

Phase I guidelines for lifeguards

In accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) emergency regulations, businesses and organizations 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 organizations in meeting the requirements outlined in these RIDOH regulations. Organizations must comply with RIDOH regulations and active [executive orders](#).

The guidelines below summarize additional steps Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is taking to certify lifeguards. RIDOH is developing related guidance for public swimming pools. RIDEM is also developing related guidance for public beaches. This document will be amended to include links to this guidance as soon as they are final. Please check for updates.

All Aquatic Supervisors should prepare and implement a plan for resuming services in a phased approach in accordance with guidelines established below. If you have questions or would like your plan reviewed, please contact Tom Rosa at 401-667-6200 or tom.rosa@dem.ri.gov.

I. Summary of Phase 1 operations

Individuals interested in working as a lifeguard in the State of Rhode Island must become certified by the RI Division of Parks and Recreation (the Division) as either a Surf or Non-Surf Lifeguard to work at a waterfront facility per RIGL 23-22.5-1 and 250-RICR-100-00-2. The Division holds testing for this conditional certification annually in May and June, and full certification annually in August at Scarborough State Beach and Burlingame State Park. There are occasions that the Division will use alternate municipal beach locations to allow for additional test dates or to accommodate a municipality who has a significant number of lifeguards that need certification. No alternate locations have been determined or requested at this time. These operations are specific to the registration and testing process for this certification program.

The testing dates are as follows:

Conditional Surf Test (valid until August 7, 2020)

Dates: May 21st, and June 11th, 2020 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm
Location: Scarborough North State Beach

Conditional Non-Surf Test (valid until August 14, 2020)

Dates: May 20th, June 10th, June 25th, 2020 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm
Location: Burlingame State Park (Prosser Grove Picnic Area)

Full Surf Test (cards valid until September 30, 2021)

Dates: August 3rd - August 7th, 2020 Time: 9:00am - 2:00p
Location: Scarborough North State Beach

Full Non-Surf Test (cards valid until September 30, 2021)

Dates: August 11th – August 14th, 2020 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm
Location: Burlingame State Park (Prosser Grove Picnic Area)

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II. Physical space and occupancy limits

Specific guidance for Lifeguard State Certification

All lifeguard candidates will be required to preregister for their examination and schedule their test time online at <http://riparks.com/lifeguard-certification.php>. This will help reduce wait times and maintain social distancing requirements. No candidate will be allowed to check in for their test until fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of their preregistered time.

All candidates must wear a face covering and will be required and advised to remain at least six (6) feet apart from other candidates and testing staff. Areas and spaces will be designated to assist in maintaining these distances. Roping will be used to keep the public separated from the testing area.

Required training cards (CPR, First Aid, Lifeguard Training) or equivalent must be uploaded on the registration site prior to the examination, and you will be required to electronically sign a waiver of liability. A valid photo ID with verification of date of birth must be presented at check in. All testing staff will be required to wear cloth face coverings and gloves while verifying identity. All efforts will be made to view the identification without handling it. All efforts shall be made to avoid the transfer of any common objects between individuals at any time (e.g., pens, equipment). If a common object must be transferred between individuals, hand sanitizer will be applied before and after the transfer of the common object.

Candidates under the age of 18 MUST be either accompanied by a parent or guardian who will sign the waiver form and present identification, or the candidate must obtain a waiver online through the Division of Parks and Recreation ahead of time and obtain a notarized signature of a parent or guardian, in order to take the test. Waivers that are electronically notarized in conformance with [the Secretary of State guidelines](#) will be accepted. A drop-off box will be established for these waivers and an area will be designated to verify identification of parent/guardian. Parents and guardians will not be allowed to stay in the testing area and will be encouraged to wait in their cars or in other areas, following all social distancing guidelines.

The certification fee is \$10 and cannot be collected in advance due to statutory and technology restrictions. Candidates will be required to bring exact change or check and deposit the fee in the deposit box to prevent the need for staff to handle. Certification cards are printed on site and the candidate will be called from a waiting area to collect his/her card from the printer tray.

Where not specified above, all organizations should follow the general guidance from RIDOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding gathering sizes and social distancing:

Adhere to Gathering Size Restrictions

Please follow the gathering size guidance for each phase as described here: <https://www.reopeningri.com/>. This should be followed when holding meetings, conferences, or other social gatherings.

Apply Social Distancing Measures

The CDC has published the following social distancing guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>. All persons shall remain at least six (6) feet apart at all times.

