



Episcopal Diocese of West Texas Statement on Camp Capers Operations

As the summer season approaches, the Diocese of West Texas Camps + Conferences Department continues its preparation for its summer camping programs. Planning is a year-round process for the three diocesan camp facilities – Camp Capers in the Texas Hill Country, Mustang Island Conference Center on the beach near Port Aransas, and Duncan Park in the Colorado Rockies.

As these preparations take place, we are mindful of the deep hurt that continues for those impacted by last summer's flood in the Texas Hill Country. Congregations throughout the diocese continue to hold in prayer individuals and communities who have suffered great loss.

Understandably, there have been many questions surrounding the safety of Camp Capers, a facility that hosts summer youth camp sessions and year-round retreats. The number one priority of Diocese of West Texas camps is the safety and well-being of campers and staff. From the time before Camp Capers opened its doors in 1947 to the present, the focus on a safe and secure environment has been and will always be paramount. The foresight in the planning, layout, and architecture of the camp continues to be a blessing. In designing Camp Capers, cabins and camp facilities were purposely built far above the Guadalupe River to ensure the safety of campers should a flood occur. In over 78 years of operation, no water has ever breached the cabins, lodges, or dining and activity buildings.

Camp Capers is licensed by the Texas State Health Department and undergoes an annual, rigorous independent inspection, as well as an accreditation assessment by the American Camp Association. These reviews help to ensure camp programs are safe, nurturing, and welcoming experiences for campers and retreat participants. Disaster response plans have been developed for all diocesan camps, and all camp staff are trained on disaster response procedures.

Camp Capers is adhering to the new legislation introduced by the Texas Legislature and the process to receive license renewal. The camp is in operation with the current state licensure.

Camp Capers has been a place of spiritual transformation and growth for many decades. We give thanks for the privilege of taking care of God's beloved children and understand the responsibility we are entrusted.

Attached, are anticipated questions and responses. We encourage parents and campers to reach out to Camp Capers staff and to plan an onsite visit.

Camp Capers Contact Information:

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Camp Capers 2026 Summer Camp Information

Licensing and Compliance to Texas Camp Regulations

Camp Capers will fully comply with the new Texas state laws and supports every effort to make camps safer.

Camp Capers is, and has been, accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA) since 2009, a distinction held only by approximately 25% of camps in the state of Texas. Accreditation by ACA means Camp Capers has voluntarily undergone a rigorous peer-review process, meeting up to 290 national standards for health, safety, and program quality. It signifies a commitment to best practices in staff training, emergency management, and risk management that go beyond basic state licensing. The camp is in operation with the current state licensure and adhering to processes for licensing renewal.

Camper Housing and Environmental Risk

Camp Capers summer camp cabins are located on the furthest spot on the property away from the river. None of the camper cabins in use this summer are in the FEMA-designated flood plain. Nor have any of the cabins or any of Camp Caper's main camp buildings ever had floodwaters reach them. We encourage our parents and campers to Camp come out and take a tour of the property.

Weather Monitoring

- **How do you monitor weather and water levels?**

Our Site Director, Camp Director, and Leadership Director monitor the weather using the following:

- NOAA and National Weather Service (NWS) alerts NWS – we have NOAA weather radios in the office and camp staff residences.
- Upper Guadalupe River Gauge at Comfort via NOAA National Water Prediction Service and United States Geological Survey (USGS)
- Emergency Alerts, including Flash Flood Warnings from Kendall and Kerr County Emergency Management
- Real-time flood gauge data and other information at texasflood.org
- Physical Observation

We maintain close relationships with our local EMS, fire station, and sheriff's office. These entities know we have campers onsite and communicate with us directly when concerns arise.

- **Notice of a Flood Watch**

Upon notice of flood watch, all activities located near the river or intermittent creek areas will be cancelled. Campers and staff are moved to the main area of camp in locations out of the flood plain.

Shelter in Place and Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a flood or tornado warning, Camp Campers issues a shelter in place directive. The cabins at Camp Capers are solid, having withstood decades of storms, and are the safest place for our campers during a storm. Staff remain on high alert, constantly monitoring the weather.

Although the Camp Capers cabins, and main buildings have never been breached by floodwaters, Camp Capers takes additional precautions by issuing an evacuation directive if a flood is determined to be imminent. The evacuation directive is based on the confirmation by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator that any of the below conditions exist:

- Upstream gauges indicate the river is on a rise
- Notification from local, county and/or state officials that river is rising
- Physical observation that the river is rising

Evacuation orders are communicated to staff and campers through the camp's facility Public Address System, walkie talkies (in every cabin), and physical notification by the Emergency Camp Coordination and Site Director.

If necessary, campers will be evacuated to even higher ground on a neighbor's property (1450 ft elev.) adjacent to Camp Capers. There will be a lighted path to guide campers as they evacuate, overseen by all staff. Each cabin is equipped with an Emergency Kit, including supplies to assist with an evacuation. The process to complete the accounting for all campers and the walk to the adjacent property is estimated to be 20–30-minutes.

Emergency Communication with Parents

We understand the importance of timely communication with parents. The highest priority in the event of an emergency is ensuring the safety of campers, followed by the notification of parents or guardians as soon as possible. Multiple methods are utilized to contact parents: a text app, phone, and email. Our Camps + Conferences Director and Camp Capers Site Director also may be reached directly on their cell phones.

Johnson Jeffers, Camp Capers Site Director (864)650-4462

Rob Watson, Director of Camps + Conferences (210)837-2788

Camp Capers has both Fiber Cable and Broadband communication lines.

Staff Training and Supervision

Camp Capers conducts extensive training with our staff on following written emergency action procedures that are included in the staff handbook and rehearsed during our in-person training sessions. They learn and practice their roles in each of these scenarios including using different communication devices including phones and walkie talkies, moving groups to safe locations, and responding appropriately to different emergencies. ACA accreditation requires that we have plans in place for a wide variety of situations: weather events such as floods, thunderstorms, and tornadoes; fires; intruders; accidents and serious injuries; illness and outbreaks; and more. Staff receives thorough training to be prepared for emergency protocols in each of these situations.

Camper Emergency Preparedness

Camp Capers staff conducts emergency drills on the first day of each camp session with campers and staff.

Our Commitment to Safety

Our number one priority is the safety of our campers. We strive to provide the safest camp experience possible, providing an environment where your child's physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing is respected and cherished. Camp Capers is open for tours, and we encourage you to reach out to our dedicated camp staff anytime with specific questions.

It is an honor and privilege to serve our campers and their families. We are committed to transparent communication and welcome questions and visits.