# The Role of Just Culture in Safety at Camp

American Camp Association webinar
March 9, 2022

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presented by:

**Jeff Baierlein, Director, Viristar**

viristar.com
viristar.com/aca-just-culture

# Outcomes

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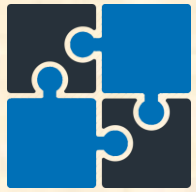
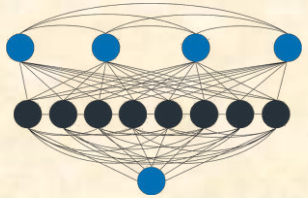
Participants will:

**Understand** how Just Culture is defined and applied across industries

**Learn** how to evaluate their organization's safety culture and use of Just Culture



**Learn** practical, tested strategies for how to apply Just Culture to their camp's prevention of & response to incidents



**Understand** Just Culture as part of systems theory-based safety management

**Gain** access to additional resources for learning more

# Principal Concepts

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- Just Culture means a practice of seeking and addressing the underlying causes of an incident, rather than reflexively blaming the person closest to the mishap
- Applying Just Culture benefits camps (and other organizations) by a) treating people fairly, and b) helping effectively address the full set of causes of incidents
- Just Culture is an expression a risk management approach informed by complex systems theory
- Just Culture is a part of an organization's safety culture, and is found in the beliefs and values that drive behavior
- Practices that show Just Culture include encouraging staff to report incidents without fear of reprisal, and seeking underlying causes in incident, risk management, and accreditation reviews

Los Alamitos
High School

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## Contributing Factors

- The Course Director was busy facilitating a high ropes element, and not free to be a safety monitor.
- The Course Director (who was also the Program Director) was new in their job, and felt they might not be fully qualified for the Course Director position at the ropes course.
- The facilitator on the launch platform was new. They had completed some training, but not the new, enhanced ropes course training the organization was in the process of implementing.
- The incident occurred at the final moments of the day, when facilitators may have been tired.
- The ladder is very heavy, making it more difficult to move back and forth, and more dangerous in a collision.

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## Recommendations

1. Ensure sufficient staff are on site for safety supervision, through changing recruiting and HR practice
2. Ensure all staff complete the full set of training activities before working at the ropes course
3. Review training materials for all program activities to ensure they are sufficiently thorough
4. Reduce director-level turnover, to support better supervision of activities and facilitator staff
5. Improve documentation of procedures for Zipline operation
6. Create a series of “Clear on the ground!” commands, similar to on-belay climbing commands, to ensure participants are released from the launch platform only when ground area is clear
7. Lower zip line cable so a smaller, lighter ladder can be used

# Just Culture

When an error occurs:

- Don’t automatically blame the person
- Look for the underlying systems that led to the error

Focus is on *what went wrong*, not *who caused the problem*

This has two benefits:

1. It empowers people to report incidents, and
2. It helps the organization resolve the underlying safety issues

# Just Culture

**Safety, But With Accountability**

Distinguish between *honest, human errors*, and *intentional bad acts*

**Human mistakes:**

- A learning opportunity for organization and its staff
- Coaching, training and similar support may be provided

**Gross negligence (willful misconduct) and reckless behavior:**

- Disciplinary action applied
- Also treated as a learning opportunity

# Risk Domains Model

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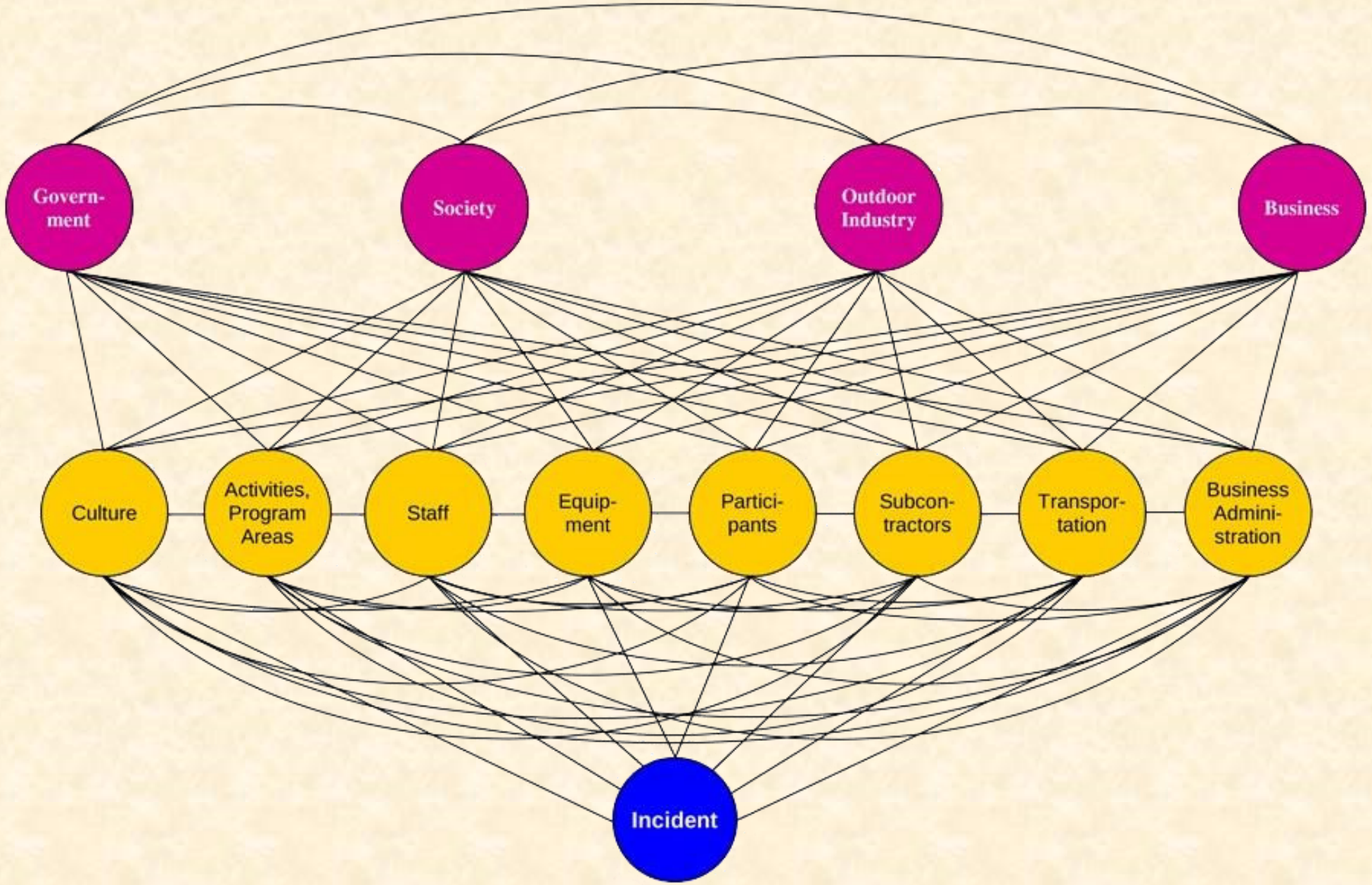

