



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

***Raised Bill No. 215***

LCO No. 1525



Referred to Committee on COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Introduced by:  
(KID)

***AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH CAMPS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 19a-426 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

3 The office shall inspect or cause to be inspected the facilities to be  
4 operated by an applicant for an original license before the license shall  
5 be granted, and again not later than forty-eight hours after the licensee  
6 commences operations. The office shall annually thereafter inspect or  
7 cause to be inspected the facilities of all licensees. In conducting such  
8 inspections, the office shall give (1) priority to applicants for an original  
9 license and those licensees who operate a youth camp for a single week,  
10 provided inspections of such single-week youth camps are conducted  
11 not later than forty-eight hours after the commencement of operations  
12 in such year, and (2) less priority to those licensees who have received  
13 national accreditation and against whom there were no complaints or  
14 violations from the previous year. No annual inspection shall be  
15 required under this section in the case of facilities of a licensee located  
16 in any dormitory, classroom or other building or any athletic facility

17 owned and maintained by any college or university, provided a timely  
18 safety inspection of such building or facility, satisfactory to the office, is  
19 conducted by or on behalf of such college or university.

20 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) (a) There is established a Youth  
21 Camp Safety Advisory Council within the Office of Early Childhood.  
22 The council shall provide advice to the Commissioner of Early  
23 Childhood on matters relating to safety issues at youth camps.

24 (b) The council shall consist of the following members:

25 (1) A representative of the Connecticut Camping Association  
26 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

27 (2) A representative of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks  
28 Association appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

29 (3) A representative of a nonprofit youth service organization in the  
30 state appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

31 (4) A representative of a nonprofit youth service organization in the  
32 state appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

33 (5) A representative of a nonprofit day camp appointed by the  
34 minority leader of the House of Representatives;

35 (6) A representative of a nonprofit resident camp appointed by the  
36 minority leader of the Senate;

37 (7) A representative of a for-profit day camp appointed by the House  
38 chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly  
39 having cognizance of matters relating to children;

40 (8) A representative of a for-profit resident camp appointed by the  
41 Senate chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General  
42 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children;

43 (9) A representative of a sports camp appointed by the Governor;

44 (10) A representative of an independent school camp appointed by  
45 the Governor;

46 (11) A representative of a university that hosts or conducts a summer  
47 camp appointed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood; and

48 (12) Any additional member appointed by the commissioner to fill  
49 the needs of the council based on expertise in the field.

50 (c) All appointments to the council, pursuant to subsection (b) of this  
51 section, shall be made not later than September 1, 2024. Any vacancy  
52 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

53 (d) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall schedule the first  
54 meeting of the council, which shall be held not later than September 15,  
55 2024. The members of the council shall elect the chairpersons of the  
56 council from among the members of the council at the first meeting of  
57 the council.

58 (e) The council shall elect, annually, its own chairperson and other  
59 officers as deemed necessary. The council shall meet at least once during  
60 each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairperson deems  
61 necessary or upon the request of a majority of members. The  
62 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall meet at least annually with the  
63 council. A majority of the members, but not less than ten, shall constitute  
64 a quorum. Any member who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings  
65 held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from  
66 the council. Members of the council shall serve without compensation.  
67 The Office of Early Childhood shall provide administrative assistance to  
68 facilitate the activity of the council.

69 Sec. 3. Section 19a-422 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
70 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

71 To be eligible for the issuance or renewal of a youth camp license  
72 pursuant to this chapter, the camp shall satisfy the following  
73 requirements: (1) The location of the camp shall be such as to provide

74 adequate surface drainage and afford facilities for obtaining a good  
75 water supply; (2) each dwelling unit, building and structure shall be  
76 maintained in good condition, suitable for the use to which it is put, and  
77 shall present no health or fire hazard as so certified by the office and the  
78 State Fire Marshal or local fire marshal, as indicated by a current fire  
79 marshal certificate dated within the past year and available on site when  
80 the youth camp is in operation; (3) there shall be an adequate and  
81 competent staff, which includes the camp director or assistant director,  
82 one of whom shall be on site at all times the camp is in operation,  
83 activities specialists, counselors and maintenance personnel, of good  
84 character and reputation; (4) prior to assuming responsibility for  
85 campers, staff shall be trained, at a minimum, on the camp's policies and  
86 procedures pertaining to behavioral management and supervision,  
87 emergency health and safety procedures and recognizing, preventing  
88 and reporting child abuse and neglect; (5) all hazardous activities,  
89 including, but not limited to, archery, aquatics, horseback riding and  
90 firearms instruction, shall be supervised by a qualified activities  
91 specialist who has adequate experience and training in such specialist's  
92 area of specialty; (6) the staff of a resident and nonresident camp shall  
93 at all times include an adult trained in the administration of first aid as  
94 required by the commissioner; (7) records of personal data for each  
95 camper shall be kept in any reasonable form the camp director may  
96 choose, and shall include (A) the camper's name, age and address, (B)  
97 the name, address and telephone number of the parents or guardian, (C)  
98 the dates of admission and discharge, and (D) such other information as  
99 the commissioner shall require; and (8) the licensee shall submit an  
100 annual report to the commissioner not later than October first detailing  
101 how the camp was operated, staffed and supervised and how the camp  
102 responded to medical or safety incidents during the year. Any youth  
103 camp licensed under this chapter shall operate only as the type of camp  
104 authorized by such license. Such camps shall not advertise any service  
105 they are not equipped or licensed to offer. The license shall be posted in  
106 a conspicuous place at camp headquarters and failure to so post the  
107 license shall result in the presumption that the camp is being operated  
108 in violation of this chapter.

109       Sec. 4. Subsection (e) of section 19a-421 of the general statutes is  
 110 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
 111 *2024*):

112       (e) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall have the discretion to  
 113 refuse to license under sections 19a-420 to 19a-429, inclusive, a person  
 114 to establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp, as described in section  
 115 19a-420, or to suspend or revoke the license or take any other action set  
 116 forth in any regulation adopted pursuant to section 19a-428 if, the  
 117 person who establishes, conducts or maintains such youth camp or a  
 118 person employed therein in a position connected with the provision of  
 119 care to a child or involving unsupervised access to a child, has (1) been  
 120 convicted in this state or any other state of (A) a felony as defined in  
 121 section 53a-25 involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of  
 122 physical force against another person, [of] (B) cruelty to persons under  
 123 section 53-20, (C) injury or risk of injury to or impairing morals of  
 124 children under section 53-21, (D) abandonment of children under the  
 125 age of six years under section 53-23, [or] (E) any felony where the victim  
 126 of the felony is a child under eighteen years of age, or [of] (F) a violation  
 127 of section 53a-70b of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to  
 128 January 1, 2019, 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a, [or  
 129 has] (2) a criminal record in this state or any other state that the  
 130 commissioner reasonably believes renders the person unsuitable to  
 131 establish, conduct or maintain or be employed by a youth camp, or (3)  
 132 held a license to establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp in another  
 133 state that was revoked by that state's licensing authority. However, no  
 134 refusal of a license shall be rendered except in accordance with the  
 135 provisions of sections 46a-79 to 46a-81, inclusive.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-426
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-422
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-421(e)

***Statement of Purpose:***

To impose requirements on how youth camps are inspected, to establish the Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council within the Office of Early Childhood, to require youth camps to submit annual reports and to permit the denial of a youth camp license if the applicant has had a license for a youth camp revoked in another state.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*