

Overnight Sleeping Rooms Rule for the 4-H Youth Development Program

1. Introduction: This rule was developed by the Department of 4-H Youth Development to ensure best practice guidelines when arranging overnight sleeping accommodations for adults and youth at 4-H programs. The rationale for this rule is to avoid situations that place adults and youth in compromising circumstances. This rule intends to promote a safe environment for both adults and youth at 4-H overnight functions.

2. Overnight Sleeping Rooms Rule for Adults and Youth at 4-H Programs

2.1 In assigning 4-H program participants to housing for overnight activities or events, unrelated adults should never share a bed or private sleeping rooms with youth. Youth should be assigned private sleeping space with other youth within a three-year age range. No more than one youth may be permitted to sleep in any bed, air mattress, bunk, or hide-a-way sleeper. Adults should be assigned sleeping space with other adults. No individual youth under the age of 18 should be assigned to a private room.

2.2 If a circumstance exists such that rule 2.1 is not feasible, then local 4-H office may in its discretion allow a parent/guardian to choose one of the following options:

Option 1: The parent/guardian may sign a consent form for a youth under the age of 18 years of age to stay in a room alone. This form must be signed by the County 4-H Agent, County Director, and witness unrelated to the youth, parent or guardian.

Option 2: The parent/guardian may sign a consent form for a youth to be assigned an overnight sleeping room with an unrelated adult. This form must be signed by the County 4-H Agent, County Director, and witness unrelated to the youth, parent or guardian.

Option 3: The parent/guardian may sign a consent form for youth to room with another youth that is more than three years older or younger. This form must be signed by the County 4-H Agent, County Director, and witness unrelated to the youth, parent or guardian.

Regardless of which option is chosen, the agent-in-charge must secure written consent from the parent/guardian. Appropriate forms of consent include the completion of a form provided to the parent/guardian by the 4-H agent or an email from the parent, in which the parent explicitly states approval.

3. Overnight Sleeping Rooms Rule for Dorm and Cabin Lodging at 4-H Programs

3.1 In assigning overnight accommodations in dormitory or cabin style sleeping situations, appropriate supervision must be arranged. Adults who are assigned to the cabins/dormitories should be counseled in appropriate supervision of the youth participating in the program. To the extent possible, youth participants should be grouped by age.

4. Compliance Guideline

4.1 Failure of Extension staff to comply with appropriate best practice guidelines regarding housing for overnight activities or events may result in disciplinary action.