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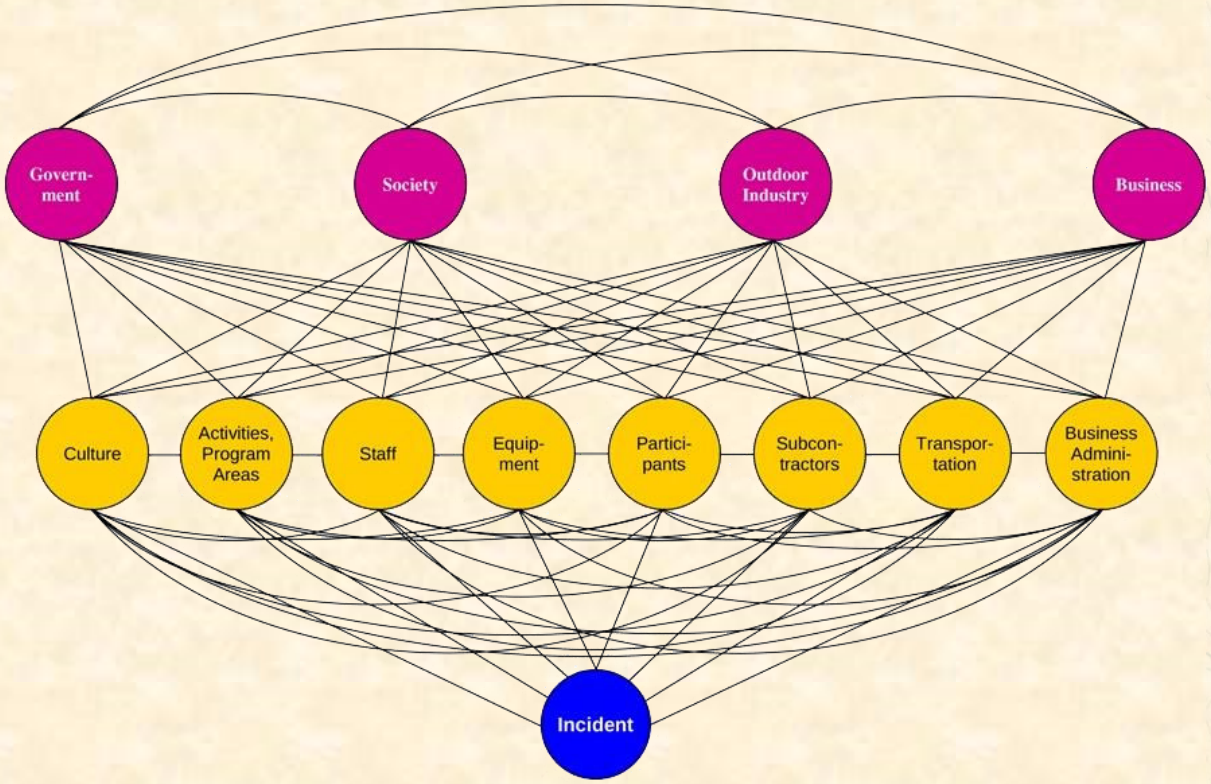


## Risk Management Instruments

- Risk Transfer
- Incident Management
- Incident Reporting
- Incident Reviews
- Risk Management Committee
- Medical Screening
- Risk Management Reviews
- Media Relations
- Documentation
- Accreditation
- Seeing Systems

*Manage risks in risk domains with policies, procedures, values and systems*

# Just Culture and ACA

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- ACA standards comprehensive & high quality
- Don’t appear to fully employ complex STS theory

american CAMP association®

| AD | Administration: Risk Management<br>AD.14 - INCIDENT REPORTING AND ANALYSIS |
|---|---|
| | AD.14.1 - Are staff required to complete written reports describing incidents, accidents, “near misses,” and emergencies that may not result in injuries?<br><br>AD.14.2 - With assistance from outside advisors, does the camp:,<br>A. Annually review and analyze when and where incidents, accidents, and injuries occurred;<br>B. Identify steps to reduce incidents, accidents, and injuries; and<br>C. Modify procedures and implement changes as necessary? |

