



The following update about government responses to CoVID-19 in Russian Camps has been provided by Valery Dolgikh, ICF Russia Ambassador. This report was filed on April 18, 2020

The most important point is that children's rest and improvement in children's camps in Russia, especially in the summer, has important political value for the state and therefore it has received specific and significant attention by the state.

The federal authority has recommended that regions maintain a 'normal' support for in camps in the spring to regions, but it has directed the regions to define their position. In general, most regions did not implement any changes during the spring school break in children's camps (end of March).

After that restriction for work of children's camps of year-round action and health/therapeutic camps was introduced. They were not permitted to accept children, but could continue to work on improvement, repair and preparation of material resources for summer vacation.

Restrictions for registering and receiving children in children's camps have been imposed to June 1.

In the four federal children's centers (Artek, Orlyonok, Ocean, and Smyrna) Shifts/sessions are also cancelled until June 1. Scheduled arrivals to these children centres have been postponed and re-scheduled into the autumn period.

The federal government has formulated measures of support to children's camps operating as small and medium business:

- transfer of payment of taxes on half a year
- reduction in the tax rate on the salary twice
- moratorium on the declaring bankruptcy of camps
- interest-free credit for compensation of the employees now if camps retain their jobs and they continue to work (14000 rubles200 dollars).

As decision-making on opening of children's camps is transferred to regions, governors of regions can determine terms of renewal of activity of camps in the territory, depending on spread of an infection in the region.

In many regions local authorities involve experts, scientists, health workers, the medical universities, practitioners, and directors of camps. Their task now is to develop a package of measures with which the camp can open in the period of children's vacation.

These measures include:

- testing of children at arrival to the camp
- a duty of parents to organize self-isolation (quarantine) of the child before arrival to the camp
- increased vigilance by camp medical examiners of children upon arrival
- restriction of visit onto camp property by parents during changeovers (no visitor days)

- full-time accommodation of all camp staff on site (including service staff)
- strengthening the numbers of on-site health care workers in the camp is provided during changeover periods and for three shifts a day and medical examination of children.

The question of utilizing campsites for accommodation of children requiring isolation or quarantine is now being considered during the May period. (Those who may have been in contact to infected persons)

Camps are currently offering their sites to large oil and chemical companies for placement of workers and employees in the conditions of full isolation arrive. They are brought to the camp for food and rest and transported away for work. Camps are able to earn some revenue.

Regional authorities promise to resolve an issue on a delay of payments for gas and the electric power consumed by camps, but so far it only discussions of a problem.

As children already from the middle of March stay at home, it leads to social tension. Schools are not ready to conduct educational process in online the mode at the good level. therefore departure of children in the camp is considered now as one of decisions which is made so that children can eat, engage in routine, continue normal life under observation of the doctor and medical staff as well as receive positive additional education and growth experiences.

Camps are counting on the help from the state so that together with them we will create conditions under which the camp will be able to open in time. The government can provide resources, money, shots. We have time now to prepare the camps for reception of children. Now all of our efforts are focussed on careful repair, implementation of new requirements for safety of children in the camp during their rest.

Many camps have already sold permits/vouchers to parents [i.e. registered campers] for summer of 2020. We work now with parents to convince them to a credit vs. refund that money. The regional government supports this approach. If the situation does not allow us to carry out arrival of children on June 1 to the camp, then these permits will be postponed for other terms during the summer, fall, winter. The regional authorities promise support in adoption of the relevant documents according to which parents will not be able to demand from us a refund for the permit.

We all hope that our summer will take place.

The core message from the government, and the one that gives us great optimism, is that the state does not intend to postpone camp experiences for children this summer.

And that is very good...