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III. Business processes, procedures, and activities

All **Lifeguard State Certification Sites** should have established cleaning, health screening, and testing procedures. Guidance for your organization follows.

Enhanced Cleaning and/or Disinfecting Procedures

RIDOH requires cleanings of business establishments **at least once daily**. In addition, commonly touched surfaces, such as shared workstations, elevator buttons, door handles, and railings should be cleaned in accordance with [CDC guidance](#) and [RIDOH guidance](#) on the Reopening RI website for specific industries

RIDOH requires that employers ensure that employees, customers, and visitors have access to soap and water and/or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol at all times.

Any lifesaving equipment used during testing including surfboards, torps, buoys, rope, and rescue mannequins will be wiped down before the beginning of testing and after each candidate is tested, and prior to securing all equipment.

Screening Procedures

RIDOH requires establishing, at minimum, symptom screening and COVID-19 risk procedures to screen anyone entering a business establishment. People whose responses to screening questions indicate they are sick, or who show visible signs of illness, must be denied entrance and instructed to isolate.

All staff assigned to work these tests will be screened in accordance to established RIDEM staff screening guidelines.

All candidates will be screened prior to entering testing areas by using the screening tool available at https://health.ri.gov/forms/screening/COVID19_Employee_Screening_Tool.pdf.

Face Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment

Employees and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless an employee and/or visitor can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other employees and/or visitors for the duration of his or her work and/or time in a building.

Such protective coverings are not required for:

- Anyone for whom use of such face covering would be damaging to his or her health; or
- Anyone who is developmentally unable to use such face covering, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a face mask; or
- When a face covering would inhibit an activity of daily living (e.g. eating); or
- When a face covering would itself negatively impact the safety of an individual or lead to an increased risk of harm to others (e.g. near open flames); or
- Face coverings are not required in outdoor settings for people who can easily and continuously maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other people.



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- Testing staff will be required to wear a surgical face mask in the event they are required to perform any first-aid during this testing. Masks may be removed to instruct and give commands during testing, if allowable in accordance with proper social distancing guidelines.
- Staff tasked with screening and processing candidates will be required to wear face masks.
- Candidates will be required to wear cloth face coverings, or surgical masks while waiting to test and waiting to receive certification cards. Masks will be removed during swim portions of the testing. Candidates are encouraged to bring their own, but the Division will provide a mask if needed.

Testing Protocols and Procedures

All lifeguard testing protocols and procedures are performed using rescue mannequins which will be cleaned in accordance with the Enhanced Cleaning and/or Disinfecting Procedures outlined above.

CONDITIONAL SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

- Torp and reel save, 3-person team. (See note below).
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure victim on board, paddle victim to shore.

CONDITIONAL NON-SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

- One torpedo rescue, 25 yards out, tow mannequin to shore.
- One rescue tube rescue, 25 yards out, front approach, securely wrap the tube around the mannequin and tow victim to shore.
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure mannequin on board, paddle victim to shore.

FULL SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

- Swim 440 yards in 10 minutes or less using only forward-facing strokes.
- Torp and reel save, 3-person team.
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure mannequin on board, paddle mannequin to shore.

FULL NON-SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

- Swim 440 yards in 10 minutes or less using only forward-facing strokes.
- One torpedo rescue, 25 yards out, tow mannequin to shore.
- One rescue tube rescue, 25 yards out, front approach, securely wrap the tube around the mannequin and tow to shore.
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure victim on board, paddle mannequin to shore.

Testing stations will be established along the shore where one instructor will be assigned to four candidates and each of the below rescues or swim will be performed according to the type of certification being tested.

TORP AND REEL SAVE: This is the only save that requires multiple candidates to engage in the rescue scenario. Candidates manning the tow the rope on shore will be wearing masks and spaced six (6) feet apart on the line. The candidate performing the water portion of the rescue will be swimming out to a rescue mannequin. All candidates will use hand sanitizer when the test is completed, and all equipment will be wiped down for next group.

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TORPEDO RESCUE & BOARD RESCUE: These saves involve only one candidate at a time who will be performing the rescues using a rescue mannequin. Candidate will use hand sanitizer when complete and all equipment will be wiped down for the next group.

440 SWIM: This test can be done adhering to all social distancing guidelines where swimmers will be spaced out in order to avoid any need for candidates to come in close proximity on land or water.

Clear Communications Plan

RIDEM will develop an information sheet on the testing protocols, which will be posted at www.riparks.com/lifeguard. The link will be emailed to candidates who register for appointments. The link will also be sent to municipalities and private recreational facilities so they can provide it to test candidates.