- Internal camp processes can add Just Culture elements

# Culture

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**What is Culture?**

An integrated pattern of individual and organizational **behavior**, based on shared **beliefs and values**

# Behavior Springs from Beliefs and Values

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**Actions**--like leaves and stems, visible

**Values** and **beliefs**--like soil and roots, invisible

# Safety Culture

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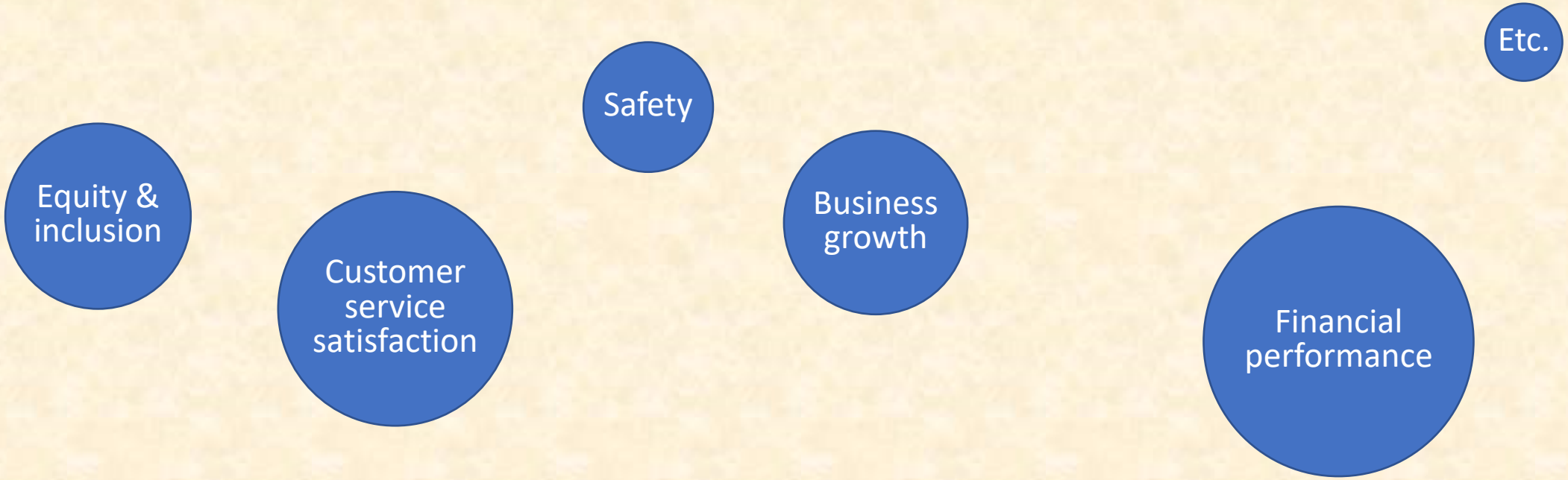
**What is *Safety Culture*?**

The influence of organizational culture on safety

Specifically: the values, beliefs, and behaviors that affect the extent to which safety is emphasized over competing goals



# Evaluating Safety Culture

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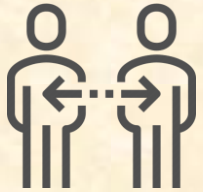
## Characteristics of Positive Safety Culture

**Leadership From the Top.** Top leaders actively support safety.

**Inclusion.** Everyone is involved in safety.

**Suffusion.** Safety spreads through all values, tasks, & processes.

**Culture of Questioning.** It's okay to question authority on safety.



**Collaboration.** Staff work together on safety.

**Effective Communication.** Staff communicate about safety between all levels.

**Just Culture.** Individuals are not punished for honest mistakes.

Safety culture survey at [viristar.com/aca-just-culture](viristar.com/aca-just-culture)

# Just Culture in Safety Culture

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**Actions**

- When an incident occurs, we seek to understand the underlying causes, and not automatically blame the person closest to the incident
- We proactively look at all risk domains when planning for safety

**Values**

- Treating staff respectfully
- Using the most effective approaches for preventing loss

**Belief**

- Incidents often have multiple causes

# Applying Just Culture

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## Incident Reports

Incident Report

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Attach a complete sheet of the subject's Medical History Form to this report. Attach SOAP Note as applicable.
Use additional sheets for documentation if necessary. Fill this form out completely and neatly in blue or black ink.

Subject Name: _____ ☐ Staff ☐ Student Sex: ☐ M ☐ F ☐ Other Age: _____ Program Type: _____
Primary Caregiver's Name: _____ Course Director's Name: _____
Client Organization: _____ Day of Course Incident Occurred: _____
Incident Date: _____ Time: _____ a.m. / p.m. Geographical Location of Incident: _____
Course Location: _____ Course Dates: _____ # Staff: _____ # Participants: _____ # Program Days: _____

Type of Incident: (check all that apply)
☐ Injury ☐ Illness ☐ Motivational/Behavioral ☐ Property Damage
☐ Near Miss ☐ Evacuation ☐ Missing Person ☐ Fatality

Course Format: ☐ Residential ☐ Basecamp ☐ Backpacking ☐ Canoeing ☐ Kayaking ☐ Challenge Course ☐ Other: _____

