

Quebec Certified Camp Association

MEMBERSHIP POLICY AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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Notes:

In this document the terms "camper" and "participant" have the same meaning.

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MEMBERSHIP

POLICY AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



Section I

- History and role of certification
- Membership policy

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History and Role of Certification

The history of camps in Quebec dates to the creation of a summer camp in 1894, the Montreal YMCA Camp for Boys. In this period of intense industrialization, the YMCA's goal was to provide inner-city boys with a wilderness experience. The first camp for the francophone community appeared in 1912 (Colonie Les Grèves). Many of the francophone summer camps had their origins through the efforts of religious orders.

In 1960 a group of camp directors joined to exchange ideas and develop common efforts. The Quebec Camping Association received its charter in 1961. Right from the start, the activities centred on training and promotion, with publication of the first camp directory. In 1967, the first accreditation program for camps in Quebec was established. Member camps gave themselves three years to meet the standards set by the new program. In 1970, certification became an essential condition for a camp to be recognized as a QCA member.

From 1967 to 1979 the certification system was very specific with standards for each activity and type of camp. The evolution of the camp milieu and the changing needs of Quebec society then brought about a revision and tightening of the standards. Today member camps must comply with more than thirty standards which can be adapted to the different types of camp programs. We can easily compare our certification system with others currently in use in other provinces of Canada and in the United States.

In the spring of 1993, major modifications were made to the Association's Membership and Certification Policy. The certification standards now apply to three different programs: the residential camp program, the day camp program, and the nature class program. For a camp, certification is a useful management tool for in the quality and the safety of its programs. Furthermore, certification is a label of quality, which when used in the camp's advertising, serves it in increasing notoriety and improving public image.

In September 2010, the "group" and "family camp" programs were integrated into the process leading to camp certification.

Membership Policy of the Quebec Certified Camp Association

1. Conditions, Applicable Standards and Desirable Practices

For the Association des camps du Québec (QCCA), certification of camps means a pledge of security and quality. For consumers, certification a form of guarantee of quality of the service they receive when they use these camps.

The certification program represents a privileged quality-control for the camp product. Moreover, this sign of quality allows enterprises recognized as camps, so long as they declare themselves as such, to enhance both their reputation and public image. Also, consumers are increasingly conscious of the importance of having certified camps. In this light the process of certification is constantly evolving so as to adapt to the reality of camp programs and consumer needs.

The membership and certification policy of the QCCA requires enterprises which offer residential camp, day camp or nature class programs and which are certified, to comply with the definition of these programs and to abide by a certain number of conditions and standards. This obligation runs for the entire length of the enterprise's certification. Certain conditions and standards are generally applicable and compulsory for all enterprises. Others are to be applied only to the specific certified programs.

This document contains the definitions for the different programs for which a certification application can be made as well as the conditions and standards applicable.

The *Standards Book* contains mandatory standards and desirable practices. Mandatory standards apply each year to each certified program. Standards are listed as Category A or Category B (refer to the Standards Table Summary, Section II).

It also contains mention of certain desirable practices, which are not compulsory. However the QCCA believes that enforcement of such practices by its certified members could improve the services they offer and help maintain the excellent reputation and renown that these enterprises have already acquired with the greater public.

To be eligible for admission in the Association, an organization camp must either have its head office or operate its camp in Quebec.

2. Programs for Which Certification Can be Issued

The Association des camps certifiés du Québec may issue general certification to a corporation or organization applicable to a camp offering one or several of the following programs:

2.1 The Residential Camp program

A residential camp program offers to individuals or groups programming, including accommodations, of an educational or recreational nature, managed and supervised by trained personnel, which promotes learning to live communally and development of the whole person through a sustained relationship of the camper with the environment and camp personnel, within the context of an organizational structure and through the use of facilities adapted to the specific clientele and to the programming.

2.2 The Day Camp program

The day camp program offers varied programming of an educational and recreational nature that promotes learning to live communally, a relationship with the community and development of the whole person through a sustained relationship between trained camp counsellors and participants. The program, which lasts a minimum of five consecutive days, and during which participants return home each evening, requires the constant presence of participants during the hours the camp is in session. The organizational structure and facilities are adapted to the specific clientele and to the programming.

2.3 The “Nature Class” program

The nature class is offered to school groups on a day or residential basis. It is a program conceived and delivered by the camp's trained personnel which emphasizes personal development through group activities. The nature class program is an educational and recreational experience which, within its own specific orientation and milieu, complements the school program.

