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# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet

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29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

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## **Overview of Youth Skill Camp Certification of Criminal Background Checks**

Effective January 1, 2014, New Hampshire implemented a law requiring Youth Skill Camps to perform background checks for camp owners, employees and volunteers who may be left alone with any child or children.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) oversees the criminal background check requirement established for youth skill camps. This program is not a licensing program. It requires criminal background checks to be conducted for all personnel who may be left alone with children. A list of currently certified camps is available online at: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/youth-skills/index.htm>.

The statutes pertaining to youth skill camps are RSA 485-A:23 and 24 and can be found online at: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/NHTOC/NHTOC-L-485-A.htm>. The rules pertaining to youth skill camps are Env-Wq 909 (dated 2014). These rules can be found on the NHDES website at: <http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/rules/index.htm#waterq>.

A “youth skill camp” is a nonprofit or for profit program with a specific curriculum that has been developed by individuals knowledgeable and experienced in the field to impart a specific skill in a logical progression of increasing difficulty over a period of three or more consecutive days. The skill is taught by at least one instructor who is knowledgeable and experienced in the skill being imparted. Skills include the teaching of sports, the arts, and scientific inquiry.

The certification period runs annually from January 1 to December 31. The certification fee is \$25 per camp per year.

The camp owner or operator must develop a background check policy in accordance with Env-Wq 909.04, to ensure that no camp staff member has a criminal conviction for any offenses for causing or threatening direct physical injury to any individual or causing or threatening harm of any nature to any child. The background check policy must require all camp staff who might be left alone with a child or children to be subject to an annual background check prior to being left alone with a child or children, and prohibit any staff member who has not been subject to the required background check from working directly with any youth unless a staff member for whom the background check has been completed is also present. The camp's background check policy must be reviewed and updated annually. The camp must make the policy available to NHDES and the public upon request, and post the policy to any camp websites and camp social media.

Not less than once in each calendar year, the camp operator must review the results of all of the personnel background checks and certifications for compliance with the established camp policy, RSA 485-A:23 & 24 and Env-Wq 909.05. The camp operator must also review any references, employment history and volunteer history submitted by or for each camp staff member to determine whether to allow each individual to work directly with youths at the camp.

The camp operator must maintain an up-to-date listing of all camp staff in a position to be left with children, together with the status of their background check.

The camp must submit a completed certification form and \$25 fee to NHDES prior to any youth arriving at the camp in each calendar year the camp operates. The form is available from the department at: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/youth-skills/index.htm>.

Submit to:  
**Youth Skill Camp Program**  
**NHDES - DWGB**  
**PO Box 95**  
**Concord, NH 03302-0095**

Make checks payable to: **Treasurer, State of NH**

Once the camp certifies compliance with the background check requirements, the department will post the camp's information on the NH Youth Skills Camp Program website at: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/youth-skills/index.htm>.

If you have any questions, please contact; Barbara Davis at [Barbara.Davis@des.nh.gov](mailto:Barbara.Davis@des.nh.gov) (603-271-2542) or Jacqueline Howarth at [Jacqueline.Howarth@des.nh.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.Howarth@des.nh.gov) (603-271-0672).