

## Beach Guidance

Some beaches in Rhode Island have opened and others will open soon. In accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) emergency regulations, beach owners/operators must prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Control Plan](#). A checklist and template can be found at [ReopeningRI.com](#). 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. Beaches must comply with RIDOH regulations and active [executive orders](#). Beaches must also abide by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance issued for the parks and recreation sectors that can be found [here](#).

The guidelines below summarize **additional** steps Rhode Island is asking beach managers and visitors to take.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact [RIparks@dem.ri.gov](mailto:RIparks@dem.ri.gov). If you have questions about water quality and COVID-related health issues associated with beaches, please contact Sherry Poucher at [sherry.poucher@health.ri.gov](mailto:sherry.poucher@health.ri.gov).

### Operations:

- **Physical distancing:** To maintain proper distance, beach visitors will be limited to group sizes in accordance with current RIDOH and [reopeningri.com](#) guidance and groups must be a minimum of 6 feet apart from other groups. Visitors should also be required to practice physical distancing wherever possible while swimming or doing other water-based activities.
- **Capacity:** Beach owners/operators are required to determine the maximum number of visitors that will be allowed entry to meet physical distancing guidance. Beach owners/operator may:
  - Limit the number of seasonal and daily beach passes sold
  - Reduce parking or access points
  - Require separate egress and ingress
  - Close certain areas of the beach, lake, or lakeshore as necessary
- The methodology used to determine the maximum number of visitors can include visual observations, technology such as surveys and GIS overlay, and engineering to determine the capacity limit. For saltwater beaches, capacity limits should take high tides into consideration.
- **Quarantine:** Visitors from out-of-state should be informed of any current [Executive Orders](#) related to travelers from out-of-state and quarantine requirements through visual messaging, including but not limited to, signage at beach entrances and reference to the executive order on the beach website.
- **Food and Beverage Sales:** All food and beverage sales shall follow the most recent Executive Orders, regulations, and/or guidance related to restaurants.
- **Face Coverings:** All persons (employees and visitors) are required to wear face coverings when in areas where congregating is common in accordance with RIDOH regulations and [Executive Order 20-30](#). Areas include but are not limited to boardwalks, restrooms, changing rooms and concession stands. Face coverings should not be worn in the water.

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- **Cleaning procedures:** Public areas (including, but not limited to: high-touch points, rails, water fountains, and restrooms) will be cleaned in accordance with RIDOH regulations and [CDC guidelines](#).
- **Customer Service:** Employees and concessionaires are required to wash and sanitize their hands on a routine basis. Employees and concessionaires in positions that require direct contact with customers should wear gloves only if normally required to do so.
- **Lifeguards (if applicable):**
  - Lifeguards shall avoid sitting next to each other on lifeguard stands.
  - Visitors, friends, and off duty guards shall not be within 6 feet of lifeguard stands. Operators should delineate an exclusion line using cones or lines.
  - Lifeguards shall wear masks and gloves whenever dealing with the public: This includes first aid, lost child searches, assisting handicapped individuals, and any other close contact with visitors.
  - In the event of a water rescue, the lifeguards entering the water should not wear a mask. Secondary guards must have masks and gloves on and take over as soon as the rescuing guards reach the shoreline.
  - BVM (bag valve mask) will be the only acceptable way of delivering rescue breaths.
  - Lifeguard equipment that is not assigned to an individual guard, including, but not limited to, the lifeguard chair, torp buoy, first aid kit, rescue board, surfboards, dinghy, oars and flags must be disinfected after each use, between shift changes, and at the end of the day.
- See also [Lifeguard Certification Guidelines](#).
- **Activities and Equipment Rentals:** Operators who offer water-based lessons or rentals, either directly or through a vendor, should ensure that guidance on physical distancing and face coverings can be followed or consider eliminating the activity. Face coverings are not recommended in the water. Equipment loaned or rented to visitors (e.g. canoes, kayaks, boogie boards, beach chairs and umbrellas) should be sanitized between each use.
- **Beach Entry Fees and Passes:** Beach operators should offer online sales of beach passes or offer automated pay kiosks at entrances to encourage cashless transactions and to eliminate the need for paper receipts. Owners/operators shall communicate the availability of these options on its social media channels and website.