2.4 The Group program

Group program: The Group program offers its clientele a structure adapted to the needs of a group and programming including individual and group activities that are structured and/or open, recreational and educational, with or without accommodation. Supervision of the clientele welcomed as a group created beforehand is shared between camp staff and the designated group leader with responsibilities established beforehand by both parties.

Sub-programs of the *group* program include:

- **Recreational groups – children and/or adults** (e.g., day camp outings, groups of scouts, extracurricular committees, sports, cultural and community groups, various associations, businesses...)
- **Groups for persons with disabilities – children and/or adults**

2.5 The Family program:

Family program: The Family program offers its clientele a structure adapted to the needs of families and programming including individual and group activities that are structured and/or open, recreational and educational, with or without accommodation. Supervision of the clientele welcomed as a family composed of at least one adult and child is shared between camp staff and the designated family adult with responsibilities established beforehand by both parties.

Sub-programs of the family program include:

- **Family program for adult(s) with child(ren)**
- **Family program adapted for persons with disabilities – adult(s) with child(ren) and/or adult(s)**

3. Logistics of Membership and Certification Policy

- 3.1** When applying for certification for the first time or requesting a renewal, the enterprise must use the forms prescribed by the QCCA. These forms can be obtained from the QCCA.
- 3.2** A certification inspection is done of every first-time applicant for each program recognized by the QCCA.
- 3.3** A certification inspection is compulsory during the year following the first certification acceptance.
- 3.4** Thereafter a certification inspection is done every 3 years.
- 3.5** Notwithstanding the provisions in article 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, the QCCA reserves the right to make, if it is deemed necessary, a certification inspection every year. Further, it also reserves the right to conduct a certification inspection if one of the following major changes occurs in the certified enterprise:
- New owner
 - New camp director
 - New location
 - New orientation of the activities offered
 - New program (residential camp, day camp, nature class, etc.)
 - New management corporation for the camp or the nature class program
 - Further to one or more complaints;
 - Finally, it reserves the right to make surprise inspections of certified enterprises.
- 3.6** The QCCA sends a certification renewal form as well as other forms that may be required to every enterprise certified the previous year. The enterprise must return them duly completed within the time prescribed by the QCCA. Furthermore if any major changes, as indicated in article 3.5 occur, the enterprise must immediately inform the QCCA and fill out the appropriate documents if necessary.
- 3.7** Renewal certification applications must be sent to the QCCA before November 1st.
- 3.8** The certification notice issued by the QCCA is valid for one year, from November 1st to October 31st.
- IMPORTANT 3.9** An enterprise certified for one of the QCCA programs and which offers services like those mentioned in the definition of one or another of the programs of the QCCA, must mandatorily also be certified for those programs.
- 3.10** The QCCA provides the public with a list of all the certified enterprises with the exception of those to whom it has issued a notice of suspended certification or of certification with respite. However, no mention is made on this list of an enterprise which has obtained a certification notice with warning or with warning and consultation.
- 3.11** Enterprises which have received a notice of suspended certification or of certification with respite, in accordance with articles 4.4.4 or 4.4.6, cannot claim, suggest or allow the false perception that they are certified by QCCA.

- 3.12** The QCCA can allow an enterprise already certified for one of its programs to advertise for another program even if the enterprise is not yet certified for it, provided that the QCCA deems that the information and documents provided by the enterprise are sufficient to judge the seriousness of the project. For this purpose, the enterprise must agree, in writing, to respect the standards relative to this program. It must also provide the QCCA with a synopsis of the program accompanied by the list of measures it intends to take in order to enforce these standards.
- 3.13** The QCCA reserves the right not to reconsider for 3 years certification applications or renewals of certification if it is found to contain false declarations or falsified documents.

4. Procedures for Membership and Certification Application

4.1 Documents required when making a first membership or certification application

Any enterprise interested in becoming a member camp of the QCCA and certified for a residential camp, day camp or nature class must complete the form prescribed by the QCCA and return it to QCCA's office accompanied by the following documents:

- 4.1.1** Complete the membership form in its entirety;
- 4.1.2** Provide a copy of your promotional tools;
- 4.1.3** Briefly describe services offered (complementary to the activities grid of the membership form);
- 4.1.4** Briefly describe facilities and equipment available for your activities;
- 4.1.5** Prepare a cheque or money order in the amount of **\$650.00 + \$100 per site + taxes (non refundable)**. This amount covers file-opening fees, application processing, training on certification standards, cost of sending the *Toolbox* and the first certification visit.

4.2 Steps for the certification visit after a first application

Following receipt of the documents described in article 4.1, the QCCA will analyze the application and decide if the enterprise seems capable of meeting the definition of the programs for which it is making a certification application. The *Standards Book* of the Association des camps certifiés du Québec and the *Toolbox* can also be provided in electronic format.

