

Highlights of COVID-19 Phase III Guidance and Executive Orders

Vulnerable populations

- All vulnerable populations identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including anyone age 65 and older, are still strongly advised to stay at home unless they must go to work, travel for medical treatment, or get other necessities such as groceries, gas, or medication. CDC has a list of conditions that put people at higher risk for severe illness from [COVID-19](#) online.

Travel

- If you are coming to Rhode Island from a [states with a COVID-19 positivity rate higher than 5%](#), you will either have to quarantine for 14 days after arrival or produce proof of a negative test for COVID-19 taken within 72 hours **before arriving**. If you receive a test **after arriving** in Rhode Island and get a negative result, you can stop quarantining.
- If you are visiting Rhode Island from out of state, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) recommends you get tested in your home state, if possible. Out-of-state visitors can find a [list of asymptomatic testing sites](#) on RIDOH's website. Out-of-state visitors will be charged for the test. If you receive a test **after arriving** in Rhode Island and get a negative test result, you can stop quarantining.
 - These domestic travel guidelines do not apply to public health public safety, or healthcare workers or to anyone traveling for medical treatment; to attend funeral or memorial services; to obtain necessities like groceries, gas, or medicine; to drop off or pick up children from summer camp or day care; or to anyone who must work on their boats.
- International travel restrictions remain in place. Anyone arriving in Rhode Island from outside of the 50 states or the District of Columbia must immediately self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

Face coverings

- All persons must wear a cloth face covering in compliance with [Rhode Island Department of Health \(RIDOH\) regulations](#) and active [executive orders](#).
 - All individuals in public or in an establishment shall wear a cloth face covering unless they can easily and continuously stay six feet apart from others.
 - No store or other business is required to refuse entry to a customer not wearing a face covering.
- Employers must arrange for cloth face coverings or materials to make face coverings for each employee at no expense to the employee.
- Exceptions to mask wearing in the regulations are:
 - Cloth masks should not be placed on children younger than age two, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without help.

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- Cloth face coverings are not required for people who are required by their employers or by State or federal law to wear other personal protective equipment (such as N-95 respirators and surgical masks).
- Cloth face coverings are not required if it prevents an activity of daily living (eating or drinking).
- Cloth face coverings are not required if it would negatively impact the wearer's safety or lead to an increased risk of harm to others (near open flames).
- Cloth face coverings are not required in outdoor settings when people can easily and continuously stay at least six feet apart from other people.

Physical distancing

- Anyone in public or in an establishment must stay six feet apart from others at all times, to the extent possible.
 - When physical distancing is not feasible, individuals should limit their time of exposure to others to the extent possible and must wear a face covering.
- Physical distancing means keeping space between oneself and others when outside of the home to prevent the spread of disease. It includes:
 - Staying at least six feet apart from people outside the same household, unless separated by a physical barrier that prevents people from having direct contact and contact with any droplets from another person's coughing, sneezing, or talking;
 - Not gathering in groups larger than 15 people inside or outside;
 - Staying out of crowded places; and
 - Avoiding mass gatherings.

Screening

- All businesses and organizations shall implement and ensure compliance with screening of all people entering the establishment(s) at any time for any reason. Sample screening forms are available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#). If someone is having symptoms of COVID-19 that cannot be explained by known allergies or non-infectious illnesses, the business or organization should deny access to that person unless the establishment is a healthcare facility with other access requirements or limitations, the person is a resident in a multi-unit residential establishment, or the establishment is a cooling center.

Cleaning

- All businesses and organizations shall perform environmental cleaning once per day.
- Commonly touched surfaces, such as shared workstations, elevator buttons, door handles, and railings should be cleaned according to [CDC guidance for specific industries](#).
- Businesses and organizations shall use, and have readily available to service providers, cleaning and disinfecting products designed to clean and disinfect surfaces and shall use the products as intended.
- Businesses and organizations shall maintain records documenting the date, time, location, and procedures for the required cleaning activities.
- All businesses and organizations must have restrooms open and assure that they have running water and soap. If access to restrooms or running water is limited, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol must be available at all times.

