

**BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89S21160 KRM-F

C.S.H.B. 1  
By: Darby et al. (Perry)  
Disaster Preparedness & Flooding, Select  
9/2/2025  
Committee Report (Substituted)

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The author of H.B. 1 informed the House Select Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding that the July 4, 2025, flooding along the Guadalupe River that killed over 100 people, including more than two dozen young girls and counselors at Camp Mystic in Kerr County, exposed critical safety gaps in youth camp emergency preparedness. According to witness testimony provided to that committee, some camps in known flood-prone areas had no formal emergency plans, procedures, or training in place, leaving youth and staff unprepared for disaster. Furthermore, the bill author informed the committee that this issue is not isolated to Camp Mystic but is common among many Texas youth camps.

H.B. 1, the Youth Camp Alert, Mitigation, Preparedness, and Emergency Response (Youth CAMPER) Act, seeks to improve youth camp emergency preparedness by requiring all resident youth camp operators to develop, implement, and annually review written emergency plans for responding to specific emergency events, to provide a copy of the plans to applicable emergency services districts or counties and camp staff members and volunteers, and to provide comprehensive training and instruction to camp staff members and volunteers. The Youth CAMPER Act also provides for Department of State Health Services review and recommendations regarding such plans and for the attorney general to impose civil penalties for violations of the act.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 1 amends current law relating to youth camp emergency plans and preparedness and authorizes penalties.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 4 (Section 141.008, Health and Safety Code) and SECTION 5 (Section 141.0091, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Authorizes this Act to be cited as the Youth Camp Alert, Mitigation, Preparedness, and Emergency Response (Youth CAMPER) Act.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 141.002, Health and Safety Code, by amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivisions (1-a), (2-a), (2-b), and (2-c), to define "cabin," "floodplain," "floodway," and "government entity."

SECTION 3. Amends Section 141.005(a), Health and Safety Code, as follows:

- (a) Requires a person holding a license issued under Chapter 141 (Youth Camps) to:
  - (1) creates this subdivision from existing text and makes no further changes; and
  - (2) submit a renewal application not later than the 30th day after the date the person alters the boundaries of a youth camp operated by the person, completes

construction of one or more new cabins located on the premises of the camp, or completes any renovation to one or more existing cabins located on the premises of the camp that increases or decreases the number of beds in an affected cabin or alters the method of ingress or egress to an affected cabin.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 141.008, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(c) Requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to review the camper to counselor ratios for overnight stays at youth camps and provide to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (executive commissioner) recommendations regarding minimum camper to counselor ratios. Requires the executive commissioner by rule to establish minimum camper to counselor ratios for overnight stays at youth camps.

SECTION 5. Amends Chapter 141, Health and Safety Code, by adding Sections 141.0071, 141.0081, 141.0091, 141.0092, 141.0093, and 141.0094, as follows:

Sec. 141.0071. **ADDITIONAL INSPECTION REQUIRED; PARENTAL COMPLAINTS.** (a) Requires a youth camp operator to include in a prominent place on the camp's publicly accessible Internet website a clearly marked link to the youth camp program web page on DSHS's Internet website for campers, parents, and camp staff and volunteers to use to report the camp's noncompliance with this subchapter.

(b) Requires DSHS to investigate each complaint filed with DSHS for a youth camp to ensure the youth camp operator is properly implementing the approved emergency plan submitted as required under Section 141.0091 and the camp complies with this chapter.

(c) Requires that a DSHS investigation under this section include an inspection to ensure the youth camp's compliance with this chapter. Requires that the inspection be performed in the same manner as an inspection under Section 141.007 (Inspections).

Sec. 141.0081. **YOUTH CAMP SAFETY MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM.** (a) Provides that the Youth Camp Safety Multidisciplinary Team (team) is created within DSHS and is composed of at least one representative from each of certain entities.

(b) Requires the commissioner of state health services (commissioner) or the commissioner's designee to serve as the chair of the team.

(c) Requires the team to meet regularly to develop proposed minimum standards for youth camps under this chapter. Requires the team to present the proposed minimum standards to the executive commissioner as recommendations for adoption.

Sec. 141.0091. **ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS; EMERGENCY PLAN.** (a) Requires the executive commissioner by rule, as part of the health and safety standards established under Section 141.009 (Standards), to make applicable to a youth camp the requirements of Chapter 762 (Campground Safety) in the same manner as those requirements apply to a campground under that chapter.

(b) Requires the executive commissioner by rule to require a youth camp operator in the emergency plan the operator develops for a youth camp to specify muster zones for campers and camp staff to gather in an emergency event that requires evacuation from any location within the premises of the camp; establish procedures responding to certain emergency events, other than an event addressed by Section 762.002 (Safety Requirements); establish procedures to identify and account for each camper affected by the emergency event; establish procedures to

notify and communicate with certain entities; and designate a camper emergency preparedness coordinator.

(c) Requires the executive commissioner by rule to require a youth camp operator at each youth camp the operator operates to:

(1) maintain an operable radio capable of providing real-time weather alerts issued by the National Weather Service or a similar professional weather service at the camp;

(2) install and maintain at the camp an emergency warning system that is capable of alerting all campers and camp occupants of an emergency and includes a public address system operable without reliance on an Internet connection;

(3) monitor safety alerts issued by the National Weather Service or a similar professional weather service and by local river authorities, if applicable to the camp, or through other local emergency notification systems; and

(4) certify the operator's compliance with this subsection.

