

## Guidelines for Lifeguard Certification

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. Applicable guidance for public [swimming pools](#) and [beaches](#) may also be found on <https://reopeningri.com/>.

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](mailto:tom.rosa@dem.ri.gov).

### Summary of Phase III 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. 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 21, and June 11, 2020 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

Location: Scarborough North State Beach

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

Dates: May 20, June 10, June 25, 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 3 - August 7, 2020 Time: 9:00am - 2:00pm

Location: Scarborough North State Beach

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

Dates: August 11– August 14, 2020 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

Location: Burlingame State Park (Prosser Grove Picnic Area)

## 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 ensure proper pod/group sizing, reduce wait times and ensure physical distancing. No candidate will be allowed to check in for their test until fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of their preregistered time. Information regarding each candidate's name and contact information will be kept, including which pod/group they are assigned, for at least 30 days, for purposes of contact tracing, in accordance with current RIDOH regulations.

All candidates must wear a face covering, except when they are in the water, 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, and Lifeguard Training) or equivalent must be uploaded on the registration site prior to the examination, and candidates 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 physical distancing guidelines.

The certification fee is \$10 and cannot be collected in advance due to statutory and technological restrictions. Candidates will be required to bring exact change or check and to put 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.

All organizations should follow the current [executive orders](#), RIDOH Regulations, and applicable guidelines [on Reopening RI](#) as they pertain to physical distancing, gathering sizes, face coverings and sanitation.

## Business processes, procedures, and activities

## 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 frequently 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 for 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 return home and 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](#) provided [on Reopening RI](#).

## 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.
- 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.

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- Candidates will be required to wear cloth face coverings, or surgical masks while waiting to test, waiting to receive certification cards, or whenever six (6) feet of physical distance cannot be easily maintained. 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 in consistent pods/groups of six people. Person-to-person contact is allowed for water rescues, and any equipment used during the training will be cleaned in accordance with the Enhanced Cleaning and/or Disinfecting Procedures outlined above.

### CONDITIONAL SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

- Torp and reel save, three-person team within pod. (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 “victim” to shore.
- One rescue tube rescue, 25 yards out, rear-facing approach, securely wrap the tube around the “victim” and tow “victim” to shore.
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure the “victim” 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, three-person team within pod.
- Board rescue 100 yards out, flip board, secure “victim” on board, paddle “victim” to shore.

### FULL NON-SURF TEST CONSISTS OF:

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

Testing stations will be spaced 14 feet apart from one another and will consist of one instructor and no more than 6 candidates in a pod/group spaced six (6) feet apart, when applicable, from one another. Each of the below rescues or swims will be performed according to the type of certification being tested.

**TORP AND REEL SAVE:** Candidates manning the tow 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 the victim. All candidates will use hand sanitizer when the test is completed, and all equipment will be wiped down for next group.

**TORPEDO RESCUE & BOARD RESCUE:** These saves involve the six candidates being divided into groups of two. The groups of two candidates will participate in person-to-person rescues. The same group of two will be used for both tests. Candidates will use hand sanitizer when rescues are complete, and all equipment will be wiped down for the next group.

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440-YARD SWIM: This test can be done adhering to all physical distancing guidelines where swimmers will be spaced at least six (6) feet apart to avoid candidates coming in close proximity to one another 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](http://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.