Type of Injury or Property Damage: (check all applicable)
☐ Muscle sprain ☐ Ligament sprain ☐ Dislocation ☐ Fracture ☐ Tendonitis ☐ Laceration ☐ Puncture ☐ Blister
☐ Avulsion ☐ Sunburn ☐ Burn ☐ Frostbite ☐ Skin ☐ Eye injury
☐ Dental ☐ Bruise, contusion or similar soft tissue trauma ☐ Head injury (without loss of consciousness)
☐ Head injury (with loss of consciousness) ☐ Near drowning ☐ Other: _____
☐ If property damage, describe: _____

Anatomical Location of Injury:
☐ Head ☐ Shoulder ☐ Wrist ☐ Upper Back ☐ Thigh ☐ Foot/Toe ☐ Face ☐ Knee
☐ Upper Arm ☐ Neck ☐ Hand/Finger ☐ Eye ☐ Chest ☐ Pelvis ☐ Lower Leg ☐ Forearm
☐ Abdomen ☐ Hip ☐ Ankle ☐ Lower Back ☐ Elbow ☐ Other: _____

Type of Illness: check all applicable
☐ Abdominal or other gastrointestinal problem (without diarrhea) ☐ Diarrhea
☐ Allergic reaction (to: _____) ☐ Apparent food-related illness
☐ Mild or localized ☐ Skin infection
☐ Severe, generalized or anaphylaxis ☐ Eye infection
☐ Upper respiratory illness (runny nose, congestion, "cold") ☐ Chest pain or cardiac condition
☐ Lower respiratory illness (asthma, bronchitis) ☐ Altitude illness
☐ Hypothermia (specify core temperature if known ____ °C) ☐ Nonspecific fever illness
☐ Heat illness (specify core temperature if known ____ °C) ☐ Urinary tract infection
☐ Heat cramps ☐ Heat exhaustion
☐ Heat stroke ☐ Other

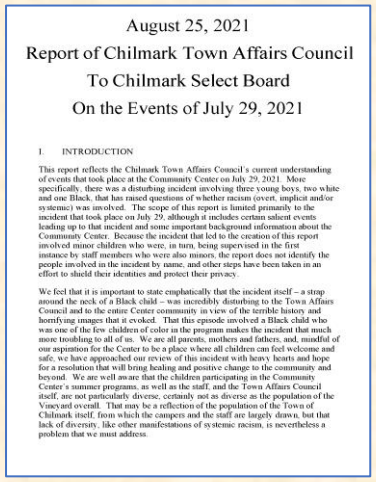
Environmental Conditions at Time of Incident:
Temperature: ____ °C Precipitation ☐ None ☐ Rain ☐ Snow ☐ Other: _____ Wind Speed: ____ kph
Visibility: ☐ Clear ☐ Limited to: _____ ☐ meters or ☐ km
Surface &Conditions: check all that apply
☐ On trail ☐ Off trail ☐ Even ☐ Uneven ☐ Sloped ☐ Wet ☐ Dry
☐ Grass ☐ Sand ☐ Dirt ☐ Rock ☐ Mud ☐ Snow ☐ Ice

Immediate Cause: Prioritize major applicable categories 1, 2, 3 etc.
___ Altitude ___ Avalanche ___ Carelessness ___ Cold exposure
___ Dark/poor visibility ___ Dehydration ___ Exceeded ability ___ Exhaustion
___ Fall/slip on trail ___ Fall on rock ___ Fall on snow ___ Falling rock
___ Failure to follow instructions ___ Falling tree/branch ___ Hazardous animal/insect (specify _____)
___ Hostile bystander ___ Immersion/submersion ___ Improper screening ___ Inadequate equipment
___ Inadequate instruction ___ Inadequate supervision ___ Inexperience/poor judgment ___ Intoxication (alcohol/drugs)
___ Lightning ___ Misbehavior ___ Missing/lost ___ Overuse injury
___ Plant poisoning/toxicity ___ Poor hygiene ___ Poor technique ___ Preexist. medical condition
___ Psychological ___ Sunburn ___ Tech. system failure ___ Unfit.
___ Unknown ___ Weather ___ Other (explain) _____

No reprisal for submitting

Discuss in training, documents

## Incident Reviews


August 25, 2021

Report of Chilmark Town Affairs Council
To Chilmark Select Board
On the Events of July 29, 2021

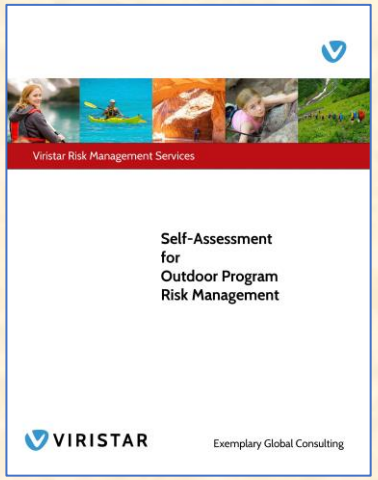
I. INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the Chilmark Town Affairs Council's current understanding of events that took place at the Community Center on July 29, 2021. More specifically, there was a disturbing incident involving three young boys, two white and one Black, that has raised questions of whether racism (overt, implicit and/or systemic) was involved. The scope of this report is limited primarily to the incident that took place on July 29, although it includes certain salient events leading up to that incident and some important background information about the Community Center. Because the incident that led to the creation of this report involved minor children who were, in turn, being supervised in the first instance by staff members who were also minors, the report does not identify the people involved in the incident by name, and other steps have been taken in an effort to shield their identities and protect their privacy.