Thereafter, camp management must attend a **mandatory** information and interpretation session on our standards program (date, time and locations to be confirmed, traditionally in Montréal and Québec City). This is a great way for an organization better to prepare for a certification visit.

In addition to conforming to membership conditions described earlier, the organization or corporation must complete the following steps:

- 4.2.1 The A.C.Q. mandates a consultant to conduct a certification visit. As soon as the consultant's mandate is confirmed, he or she contacts the organization or corporation to establish a date for the certification visit.
- 4.2.2 As soon as the consultant's mandate is confirmed the consultant will contact the enterprise and arrange a date for the certification inspection.
- 4.2.3 During the consultant's inspection, the enterprise must show that it fulfils the definition of the programs and that it conforms to all the conditions and standards provided for in the membership and certification policy of the QCCA. It must allow the consultant access to all its facilities and activities available within the structure of the program for which it is making a certification application. Finally, it must allow the consultant access to all documents for purpose of inspection, and copies of all the documents to be kept by the consultant must be supplied.
- 4.2.4 During the consultant's visit, the enterprise must remit to the insurance inspection form as well as the menu approval form, duly completed, and staff list.
- 4.2.5 At the end of the inspection and when applicable, the consultant remits to the enterprise a preliminary report mentioning the conditions and standards that fall short of stipulated QCCA requirements, and indicates the length of time the enterprise has to conform to these.
- 4.2.6 Following the inspection, the consultant draws up a written report and transfers the file to the QCCA membership board.
- 4.2.7 The development coordinator studies the consultant's report and evaluates the conformity with the definition of the program or programs for which an application has been made and if the prescribed conditions and standards have been met. It then issues a recommendation to the QCCA board of directors.
- 4.2.8 After studying the recommendations, the QCCA board of directors will make a decision and issue the appropriate notice.
- 4.2.9 If the camp is granted certification, it can display the QCCA logo on its promotional tools and is entitled to access to all QCCA services. **Subsequently, upon membership renewal the following fall, the camp must renew its membership in accordance with the policy on annual renewal fees.**
- 4.2.10 The following year, the newly certified camp will automatically be reviewed for certification a second time and in keeping with the same procedures as those outlined in Article 4.2 (inspection fee included in annual renewal fee).

4.3 Six types of notices relating to certification

The QCCA board of directors can, regarding a new certification application or certification renewal application, issue the following notices:

4.3.1 Certification

If the enterprise meets the definition of the programs and all of the conditions and standards indicated in the present membership and certification policy.

4.3.2 Certification with warning

If the enterprise meets the definition of the programs and the conditions in the present policy, respects the mandatory standards but departs from a maximum of 2 (two) other norms for each program for which it is applying, a certification notice with warning is issued. The notice mentions the delay granted so that the enterprise may conform to the indicated standards. It also mentions the documents to produce as proof of conformity. The enterprise must, within the delay prescribed in the notice, take the appropriate steps in order to conform and send the QCCA the duly completed attestation of conformity to non-respected standards form.

4.3.3 Certification with warning and compulsory consultation

Should the QCCA board of directors decide that certification with warning must be issued to an enterprise and that the latter needs a compulsory consultation, the QCCA may issue a certification with warning plus compulsory consultation. The notice will indicate the time in which the enterprise must make changes to be in compliance with standards and requirements with regard to the compulsory consultation and the documents it must produce to attest to its compliance with the aforementioned. The enterprise must, within the prescribed timeframe mentioned in the notice, take the appropriate measures to conform to the standards and requirements and submit the required documents to the QCCA.

Note: In the event of a compulsory consultation, the QCCA may require the directors or camp heads of new organizations to attend the following training activities during their first year of membership: Coordinator Training Program; Laws and Regulations; Risk and Crisis Management.

4.3.4 Suspended certification

A notice of suspended certification is issued to an enterprise for a fixed period of time under the following circumstances:

- If it globally meets the conditions and standards of the certification program but needs a delay in order to complete its files;
- If it is unable to meet certain essential standards for reasons beyond its control;
- If it must suspend its activities for a period of time.

4.3.5 Non-certification

A notice of non-certification can be issued to an enterprise for the following reasons:

- If it does not fall within the definition of the programs for which it is applying for certification, or
- If it does not conform to the conditions contained in the present policy, that are applicable to it, or
- If it does not meet any one of the mandatory standards, or

- If it fails to meet more than two (2) other standards for each of the programs for which it has requested certification.

