



# TEXAS BAPTIST ENCAMPMENT

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To all TBE Summer Camp Directors and Committees, Church Youth & Children Departments, and “Shepherds”,

Our entire Texas Baptist Encampment staff is very excited about the upcoming summer and the opportunity to host your group here in Palacios. If we can aid you in your planning in any way, please let us know. We want your week of camp to be exciting, dynamic, and eternally significant in the lives of young people and adults like you.

This cover letter should be accompanying a DVD that is specific to our requirements as a youth camp facility in the state of Texas. Within the last few days, a law was passed as an addition into the Texas Administrative Code for which our camp must adhere to at all times. This law mandates a new proactive approach to an important subject: the safety of our campers. The state has now mandated a one-hour education class for all camp adults who are entrusted with supervision of youth campers. This is mandatory for both you as volunteer counselors & sponsors (“Shepherds”) and our own in-house camp staff. Basically, this is required of ANY adult coming into contact with youth campers in any youth camp facility statewide, including TBE. This video is entitled “**Child Protection Training**” and has been created by the Texas Baptist Camp Manager’s Association, of which we are a member.

This training package includes a 22-minute video with 38 minutes of discussion time, a 25-question test directly related to the video material, a certificate of completion to be filled out for each participant, and a class facilitator’s discussion guide and test answer key. Your church or organization will need to select a designated responsible “facilitator” of this training material and this person is responsible for seeing that this material is presented correctly. Any & all facilitators should feel free to call here to the camp office and speak with me if you have any questions whatsoever. The 25-question test has been mandated by the state and must be completed and “**passed**” with **70% proficiency in order to be a certified trainee**. Be aware that if any potential Shepherds choose to not participate or if they do not pass this test with at least a 70, **they are not eligible to be a volunteer Shepherd** at Texas Baptist Encampment for this summer. However, I am very confident in everyone’s ability to pass this test. The video is very well assembled and the test is simple and reflective of the information presented in that training. Upon arrival to camp, each facilitator should **turn in all certificates of completion and test papers to the TBE staff member at registration**. These will then be crosschecked to see that every Shepherd is “good to go” for their important role as Shepherd leaders.

The purpose of this training course is to provide all staff, volunteer Shepherds, and church leadership with a clear understanding of how to recognize, reduce, prevent, and report suspected sexual abuse or molestation of youth and children while at TBE. We are very aware that this may end up being quite an endeavor for you to assemble all necessary individuals for the training but please remember that this material is extremely important and applicable to the safety of those whom you have been entrusted to care for and mentor. This one-hour training certification will be good for two years for every individual who is certified. If there are any Shepherds or Adults who happen to miss this training in your own churches, we will have the same class at the very beginning of each week of the summer. For those particular folks, this training must be done immediately upon your arrival at Texas Baptist Encampment. For every adult leader who would potentially be involved at summer camp AND anyone, i.e. parents & church ministers, who may even remotely be “popping in” to visit the camp for even one hour during the week, facilitators should strongly emphasize that everyone be involved the first time the class is taken en masse in your church.

Thank you so much for your willingness to follow through with this important exercise. This first year should be the most difficult to get done but please understand how important it is that each and every person completes this training. TBE is subject to state authorities and we happily abide by the law. In turn, as the TBE Youth Camp Operator, I am personally responsible and liable to see that this new training is accomplished. Please aid us in seeing this through. Our ultimate goal is to make your camp experience as enjoyable and eternally significant as possible and we feel that it is important to get everyone trained & certified, particularly before his or her week of camp ever begins.

Thank you and may God Bless you richly! See you this summer!

*Rob Kessler*

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