We feel that it is important to state emphatically that the incident itself – a strap around the neck of a Black child – was incredibly disturbing to the Town Affairs Council and to the entire Center community in view of the terrible history and horrifying images that it evoked. That this episode involved a Black child who was one of the few children of color in the program makes the incident that much more troubling to all of us. We are all parents, mothers and fathers, and, mindful of our aspiration for the Center to be a place where all children can feel welcome and safe, we have approached our review of this incident with heavy hearts and hope for a resolution that will bring healing and positive change to the community and beyond. We are well aware that the children participating in the Community Center's summer programs, as well as the staff, and the Town Affairs Council itself, are not particularly diverse, certainly not as diverse as the population of the Vineyard overall. That may be a reflection of the population of the Town of Chilmark itself, from which the campers and the staff are largely drawn, but that lack of diversity, like other manifestations of systemic racism, is nevertheless a problem that we must address.

Systems-informed: addresses all domains

## Risk Management Reviews

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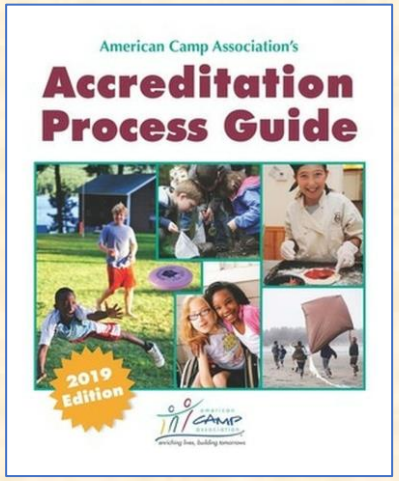
## Accreditation Reviews




Go beyond linear standards to assess safety culture

# Application: Incident Reports

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## Incidents in the Outdoors: Campcraft Activities

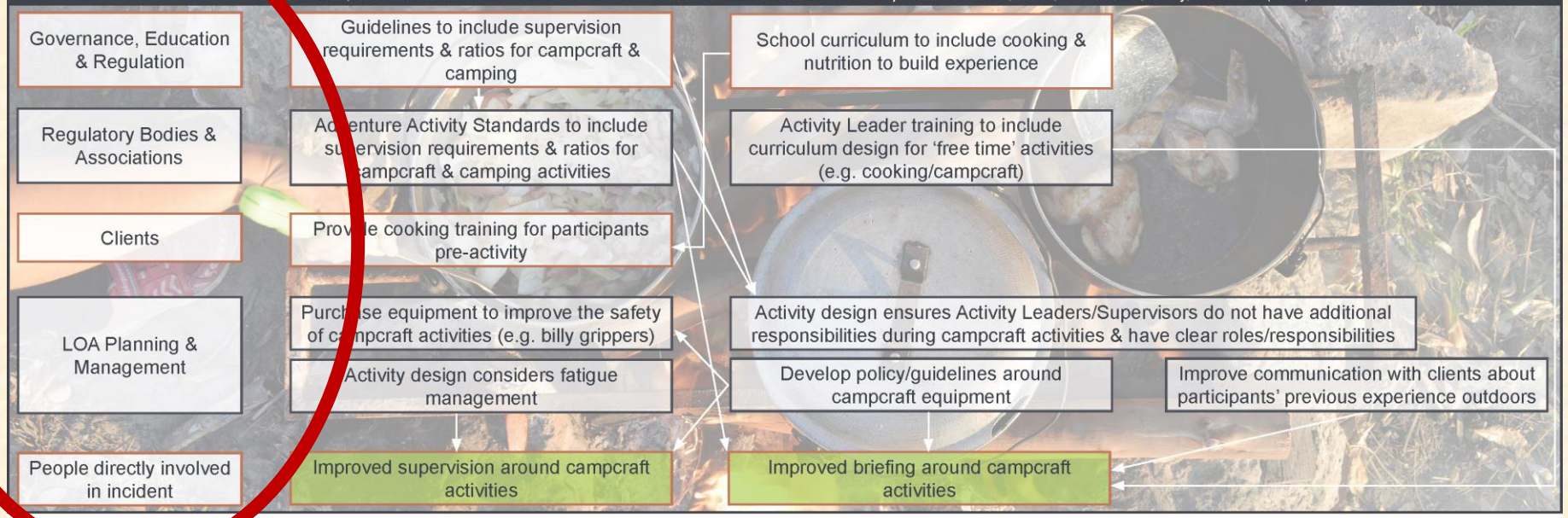
| Prevalence | Most frequently reported incident types | Incident Severity |
|---|---|---|
| From **298,046** participation days in Campcraft (cooking/eating) activities, **473** injury and illness incidents were reported | **360** hand/finger injury incidents were reported (e.g. burns, open wounds, superficial, or bites/stings)<br>**35** illness incidents were reported (e.g. gastric/nausea/vomiting, allergic reactions, or headache/migraines) | **89%** of injuries and illnesses were minor in severity, indicating that the injuries sustained had short term impact and required localised care |

### Most frequently reported contributory factors for Campcraft incidents

**Parent's** communication with activity provider regarding participant allergies & medications
**Management** communication/training
**Caterers** unaware of participant dietary requirements
**Peer interactions/teamwork** distraction; competitive behaviours; communication between participants about hazards
**Supervisor/Leader's** communication of procedures/techniques for preparing food & lack of supervision
**Participant's** experience using kitchen equipment or cooking over fire
**Environment** including ants, mosquitoes, bees in the vicinity
**Equipment** including sharp knife, trangia burner, methylated spirits, oil, gas