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Indoor and outdoor venues of assembly

- Indoor venues operating at a percent capacity in previous phases can increase to up to 66% capacity while maintaining six-foot spacing between people.
- Indoor venues operating at a square footage capacity in previous phases can increase to up to one person per 100 square feet while maintaining six-foot spacing between people.
- Social gatherings (weddings, parties, networking events):
 - Indoor: limit of 15 people; events with a licensed caterer can have up to 50 people
 - Outdoor: limit of 15 people; events with a licensed caterer can have up to 100 people
- Public events and venues of assembly (performances, festivals):
 - Indoor: limit of 125 people, or up to 66% capacity with six-foot spacing between people
 - Outdoor: limit of 250 people, or up to 66% capacity with six-foot spacing between people
 - Organizations are required to submit a plan to the Department of Business Regulation (DBR) for any event at which there will be more than 250 in attendance. [Submit the plan to DBR online.](#)
 - Fourth of July celebrations with up to 250 people may be held and are subject to [beach and park rules.](#)
 - Municipalities may hold July 4 celebrations of more than 50 people, but only if they adhere to beach and park rules and submit a plan to DBR for review and approval.

Structured and seated venues (movie theaters, concert halls, comedy clubs)

- Parties must be spaced at least six feet apart on all sides.
- Live performances are permitted, as long as there is 14 feet of space between performers, between customers and audience members, and between performers and high-traffic areas. This distance can be reduced to six feet if all performers wear cloth face coverings throughout the performance and there is no vocal performance or if there is a physical, non-porous barrier separating performers from other performers, customers and audience members, and high-traffic areas.

Religious and faith-based organizations

- Services may resume indoors for up to 66% of worship-space capacity and subject to the [Phase III Guidelines for Religious and Faith-Based Organizations.](#)
- Places of worship shall also limit occupancy to 125 people or fewer according to the statewide rule for indoor places of assembly.
- Live streaming or broadcasting of religious services or attendance through outdoor drive-in services are permitted and strongly recommended, particularly for vulnerable populations, including those age 65 or older.
- Choirs and musical ensembles should be limited. People singing must be at least 14 feet apart from other choir and ensemble members and from other people.

Setting-specific guidelines

Office-based businesses

- Office-based businesses may allow up to 66% of workers to work on site at the same time as long as physical distancing standards, regulations, and other guidance described in Phase III guidelines can be maintained.
 - Working from home is still strongly encouraged when possible.
 - Offices should adjust protocols for shared spaces such as conference rooms, break rooms, and cafeterias to ensure people can stay at least six feet apart from each other.

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Critical and non-critical retail businesses

- All retail establishments may continue operating for in-person customer shopping. All operations are subject to the [Guidelines for Retail Phase III](#).
- Retail businesses may allow up to one customer per 100 square feet of store area.
- The use of dressing rooms is not encouraged. Retailers for whom the operation of a dressing room is essential to their business model must outline procedures for the sanitization of clothing tried on in dressing rooms between customers, and for the frequent cleaning of dressing rooms.
- Individual retailers must not allow sampling or application of personal goods (makeup, perfume, lotion) unless they provide single-use applicators or have a no-touch option.
- Multi-retailer complexes (shopping malls, strip malls) can open, subject to all appropriate guidance in operating each component of their facility under their control (recreation spaces, food service spaces, etc.).
- Market retail (flea markets, yard sales, outdoor retail) should use the following customer and household limits: up to one customer or household at a time for booths and stalls that are less than 10 feet wide, and up to two customers or households at a time for booths that are more than 10 feet wide.
 - Food and beverage sales and consumption (including food trucks) at market retail operations must follow restaurant guidance if offering on-site consumption.