(d) Requires a youth camp operator, in developing a youth camp's emergency plan, to annually submit the initial or updated plan to DSHS for approval in the form and manner DSHS prescribes.

(e) Requires a youth camp operator, if DSHS determines a youth camp's submitted emergency plan does not meet the minimum standards prescribed by DSHS rules, to revise and resubmit the plan not later than the 45th day after the date the operator receives notice from DSHS of the plan's deficiencies.

(f) Requires a youth camp operator to include any updated youth camp emergency plan as an attachment to each application to renew the operator's license under Section 141.005 (License Renewal).

(g) Requires the operator, notwithstanding Section 762.002(c) (relating to requiring a campground operator to send a copy of an emergency plan to certain persons), not later than the 10th business day following the date DSHS approves a youth camp's emergency plan or, if DSHS determines the plan is deficient under Subsection (e), the camp's revised emergency plan, to provide a copy of the plan to:

(1) for a camp located in a municipality, the emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015 (Emergency Management Directors), Government Code, for the municipality; and

(2) the emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015, Government Code, for the county.

(h) Authorizes a youth camp operator, in developing a youth camp's emergency plan, to consult with an emergency management director or coordinator described by Subsection (g).

(i) Requires DSHS to store in a digital database each emergency plan submitted to DSHS under this section or Section 762.002 and provide access to that database to the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and each member of the team created under Section 141.0081.

(j) Requires a youth camp operator to:

(1) provide the most recent version of a youth camp's emergency plan submitted under this section to the parent or legal guardian of a camper who is participating in a camp session or a prospective camper who is registered to participate in a future camp session;

(2) notify the parent or legal guardian of a camper or prospective camper described by Subdivision (1) if any area of the camp is located within a floodplain; and

(3) ensure the parent or legal guardian signs and submits to the operator a statement acknowledging receipt of the notice required under Subdivision (2).

(k) Requires the youth camp operator or a youth camp staff member, not more than 48 hours after each youth camp session begins, to conduct a mandatory safety orientation that notifies each camper of the camp's boundaries and any hazards present on the camp premises, instructs each camper on behavioral expectations in an emergency event, and provides each camper developmentally appropriate instruction on the appropriate actions and procedures to follow in an emergency event, in accordance with the camp's emergency plan required under this section and Section 762.002.

(l) Requires a youth camp operator, at least once a year, to provide each youth camp staff member and volunteer with a copy of the camp's most recent emergency plan, ensure each staff member and volunteer successfully completes training on the camp's emergency plan in compliance with any minimum standards and required hours established by DSHS rule, instruct each staff member and volunteer on the proper procedures to follow in an emergency event under the plan, and maintain written records documenting each staff member's and volunteer's successful completion of the training required under this subsection.

(m) Requires a youth camp operator to conspicuously post in each cabin on the youth camp premises the proper evacuation route described in the youth camp's emergency plan and ensure each evacuation route on the camp premises is illuminated at night.

(n) Prohibits DSHS, notwithstanding Section 141.0025 (Waiver; Appeal), from granting a waiver from a requirement prescribed under this section or Chapter 762.

(o) Provides that an emergency plan submitted to, received by, or accessed by DSHS, TDEM, an emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015, Government Code, or any other governmental entity under this section is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552 (Public Information), Government Code.

Sec. 141.0092. REDUNDANT INTERNET CONNECTIONS REQUIRED. (a) Defines "broadband service."

(b) Requires a youth camp operator to provide and maintain for a youth camp:

(1) Internet services through a broadband service that connects to the Internet using end-to-end fiber optic facilities; and

(2) a secondary Internet connection through a broadband service distinct from the service described under Subdivision (1).

Sec. 141.0093. REQUIRED NOTICE FOR MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN YOUTH CAMP STRUCTURES OR ACTIVITY LOCATIONS. (a) Requires a youth camp

operator to notify DSHS, in the form and manner prescribed by DSHS, of any modification to a structure intended to facilitate youth camp activities or the location of a camp activity on the camp's premises.

(b) Authorizes DSHS, on receiving notification of a modification described by Subsection (a), to require the youth camp operator to update the youth camp's emergency plan under Section 141.0091.

**Sec. 141.0094. DENIAL OR SUSPENSION OF LICENSE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE.**

(a) Prohibits DSHS from issuing a license or renewing a license for a youth camp under this chapter if the youth camp operator is not in compliance with Sections 141.0091 and 141.0092 or a rule adopted under those sections.

(b) Requires DSHS to suspend a youth camp license issued by DSHS if the camp or youth camp operator is in violation of Section 141.0091 or 141.0092. Provides that DSHS is authorized to reinstate the license only on or after the date DSHS determines the camp and the operator are in compliance with Sections 141.0091 and 141.0092.

**SECTION 6.** Provides that, notwithstanding Section 141.0081, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, the team is not required to hold its first meeting until September 1, 2026.

**SECTION 7.** Requires the executive commissioner, not later than January 1, 2026, to adopt the rules required by Section 141.0091, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

**SECTION 8.** Provides that, notwithstanding Section 141.0091, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, a youth camp operator is not required to submit a youth camp emergency plan to DSHS until April 1, 2026.

**SECTION 9.** Effective date: upon passage or the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.