### PreventiMap

This PreventiMap provides a framework of interventions that can be implemented to prevent and manage campcraft related incidents. The grey boxes show the interventions; the green boxes show the key outcomes of the interventions, and the lines show how the interventions interact to achieve the outcomes. *Adapted from Goode, Read, van Mulken, Clacy, & Salmon (2016)*




**Australian National Incident Dataset**
September 14, 2018 to January 6, 2021

*Scott McLean, Lauren Coventon, Caroline Finch, Paul Salmon*

**UPLOADS**
Understanding and Preventing Led Outdoor Accidents Data System
www.uploadsproject.org

# Application: RM Review

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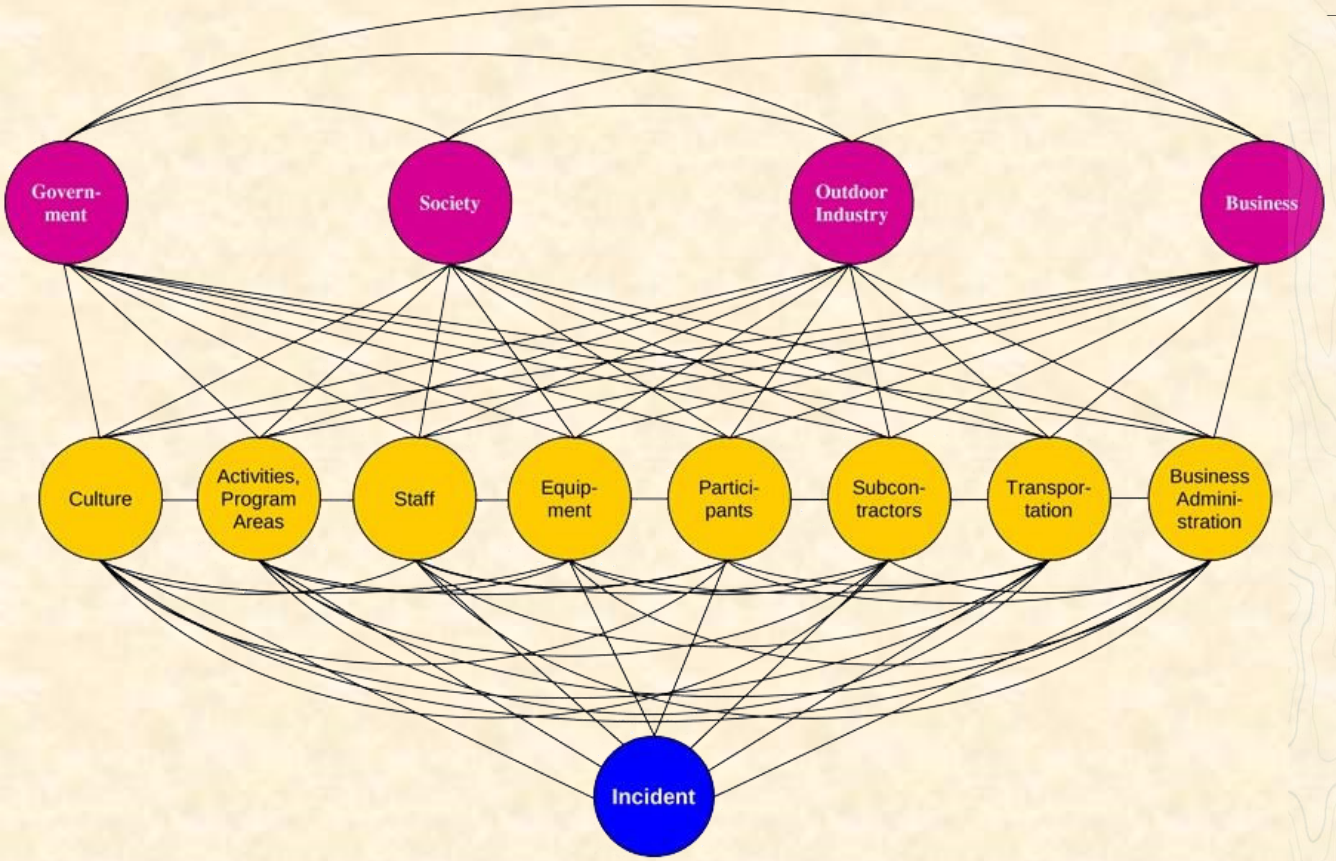


