

Phase I ferry operation and sightseeing operation guidelines

Beginning on May 11, 2020, ferry and sightseeing operations may continue essential lifeline services and begin seasonal service. In accordance with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) emergency regulations, ferry and sightseeing operators must prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Control Plan](#). The RIDOH emergency regulations can be found [here](#). The State prepared a [guidance document](#) to assist businesses in meeting the requirements outlined in these RIDOH regulations. Ferry operators and sightseeing operators must comply with RIDOH regulations and active [executive orders](#).

The guidelines below summarize **additional** steps Rhode Island is asking ferry and sightseeing operators to take. If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact Joseph Masino at Joseph.Masino@governor.ri.gov.

Phase I Operations:

- **Social distancing:** Passengers, whenever possible, must maintain six (6) feet of social distance between themselves and others who are not part of their household, especially on the vessel when moving about as corridors and walkways are narrow. Passengers are responsible for maintaining social distancing at all times possible. Operators can assist with social distancing on the vessel if they so choose, this includes but not limited to, boarding by party size and assigned seating. In addition, to allow for adequate distancing, ferry operators will limit cabin capacity and request passengers to remain with their vehicles, if safe to do so, or on deck during the duration of the trip (weather dependent). Operators should place spacing demarcations at ticket booths, concessions, and boarding lines.
- **Capacity:** In order to maintain social distancing, capacity should be limited to 30% to 60% of the operating vessel's capacity (based on ridership demand, weather elements, and sea conditions). If needed, ferry operations will be allowed to operate additional vessels to run the routes (based on ridership demand, weather elements, and sea conditions). When weather and sea conditions limit outdoor seating, ferry operators should limit capacity to 30%-40%. When outdoor seating is not limited, operators should limit capacity to 50%-60%.
- **Screening Signage:** COVID-19 screening signage should be posted at the entrances and high traffic areas. For lifeline ferries, added safety protocols should be posted for boarding passengers needing transport for residence, medical or essential services.
- **Cleaning Procedures:** All cabins and commonly touched surfaces such as handrails, tabletops, and restrooms on the vessel must be sanitized between runs and at the end of the day. The entire vessel also must be thoroughly cleaned at least once a day.
- **Food & Beverage Sales:** All food and beverage sales shall follow the most recent executive orders, regulations, and/or guidance related to restaurants.
- **Bookings:** All ticket sales should be done online whenever possible to eliminate the need for paper tickets and to encourage cashless transactions. Service providers should inform customers of encouraging cashless transactions through social media and on company website.

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- **Face Coverings:** All persons (employees and passengers) are required to wear face coverings when providing or using the ferry service in accordance with RIDOH regulations and [Executive Order 20-30](#). Face coverings shall not be required of those who are developmentally unable to comply, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a mask. Nothing in this guidance shall require a place of business to refuse entry to a customer not wearing a face covering.

