

TO: All Guiders

Sept 2015

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL GUIDERS IN NOVA SCOTIA

NEW REQUIREMENT FOR GUIDERS TAKING GIRLS CAMPING

Dear Guiders,

Camping is a key ingredient to help us provide excellent programming for our girl members. Ensuring safe and healthy camp properties is an important part of a great camping experience.

Over the past year considerable time has been spent in bringing GGC camp properties in Nova Scotia in line with the standards of the Regulations and Guidelines pursuant to the Health Protection Act, Province of Nova Scotia.

Camps operated by GGC in Nova Scotia are considered to be “recreational camps.” Under the Health Protection Act, *“recreational camp” means a camp for recreational, educational, social, or cultural or religious activities consisting of 1 or more tents, cabins, vehicles, buildings or structures established or maintained as living quarters for temporary occupancy of 3 or more days, with or without charge, and includes a camping program.*

It was very clear, as we met with the GGC campsite coordinators, that the commitment to providing a safe environment for our members was an important issue for everyone. We have broken down the regulations into manageable pieces:

Water: We are pleased to advise that all GGCNS camp properties have been registered with the NS Department of Environment for water quality purposes - this is a very important achievement !

Camp Kitchens: the Guidelines state that *“all camp kitchens are required to hold a Food Establishment Permit with all food preparation, serving and storage at recreational camps being subject to the **Food Safety Regulations**”*. We were very pleased with the discussions held with Dept of Agriculture (DoA) and their support as we worked through the regulations with each camp. We are now in the process of having all camp kitchens comply with these Regulations and, in due course, GGC camp kitchens will be licensed.

Food Hygiene Training Program: As discussions continued with the various Government Departments we became aware of the training requirement for individuals doing food preparation and/or cooking in the camp kitchens. Dept of Agriculture requires volunteers who work in camp kitchens, such as ours, to complete an approved Food Hygiene Training Program.

We recognize this requirement is new to our Guiders taking girls to camp but a necessity step to comply with the legal and regulatory requirements.

GGCNS is very fortunate to have individuals who are Guiding Members who are certified to provide this training. Areas have and will continue to offer the Volunteer Food Hygiene training to our Guiders throughout the Province. Those who take the course via GGC will automatically have their names forwarded to the Provincial Office to have their iMIS record updated. This course is also provided locally via Dept of Agriculture (<http://novascotia.ca/agri/>). Upon completion of this 3 hour Volunteer FHT course (via DoA), Guiders will be issued a Certificate of Completion which must be forwarded to the Provincial Office to be entered in the Guider's iMIS record. The course must be retaken every 5 years.

Part of the Assessment for Safe Guide papers now includes an iMIS records check to ensure one Guider or Non Member volunteer who will be involved in the food preparation has the FHT course, similar to what is now done for PRC, Safe Guide, and First Aid courses.

Effective Oct 1 2015 all Unit / District / Area camps must have a minimum of one adult member or non-member volunteer with the Volunteer Food Handling Training involved in food preparation at the camp.

GGC Nova Scotia is committed to providing the Guiders with the training needed, therefore over the coming months you will hear more about Training opportunities for the Food Hygiene Course. I encourage all Guiders to take the course – it is a valuable tool to have not only for Guiding but for areas as well.

The ultimate responsibility for all of us as Guiders is the Health and Safety of the girls and Guiders in our care. Thank you for the talent, time, and effort you put into making Guiding a great experience for our girls.....camping amongst the greatest of these experiences!

I know I can count on all of you to give this your considered and immediate attention.

Happy and safe camping!

Kathy McKay
Provincial Commissioner, Nova Scotia