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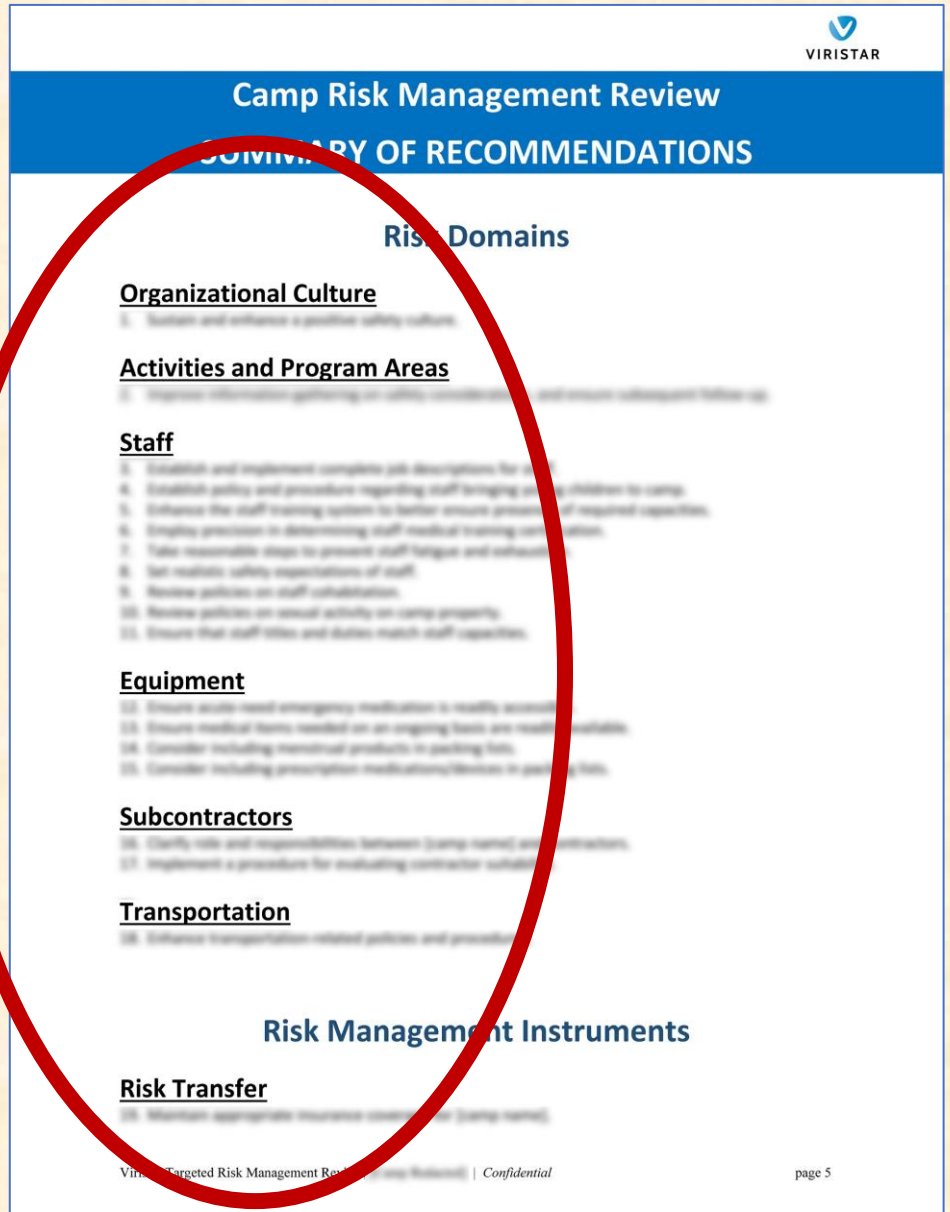

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## Camp Risk Management Review

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Risk Domains

**Organizational Culture**

1. Sustain and enhance a positive safety culture.

**Activities and Program Areas**

2. Improve information gathering on safety considerations [illegible] and ensure subsequent follow-up.

**Staff**

3. Establish and implement complete job descriptions for [illegible].
4. Establish policy and procedure regarding staff bringing [illegible] children to camp.
5. Enhance the staff training system to better ensure presence of required capacities.
6. Employ precision in determining staff medical training considerations.
7. Take reasonable steps to prevent staff fatigue and exhaustion.
8. Set realistic safety expectations of staff.
9. Review policies on staff cohabitation.
10. Review policies on sexual activity on camp property.
11. Ensure that staff titles and duties match staff capacities.

**Equipment**

12. Ensure acute-need emergency medication is readily accessible.
13. Ensure medical items needed on an ongoing basis are readily available.
14. Consider including menstrual products in packing lists.
15. Consider including prescription medications/devices in packing lists.

**Subcontractors**

16. Clarify role and responsibilities between [camp name] and contractors.
17. Implement a procedure for evaluating contractor suitability.

