



June 15, 2021

## **Hume Lake – California Locations COVID Screening Statement**

*Why does Hume Lake require a negative COVID-19 test or proof of vaccination to attend camp?*

Since making plans to open this summer, we have endeavored to do whatever it takes to maintain the highest standard of camper safety while preventing unnecessary disruptions in the camp experience. We want to open and stay open. For this reason, we will continue to ask prospective campers to be tested or vaccinated before they come to camp.

We want Hume Lake to remain open so that every person who experiences camp can fully enjoy the recreational and life-changing spiritual impact we all know and love. We are aware that there are many well-intentioned opinions regarding COVID-19, testing, and vaccinations among our constituency. We did not develop our screening strategy casually or in a vacuum. After months of prayer and thoughtful evaluation of all the factors, our medical directors, doctors, nurses, and legal counsel all recommended testing (or vaccinations) as the right approach in light of our ministry's unique size, scope, and complexity. Current California overnight camping guidelines also recommend testing as an essential COVID-19 mitigation strategy<sup>1</sup>. These same overnight camping guidelines are also referenced explicitly in the recent June 15th Statewide changes as remaining in effect until September<sup>2</sup>.

We are considered an "Organized Overnight Camp" in the eyes of the State and, as such, fall under Organized Camp requirements, guidelines, and CAL/OSHA regulations. Because of this, certain COVID-related freedoms that restaurants, retail, businesses, and even churches might enjoy do not generally extend to overnight camps. The reason for this is because Hume's considerable camper populations generally sleep, eat, and interact closely with one another for six full days and nights.

Because we lodge more than 2,000 people a week from multiple states and counties, we take extremely seriously the well-documented COVID-19 risks and align to the guidelines provided for us as much as possible. We also want to be exceedingly careful about COVID-19 transmission in light of our 75-year-old commitment to overall community health and a safe camping experience for everyone. We believe this is an example of loving our neighbor.

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If a single camper tests positive for COVID-19 during camp, their entire cabin must be quarantined for seven days, which effectually means the occupants of the entire cabin go home. Further, we are required to report any positive tests of COVID-19 during camp, which heightens the risk of ministry interruption at best or complete shutdown by the State and/or county at worst.

The risk is very real for our ministry, and the repercussions of spread are exceedingly more significant for us than for a church, school, or retail outlet. Simply put, another summer of shutdown because of COVID would be catastrophic for the ministry on multiple levels. For us, the risk of our ability to operate, remain consistent in our commitment to camper safety, and accomplish our mission uninterrupted far outweighs the inconvenience of requiring testing for our campers.

Our screening strategy has already proven effective. As early as our first week of camp several individuals tested positive for COVID-19 before coming to camp, which otherwise could have led to an outbreak and subsequent shutdown of our facilities. And just this week, Week 2, a Youth Pastor was diagnosed with COVID-19 and wasn't able to attend. COVID-19 is still a real issue. As a ministry, we don't fear COVID, but we respect it. To do otherwise would be irresponsible and goes against our mission. We are the ones ultimately responsible for all our campers' health and the ministry the Lord has called us to do.

Hume Lake respects everyone's individual views and their family's own practices as it relates to personal health decisions. We are asking, that our campers, churches and families would choose to support the difficult screening choices we've had to make, with the advisement of our leadership, board of directors, legal advisors, our healthcare professionals, and the State of California, to open camp. While we genuinely regret that anyone would choose not to come to Hume this summer because of our testing position, we respect everyone's individual decisions and wish them God's best this summer.

We will continue to regularly and prayerfully monitor the situation, in conjunction with our professional advisors, and in consultation with our board of directors and make adjustments to our positions as we deem appropriate. Any changes to our approach will be updated at [hume.org/health-announcements](https://hume.org/health-announcements). Please pray for us as we navigate these challenging waters for the sake of the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Guidance-for-Overnight-Camps.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://covid19.ca.gov/safely-reopening/#reopening-california>