

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1041  
Health

(Delegate Spiegel, *et al.*)

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**Youth Camps - Structures in Flood Hazard Areas - Prohibition**

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This bill prohibits the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) from issuing or renewing a certificate to a youth camp, or accepting alternative accreditation, if any structure that is or will be used to house a camper is located within a flood hazard area.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MDH can ensure compliance with the bill’s requirements with existing budgeted resources. To the extent that youth camps are no longer issued a certificate under the bill, certification fee revenue may decrease by a minimal amount beginning in FY 2027.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local governmental operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:**

*Maryland Youth Camp Regulation*

MDH is responsible for monitoring, inspecting, and certifying youth camps in the State. “Youth camp” means any day camp, residential camp, travel camp, or trip camp that (1) during a calendar year, accommodates at least seven campers who are unrelated to the person operating the camp; (2) provides primarily recreational activities or has a substantial outdoor recreational component; (3) has permanent buildings, temporary buildings, or no buildings; and (4) operates on owned or leased private property or facilities or public property or facilities. MDH may impose a fee to inspect, monitor, and regulate a youth camp.

MDH may also issue an alternative accreditation, as approved by the Secretary of Health. “Alternative accreditation” means a national camping standard that is acceptable to the Secretary as providing adequate health and safety protection for the campers, such as the American Camping Association standards for camp programs and services and the Boy Scouts of America standards, which includes an annual monitoring process to verify compliance with the standard. MDH may not impose a fee for an alternative accreditation.

Specified entities are exempt from certification or alternative accreditation requirements, including (1) social activities of a family; (2) programs or activities directed or operated by a board of recreation, recreation department, or similar public unit of a county, a municipality, or the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as specified; (3) programs or activities directed or operated by an agency of the State, as specified; or (4) youth overnight programs sponsored by religious or community organizations, as specified. Each local government or agency of the State that directs or operates a program or activity must adopt health and safety standards pertaining to the operation of youth camps. MDH must conduct inspections of a random sample of exempt entities to ensure that each program or activity is in compliance with all applicable health and safety laws and standards, or when a complaint has been filed.

With due consideration for conditions existing in nature and for the importance of outdoor adventure experiences, MDH must adopt regulations that include (1) safety procedures for specified outdoor activities; (2) except for outdoor cookouts, sanitation regulations pertaining to the facilities and personnel for the storage, preparation, and serving of food products; (3) personal health, first aid, and medical services, health supervision, and the maintenance of health records for campers; (4) water supplies, sewage disposal systems, and refuse collection and disposal procedures; (5) fire and safety standards relating to the buildings and the occupants of buildings; (6) systems for the routine reporting of fatalities and serious illnesses or accidents; (7) any personnel screening procedures that are required for operators and employees of group day care centers; (8) procedures for conducting inspection, monitoring compliance, and verifying information; (9) alternate accreditation; and (10) minimum standards for the supervision of campers during routine activities.

By regulation, MDH requires each operator of a youth camp to prepare and implement a written emergency plan that includes procedures for camp staff members to (1) ensure camper safety during natural disasters, severe weather, and other emergencies; (2) evacuate campers; (3) account for campers and locate a missing camper; (4) use fire, rescue, police, and 9-1-1 services; (5) ensure emergency transportation; (6) notify the camper’s parent or guardian; (7) ensure camper safety until the camper’s parent, guardian, or parent’s or guardian’s designee picks up the camper; and (8) monitor for adverse weather conditions. Camp operators must ensure that each staff member is trained on the emergency plan and related emergency procedures. During severe weather, adequate shelter must be provided for the campers and camp staff members.

## *Flood Hazard Management*

“Flood hazard area” means an area of tidal or nontidal inundation resulting from a 100-year flood event and established pursuant to specified provisions of the Flood Control and Watershed Management Subtitle of the Environment Article. “100-year flood event” or “100-year flood” means a flood that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.

Pursuant to the Flood Hazard Management Act of 1976, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is responsible for various initiatives designed to address flood hazards, including (1) assisting in the development of guidance to minimize the impacts of flooding; (2) providing State guidelines and technical assistance to local governments to manage flood areas; and (3) administering the Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program. MDE, in cooperation with specified entities, must designate a priority list of watersheds for the purpose of flood control planning and management and conduct studies of the watersheds. As a part of these studies, MDE must delineate the flood hazard areas on [maps](#) showing areas of tidal and nontidal inundation.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 2026  
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Analysis by: Amberly E. Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510