**Transportation**

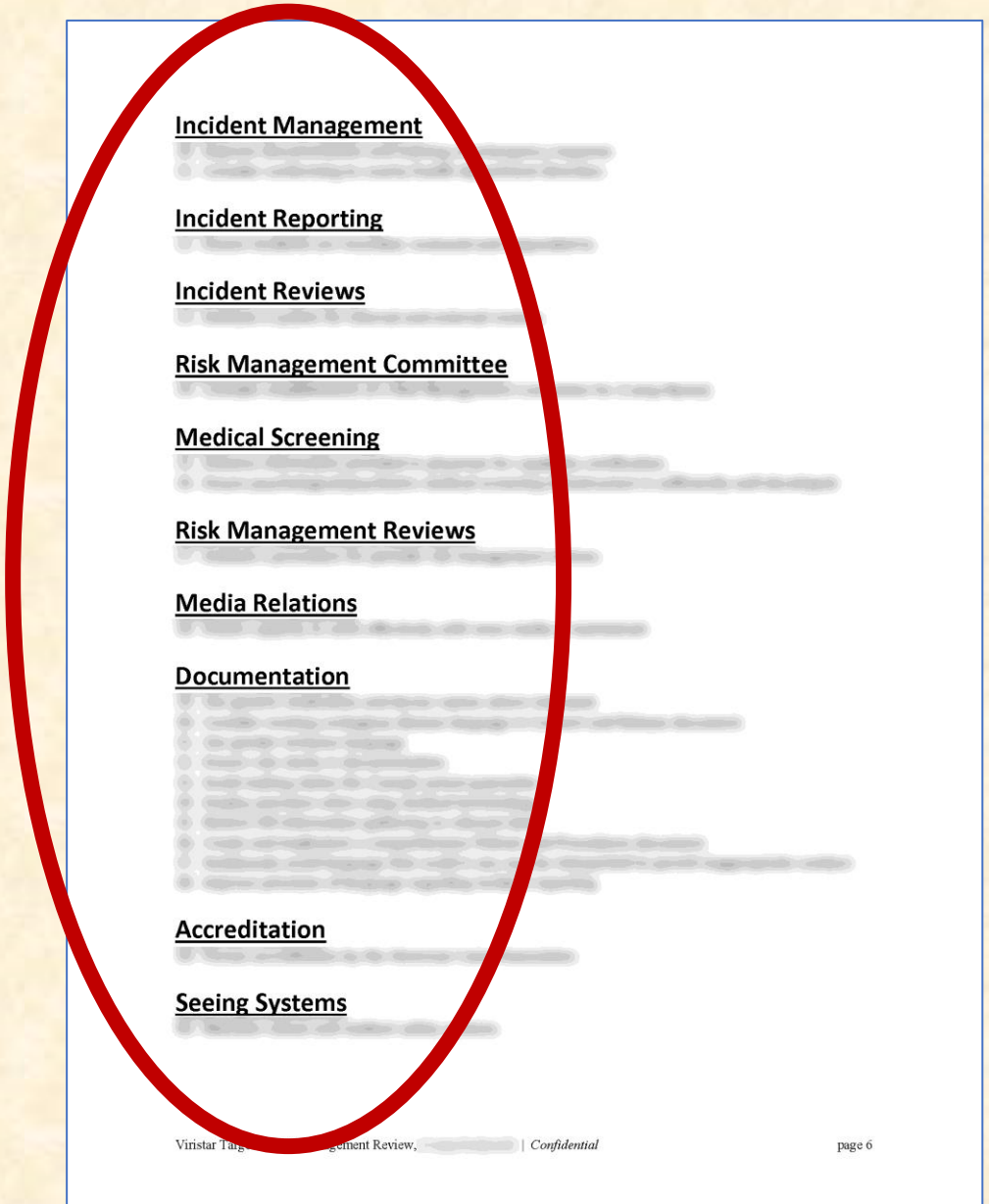
18. Enhance transportation-related policies and procedures.

### Risk Management Instruments

**Risk Transfer**

19. Maintain appropriate insurance coverage for [camp name].





**Incident Management**

**Incident Reporting**

**Incident Reviews**

**Risk Management Committee**

**Medical Screening**

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**Documentation**

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**Seeing Systems**

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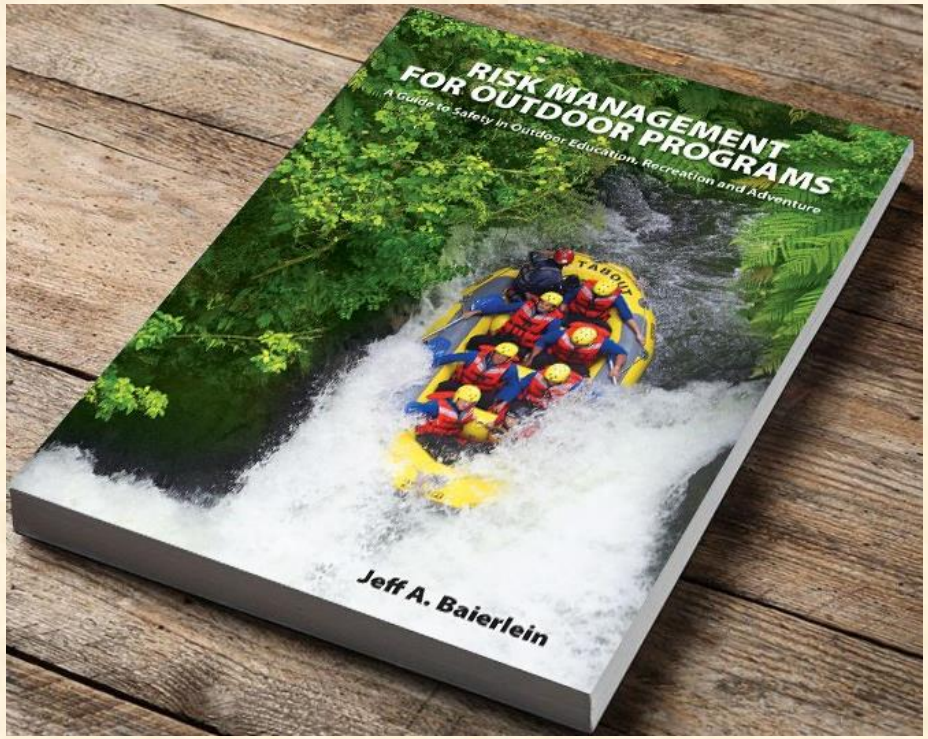
# For More Information

VIRISTAR

*Risk Management for Outdoor Programs: A Guide to Safety in Outdoor Education, Recreation and Adventure*




**Risk Management for Outdoor Programs**

40 hour online training, held over 4 weeks

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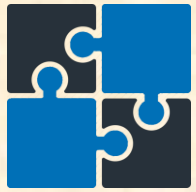

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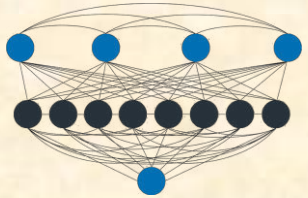

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