

2008 Child Sex Abuse Update

Sexual abuse claims involving children while at camp continue in 2008. As in prior years, about half of the incidents involved camper-to-camper activity and half resulted from possible staff-to-camper abuse.

For the second year in a row, a returning senior staff member has been caught video recording teen male campers performing sexual acts. This is disturbing on a number of levels:

- How long has this been taking place, and what other sexual abuse has occurred?
- What supervision policies were violated for the staff member to have time alone in the cabin with campers?
- The video recordings of multiple campers without any of them disclosing the incidents raise questions about the camp's "culture" and its definition of acceptable behavior.

Take time to review your camp policies regarding child abuse prevention and staff supervision to determine if they are simply policies, or in fact practices. Is a staff member ever alone with campers? How does staff respond when they find another staff member alone with a camper? What is the camp's policy regarding video recordings? Child protection requires constant vigilance by all staff members.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.