

## Phase I guidelines for: Rhode Island state parks

### I. Summary of Phase I operations

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) will reopen state parks in a graduated manner. State park facilities will be limited to active use only, such as walking, hiking, biking and fishing, with use restrictions eased as conditions permit.

### II. Physical space and occupancy limits

Social distancing and group limitations will be enforced at state parks. This requires reducing parking capacity and closely monitoring park use during Phase I. The parking limits and visitor capacity will be determined for each facility, based on “carrying capacity” and the experience and observation of park managers. The volume of cars and visitors will be monitored, and parks will be closed to parking once the limits are reached. The restrictions will be flexible so that managers can adjust limits up or down depending on the number of visitors and visitor compliance with social distancing practices and group size requirements.

All state park employees and visitors should follow the general guidance from the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding gathering sizes and social distancing.

#### Adhere to gathering size restrictions

- RIDOH has published the following requirements on gathering sizes: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>.
- Please follow the gathering size guidance for each phase as described here: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/#alerts>.
- These restrictions 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 should remain at least six (6) feet apart at all times.

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### III. Business processes, procedures and activities

#### Enhanced cleaning and/or disinfecting procedures

- During Phase I, park restrooms will remain closed and RIDEM will encourage visitors to bring their own hand sanitizer. Porta-johns will be placed in some (but not all) facilities, based on the level of use. Porta-johns will be supplied by a vendor, who will do the regular deep cleaning. RIDOH has approved the following cleaning schedule for porta-johns:
- High use porta-johns:
  - Thorough cleaning and sanitizing once per day by the vendor.
  - High-touch areas in the units (door handles, hand sanitizer dispensers, and toilet seats) wiped down frequently by RIDEM seasonal staff.

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- Moderate- and low-use porta-johns:
  - Thorough cleaning and sanitizing once per day by the vendor.
  - Cleaning wipes and/or cleaning materials available for individuals to clean surfaces before and after use.

## Screening procedures

- Parks and Recreation staff will be screened daily in compliance with procedures for state employees issued by the Department of Administration. Employees who are determined to be sick will be sent home.

## Face coverings and other personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Employees, customers and visitors are required to wear face coverings.
  - Either a cloth face covering or surgical face mask is acceptable. Respirators and N95 masks should be reserved for designated healthcare workers.
  - Employees who require more extensive facial coverings due to industry-specific safety regulations, laws or guidelines should continue to comply with the PPE requirements outlined within their respective industry-specific laws, regulations and guidelines (e.g., medical professionals, professionals who use respiratory equipment, and professionals who handle hazardous waste).
  - Face coverings are required 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 certain individuals, per CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> or when a face covering would inhibit an activity of daily living (e.g., eating).
  - Park employees will wear cloth masks. Employees who are responsible for administering first aid, such as park rangers and lifeguards, will wear surgical masks while administering first aid.
  - RIDEM has developed guidance for the appropriate level of PPE for specific positions and settings.

## Clear communications plan

- The Department will develop clear messages regarding restrictions and COVID-19 measures and will communicate them to visitors through its website, social media channels and the press.
- The Department will develop and post social distancing reminders and other signage as needed throughout its facilities.
- The Department will also have park rangers at some larger parks to greet visitors and to provide COVID-19-related reminders.
- The Department will use signage on the roads at some park facilities to notify the public when parking is at capacity.

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## IV. Human resources

### Guidance to minimize spread of COVID-19 among employees

RIDEM will strive to limit spread of COVID-19 among park employees in compliance with all guidance and directives issued by the Department of Administration for state employees. RIDEM has developed specific protocols for use of PPE for certain job classes and in specific settings (e.g., lifeguards). Face coverings and hand sanitizer will be provided to all park employees. Supervisors will issue frequent reminders and will closely monitor compliance with COVID-19-related policies.

### Guidelines to assist individuals who are symptomatic and/or test positive for COVID-19, or are required to quarantine based on potential exposure

Employees who are symptomatic will be immediately sent home in accordance with Department of Administration guidance for state employees. RIDEM will work with Human Resources to ensure appropriate follow up with those individuals and others with whom they have been in contact.

### Training plan in order to meet the safety guidelines proposed in the previous sections

All seasonal park employees attend orientation and training sessions. At these sessions, COVID-19-related issues will be reviewed and emphasized, and questions and concerns will be addressed. Employees will be issued a one-page document with guidance, which will also be posted where employees report to work. Supervisors will be responsible to monitor and ensure strict compliance.

## V. Supplies

### Likely supplies needed for Phase I

The state will provide the requisite cloth face coverings, surgical masks and gloves to park employees. RIDEM will procure needed cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer. RIDEM will develop and procure signage, as well as other supplies and equipment that may be needed to restrict access or parking, such as jersey barriers or traffic cones.

## VI. Enforcement

RIDEM will emphasize personal responsibility in its messaging. With limited parks and environmental police staff, establishing and reinforcing expectations for visitor compliance are necessary first steps. Violations will be handled by park rangers and by RIDEM environmental police, when appropriate. RIDEM will coordinate closely with and rely on assistance from state and local law enforcement agencies as the need arises.

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## VII. Other considerations

If during Phase I it becomes clear that the above physical space and occupancy limits are not being adhered to and parks become too crowded, RIDEM will need to impose new restrictions and, in some cases, may have to close areas or delay the reopening of new areas.

Rhode Islanders are fortunate to have a diverse and beautiful state park system. While COVID-19 has changed many aspects of our lives, RIDEM will work hard to ensure access to outdoor recreation in our public parks remains an avenue to provide enjoyment and enhance the health of our citizens.