

Camp Life: The Unwritten Rules

The etiquette nobody explains at induction

FIFO Life

Real talk for FIFO workers & families

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Introduction

Camp has rules on posters and rules nobody writes down. The second kind decide whether your swing is easy or hard. Learn them before your first wet mess conversation and you'll be fine.

None of this is complicated. All of it matters.

1. Rooms, Corridors and the Dry Side

Corridor noise is the fastest way to become the person everyone avoids. Night shift workers are sleeping metres from you at 2pm — doors get closed quietly, phone calls happen outside, and corridor conversations move to the common area. If you're on nights yourself, you'll understand within one swing.

Don't touch other people's laundry. If a machine's finished and you're desperate, the accepted move is: wait, or at absolute most, place items neatly on top of the machine — never the floor. Better: come back in ten minutes.

Bus seats and mess tables aren't assigned, but regulars have patterns. Your first week, sit anywhere that's clearly open and read the room. It sounds like high school because it is — camps run on routine and routine is what gets people through.

- ✓ Treat every corridor like someone's asleep behind each door — someone is
- ✓ Ten minutes' patience beats touching anyone's washing
- ✓ First week: watch the patterns before you claim a spot

2. The Wet Mess and Your Reputation

Whatever the camp limit is, the real limit is lower. The workers with long careers treat the wet mess as a place to have one or two and a yarn — not a session. Your reputation forms in your first two swings and travels between sites faster than you'd believe; supervisors hear everything.

Shout fairly and don't keep score loudly. Skip the work complaints after the second drink — the bloke next to you might report to the person you're complaining about, or be them.

If you don't drink, no one who matters cares. 'Not tonight, mate' has ended exactly zero good careers.

- ✓ Two-drink reputation, even where the limit is four
- ✓ Complaints travel — save them for your partner, not the wet mess
- ✓ Early nights before early starts is respected, not soft

Final Word

The pattern in all of it: camps run on mutual respect between tired people. Give it consistently and camp becomes easy. There's a longer version of all this — with the roster, family and money side — in The FIFO First Swing Survival Guide.

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