

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1
By: Perry et al.
Disaster Preparedness & Flooding, Select
9/8/2025
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1 is comprehensive legislation intended to address the needs and challenges relating to campground and youth camp safety identified during and after the devastating July 4 floods that inundated Central and West Texas. This bill incorporates significant feedback received from the families of the children lost at Camp Mystic.

To better prepare campgrounds of all types—including youth camps—for natural disasters, S.B. 1 implements basic campground safety requirements. These requirements include:

- installing emergency rooftop access ladders in cabins located in floodplains;
- developing an emergency plan that addresses the safety of campers in all types of natural disasters (e.g., flash floods, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, etc.);
- implementing the applicable portions of the emergency plan during each type of natural disaster;
- providing a copy of the emergency plan to the local emergency management coordinator(s); and
- implementing basic fire safety standards.

To better prepare youth camps, specifically, for emergencies, S.B. 1 implements heightened requirements applicable only to youth camps. These requirements include:

- a prohibition against operating cabins located in a floodplain;
- incorporating additional scenarios into the emergency planning requirement (e.g., lost campers, structure fires, severe injuries, illnesses, or fatalities suffered by campers, and aquatic emergencies such as drownings);
- establishing procedures for identifying and accounting for campers during emergencies;
- establishing procedures to notify local emergency services, appropriate camp personnel, and the parents or legal guardians of campers of an emergency;
- designating an emergency preparedness coordinator for each youth camp; maintaining operable weather alert radios in each cabin; installing emergency warning systems and public address systems in each youth camp; monitoring for local weather alerts;
- providing a copy of the emergency plan to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), which must maintain a database for all such emergency plans that is accessible to the Texas Division of Emergency Management;
- providing a copy of the emergency plan to the parents or legal guardians of each camper;

- notifying the parents or legal guardians of each camper if any portion of the youth camp is located in a floodplain;
- conducting safety orientations for campers at the beginning of each camp session that include training the campers on their roles in the emergency plan;
- conducting an annual training on the emergency plan for each camp staff member and volunteer;
- posting in each cabin the evacuation routes applicable to each cabin; and
- keeping all evacuation routes lit at night.

Lastly, S.B. 1 increases transparency by requiring DSHS to post, update, and maintain on its website a list of all youth camps in the state with active licenses from DSHS.

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

S.B. 1 amends current law relating to campground and youth camp safety.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Authorizes this Act to be cited as the Heaven's 27 Camp Safety 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 "governmental 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 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. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 4. Amends Chapter 141, Health and Safety Code, by adding Sections 141.0052, 141.0056, 141.0091, and 141.0092, as follows:

Sec. 141.0052. PROHIBITED LICENSURE OF YOUTH CAMPS WITHIN FLOODPLAIN; EXCEPTION. (a) Prohibits the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) from issuing or renewing a youth camp license for a youth camp that operates one or more cabins located within a floodplain.

(b) Provides that, notwithstanding Subsection (a), DSHS is authorized to issue or renew a license to a youth camp described by Subsection (a) only if:

(1) each cabin location within a floodplain is a result of the cabin's proximity to a lake, pond, or other still body of water that is not connected to a stream, river, or other watercourse or is dammed; or

(2) each cabin is at least 1,000 feet from a floodway.

Sec. 141.0056. ONLINE YOUTH CAMP REGISTRY. Requires DSHS to post, maintain, and update on DSHS's Internet website a list of each youth camp with an active license issued under this chapter.

Sec. 141.0091. ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS; EMERGENCY PLAN. (a) Requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (executive commissioner), as part of the health and safety standards established under Section 141.009 (Standards), by rule to make applicable to a youth camp the requirements of Chapter 762 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 for responding to certain emergency events, other than an event addressed by Section 762.002, establish procedures to identify and account for each camper affected by the emergency event, establish procedures to notify and communicate with certain persons, and designate a camp emergency preparedness coordinator.

(c) Requires the executive commissioner by rule to require a youth camp operator, at each youth camp the operator operates, to 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, 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, 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 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 the 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 a youth camp operator, notwithstanding Section 762.002(c), 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 emergency management 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 Youth Camp Safety Multidisciplinary 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's 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:

(1) provide each youth camp staff member and volunteer with a copy of the camp's most recent emergency plan;

(2) 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;

(3) instruct each staff member and volunteer on the proper procedures to follow in an emergency event under the plan; and

(4) 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).

SECTION 5. Amends Section 141.008(a), Health and Safety Code, to delete existing text requiring DSHS, in developing the rules to be adopted by the executive commissioner to implement this chapter, to consult parents, youth camp operators, and appropriate public and private officials and organizations.

SECTION 6. Amends Subtitle A, Title 9, Health and Safety Code, by adding Chapter 762, as follows:

CHAPTER 762. CAMPGROUND SAFETY

Sec. 762.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "cabin," "campground," "campground operator," "floodplain," and "governmental entity."

Sec. 762.002. FLOODPLAIN SAFETY REQUIREMENTS. (a) Requires a campground operator to:

- (1) install and maintain in each campground cabin located within the floodplain an emergency ladder capable of providing access to the cabin's roof; and
- (2) develop an emergency evacuation plan for:
 - (A) evacuating on issuance of a flash flood or flood warning campground occupants who are at a campground area within the floodplain;
 - (B) evacuating campground occupants on issuance of an evacuation order by the emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015, Government Code, for the county or, if applicable, the municipality in which the campground is located, due to a wildfire, hurricane, or other disaster; and
 - (C) sheltering campground occupants in place on issuance of a tornado warning or an order to shelter in place issued by the emergency management director or coordinator for the county or, if applicable, the municipality in which the campground is located.
- (b) Requires a campground operator to implement the emergency evacuation plan developed under Subsection (a)(2)(A) on issuance by the National Weather Service of a flash flood or flood warning for an area of the campground and implement the emergency evacuation plan developed under Subsection (a)(2)(C) on issuance by the National Weather Service of a tornado warning for an area of the campground.

(c) Requires a campground operator to send a copy of an emergency evacuation plan developed under Subsection (a)(2) to, for a campground located in a municipality, the emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015, Government Code, for the municipality and the emergency management director or coordinator designated under Section 418.1015, Government Code, for the county.

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

Sec. 762.003. FIRE PROTECTION STANDARDS. (a) Provides that this section does not apply to a campground owned or controlled by a governmental entity.

(b) Requires a campground to comply with the National Fire Protection Association 1194, Standard for Recreational Vehicle Parks and Campgrounds, 2021 Edition, other than Sections 1.1.1 and 5.1.1.1.

(c) Provides that a governmental entity is authorized to adopt a policy, rule, ordinance, or order to regulate environmental health and sanitation, electrical distribution system safety, liquefied petroleum gas storage and dispensing safety, or fire protection only if the policy, rule, ordinance, or order does not impose standards more stringent than the standards described under Subsection (b).

SECTION 7. Repealer: Section 141.0035(b) (relating to requiring DSHS, before the executive commissioner adopts or amends a rule, to solicit comments and information from the operators of affected youth camps and allow affected operators to meet with appropriate DSHS staff involved with rulemaking), Health and Safety Code.

SECTION 8. 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 9. 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 10. Effective date: upon passage or the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.