Tennessee. All other locations, firewood must be purchased or gathered in the forest.



**Camp Fitch YMCA
Adventure Programs**



Environmental Impact Policy

- Group sizes are limited to 16 people maximum (campers plus staff)
- Wilderness Areas require groups of 8. If a trip has more than 8 total people (Campers plus staff) then the trip should split into two smaller groups and must include at least one staff member.
- Soap may not be used directly in a major water source (river, creek, etc.)
- Going number 2 (pooping) in the woods must be done 200 feet away from the trail, campsite, and/or water source. Try to bury it 8 inches in the ground (hole dug before).
- Do not stay in a backcountry location for more than 3 nights unless there is a medical situation.
- Do not re-landscape an area or adjust camp terrain.
- Use established campsites wherever possible
- Fires will be made only in existing fire rings. Do not make one.



- As a program we will try to follow the 7 principles of “Leave No Trace” as well.
 1. Plan ahead and prepare.
 2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
 3. Dispose of waste properly.
 4. Leave what you find.
 5. Minimize campfire impacts (be careful with fire).
 6. Respect wildlife.
 7. Be considerate of other visitors.

Other Important Information

The following topics are to be highlighted during Trip Leader training. If needed there are online videos to go with these topics.

- **Girl Power**

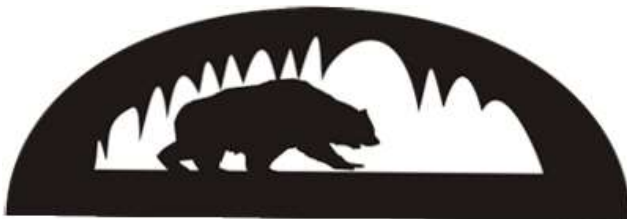
- Knowing that in a trip environment, girls might be underrepresented and may feel less empowered to show competency in skill, we as staff members need to create an environment where they feel confident and have the same success as male participants. Female Trip Leaders can play a huge role in this and set the example.

- **Off Time Procedures (While on Trip)**

- Off time while on a trip is rare, do not expect it.
- When on off-time please do not wear any Camp Fitch YMCA apparel, as you will be in the public eye.
- No alcohol beverages to be consumed while on a trip.

- **Safe Touch and Safe Talk**

- Safe Touch
 - Always go in for the side hug, most teens like the fit bump or pat on back.
 - Harness Checking “May I **touch** your harness?”
 - Boat Rescues, lift by the PFD first. In whitewater, use what you got.
 - During assisted lifts in caves, tell participants what you are going to do, so they expect the touch.
- Safe Talk
 - Backcountry Camping talking topics
 - Keep conversations appropriate and know when to switch the conversation.
 - Bus/ Vehicle conversations and items to watch for.
 - Co-worker talk
 - Do not talk about off-time
 - Do not talk about inappropriate topics.
 - Do not yell at children unless there is an emergency situation.



Skillful Discipline in the Backcountry

Trip campers sometime choose to act up while on an adventure trip. This creates a unique situation because parents and guardians are expecting their child to participate in every activity that they have paid for and signed waivers for. Therefore, trip campers cannot sit out on what is deemed a primary activity. Instead, Trip Leaders are advised to follow these guidelines when enforcing discipline to the group or an individual. As a reminder, Trip Leaders are to show no favoritism as well, so when you decide to punish the whole group, don't make exceptions.

Step 1

Have a conversation with the camper or campers who are acting up. Let them know that this is a warning.

Step 2

Have a second conversation with the camper or campers who are acting up. Tell them of the second warning and of a specific consequence or punishment that will be implemented if the behavior continues.

Step 3

Have a third conversation and tell the camper or campers the consequence or punishment for their behavior.

Step 4

If there is time leading up to the punishment or consequence, allow the camper to 'repent' and earn back the reward, privilege, or 'get out' of the situation.

Step 5

Implement the punishment if the camper cannot earn it back by demonstrating change in behavior.

Step 6

If the camper or campers still do not listen and continue to show bad behavior, the Trip Captain or Trip Director will contact the parents to see what else can be done.

If at any time a camper shows violence toward others and causes physical harm to themselves or to another, the parent will be contacted, a call to the summer camp will be made, and the parents will be asked to pick up their child

Examples of skillful discipline include:

- Taking away privileges to purchase snacks and drinks during gas station stops.
- Adding extra chores such as doing the dishes and taking trash to the campground dumpster.
- Taking away a dessert option during (rafting lunch, ice cream stop).

- Sitting out at the start of a 'bonus activity' such as ACE waterpark, swimming at a campground or touring a local town and visiting local shops (Jim Thorpe, PA).

Thank You Cards

Around New Year's, thank you cards will be sent out to every trip's campers from the year. Trip Leaders are encouraged to write to them expressing their desire to see them continue their adventure by attending another trip in the coming new year. Trip Leaders can write these during the summer or request cards to be sent to them for them to fill out at home. This is optional.

Praying Before Meals

It is expected before every meal that some sort of prayer is said or a camp song giving praise is sung. It is optional for a prayer to be said after a devotion.

Devotions

The adventure tripping program at Camp Fitch YMCA supports Christian ideals and tries to structure a program around being out in nature and celebrating what God has made. Once per day during the trip, staff will plan out a structured bonding activity, talk or debrief. This could be done during the day or at night before bed. The goal of this is to have the kids share how their day went and help bond the trip on a spiritual/emotional level. Spiritual references are encouraged but not mandatory and always will respect the comfort of the Trip Leader.

The following is a prayer that can be used during the trip. This is also the required prayer to be said during the first devotion of the adventure trip.

**Lord, give us the strength to climb the highest mountains
The courage to paddle the wildest rivers
The ability to overcome our fears of the wilderness
And may you protect us from harm throughout all our adventures!
Keep our mind sound,
Our bodies healthy,
And our spirit alive!
Amen**

*"Adventure Prayer" (Bill Young, Cheerio Adventures- 2014)
Edited for Fitch Adventures by Brad Powell- 2019*

Camp Fitch YMCA Adventure Programs