Note: Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, the QCCA board of directors reserves the right to issue to the enterprise at fault, a notice of non-certification if, in their opinion, exceptional circumstances justify this.

4.3.6 Withdrawal of certification with respite

A notice of withdrawal of certification with respite may be issued by the board of directors to an enterprise in any of the following circumstances:

- During the study of a notice of non-certification issued by the hearing committee;
- Upon recommendation of a withdrawal with respite made by the hearing committee formed under the terms of the general regulations;
- If the camp has received a notice of non-certification issued by the board of directors of the Association and if the camp files a request for a withdrawal of certification with respite;
- If the camp has shown that it has regained sufficient control over the situation so as to correct the camp's dossier;
- If the camp is unable to meet crucial requirements for reasons beyond the camp's control.

Before issuing a notice of withdrawal of certification with respite, the board of directors must ensure that the camp acknowledges in writing having read the grounds for blame and accepts the conditions to be complied with, which are included with the notice of withdrawal of certification with respite.

Conditions for obtaining a release from a withdrawal of certification with respite:

At the date of the review set by the Board of Directors, the development coordinator examines the file and presents a recommendation to the Board of Directors concerning corrective measures taken with respect to the grounds for blame. The decision of the board of directors is final.

Consequences of a withdrawal of certification with respite:

- The member cannot display the Association logo or lead people to believe that the camp is accredited by the Association or that it complies with Association standards.
- The member cannot participate in promotional activities and advertising services offered by the Association.
- The member is entitled to other services offered by the QCCA, such as insurance and information sessions.

4.4 Request for Revision for a Notice of Non-certification Following a Certification Renewal Application

The enterprise may, within 30 days of the date of the notice of non-certification issued following the certification renewal application, request in writing that the QCCA board of directors revise its decision. In these circumstances, the council or its designated hearing committee hears the enterprise and then gives the decision

it deems appropriate. The decision must be made by a two-third majority of its members. The decision of the board to maintain a notice of non-accreditation (issued to the enterprise) results in revocation of membership and the loss of all rights and privileges attached.

If the enterprise does not appeal the notice of non-certification at the expiration of the delay for appeal the same consequences as described in the preceding paragraph are applicable.

4.5 Removal of Certification and Revocation Membership

4.5.1 The QCCA board of directors can, with a two-third majority decision by its members, pronounce the removal of certification and revocation of membership of an enterprise for the following reasons.;

- a) If at one time or another following the last certification issued to them, it was found that within the programs offered the any one of the mandatory standards was not respected
- b) If at one time or another following the last certification issued to them, it was found that within the programs offered more than two (2) standards, with the exception of the standards mentioned in paragraph a), were not respected
- c) If the enterprise fails to submit within the required period the annual agreement form to respect rules pertaining to membership and certification as outlined in 4.3.1
- d) If during the delay granted the enterprise did not conform to the standards that were indicated in the notice of certification with warning issued to them
- e) If within the delay granted the enterprise did not conform to the standards that were indicated or meet the requirements of the consultation that were imposed in the notice of certification with warning and compulsory consultation issued to them
- f) If it did not send to the QCCA within the delay granted, the attestation of conformity to standards form that was joined to the notice of certification with warning or the notice of certification with warning and compulsory consultation issued to them or if the form was incorrectly completed.

However, before proceeding with the withdrawal of the certification and the revocation of membership of any enterprise which does not conform to the membership and certification policy, the board must, by registered letter, inform the said enterprise of the time, date and location for the hearing of their case as well as briefly explain the accusations and offer an opportunity to be heard.

4.5.2 Notwithstanding article 4.6.1, the QCCA board of directors reserves the right at any time to withdraw certification of an enterprise and revoke its status as member in the following circumstances:

- a) If it is shown that the safety of participants or personnel is threatened
- b) If it contravenes any one mandatory standard

The board of directors must, however, allow the enterprise the opportunity to be heard within the following 30 days.

- 4.5.3** The withdrawal of certification and revocation of membership results in the loss of all rights and privileges as a member.

5. Control of Designation and Certification Logo

The official titles of programs recognized and certified by the Association des camps du Québec are:

- Certified Residential Camp
- Certified Day Camp
- Certified Nature Class
- Certified Group program
- Certified Family program

The titles residential camp, day camp, and nature class may not be used by a member organization if it operates a similar program that is not recognized and certified by the Association des camps du Québec.

Member organizations must use the certification logos suggested and provided by Association des camps du Québec in their entirety.

The word "camp" in the following pages includes the programs certified by the Association:

- Residential Camp
- Day Camp
- Nature Class
- Group program
- Family program