Restaurants and bars

- Restaurants may offer indoor dining in addition to outdoor dining, pick-up, delivery, and drive-through operations subject to the requirements and recommendations described in the Phase III Guidelines for Restaurants and RIDOH regulations.
 - **Restaurants** can operate at 66% capacity, while also maintaining all physical distancing requirements between parties.
 - **Bars** may reopen for seated service only and subject to the requirements and recommendations described in the [Phase III Guidelines for Restaurants](#) and RIDOH regulations.
 - Service is allowed from bartender to seated bar patrons (with restrictions).
 - **Catered events** are permitted, subject to restaurant guidance:
 - Up to 50 guests are allowed for indoor settings
 - Up to 100 guests are allowed for outdoor settings
 - **Indoor recreation and entertainment** (pool tables, arcade games) are allowed to operate under the recreation and entertainment guidance. Indoor live performances are also allowed (with restrictions).

Recreational and entertainment businesses and historical and cultural establishments

- These establishments may reopen subject to the [Phase III Guidelines for Recreational, Historical, Cultural, and Entertainment Establishments](#).
 - Examples of these operations include outdoor mini golf courses, batting cages, go-kart tracks, rail biking, bumper cars, zoos, horseback riding, and historical sites.
 - Seated venues, including movie theatres, can open at 66% capacity.
 - Free-flowing venues, including bowling alleys, arcades, museums, and cultural institutions can open at one person per 100 square feet.
 - Night club operations remain closed.

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Personal service businesses and operations

- Personal service businesses and operations, including, but not limited to, hair salons and barbershops, nail salons, tattoo parlors, tanning parlors, estheticians, and massage therapists may reopen subject to all requirements of their professional or facility licensing and the requirements and recommendations of the [Phase III Guidelines for Personal Services](#).
 - Capacity must be limited so that each client and professional pair is able to maintain six feet between pairings. Pairings may be closer together if physical, nonporous barriers are placed between work stations and the overall capacity is limited to one customer per 100 square feet (or up to three customers for establishments less than 300 square feet).
 - Businesses that provide services that require the removal of a face covering by the customer (facial hair care, waxing, facials) can offer these services, as long as additional precautions are taken (the professional wears an N-95 or KN-95 respirator, eye protection, and face shield) and the unmasked customer maintains a physical distance from all other people besides the professional.

State parks and beaches

State parks and beaches are open and are subject to the same restrictions and precautions on face coverings and physical distancing cited above as well as limits on use, parking, and capacity.

- When a park reaches capacity, the entrance is closed until existing visitors leave the park so more may be allowed in. To help prevent overcrowding, beach parking is at 75% capacity. The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) encourages beachgoers to [consult its website](#) before going to the beach. It provides the parking capacity status of the five major State beaches – Scarborough North and South, Roger Wheeler, East Matunuck, and Misquamicut – about once every hour.
- To minimize traffic tie ups and lengthy point-of-sale interactions, season passes will no longer be sold at beach entrances. DEM encourages online [purchase of daily flex and seasonal parking passes online](#).
- The pavilions at State beaches are high-use, public areas where visitors cannot easily and continuously stay six feet apart from each other. Whether to buy food and drinks at the concessions or to use the restrooms, beachgoers must wear face coverings on the pavilions.

Gyms, fitness centers, and small-group fitness classes

- Gyms and fitness centers may reopen subject to the requirements and recommendations in the [Phase III Guidelines for Gyms and Fitness Centers](#).
 - Group fitness activities are preferred to take place outdoors but are limited to one person per 100 square feet, with all physical distancing guidelines observed.
 - In open gym settings, capacity is limited to one person per 100 square feet. In class settings (e.g., yoga, exercise, spin), capacity is limited to the number of people who can stay at least six feet apart, or 14 feet apart if not wearing a mask, in the space where the class is taking place. **Physical distancing requirements must be enforced.** Creating consistent cohorts for classes is encouraged.
 - Pools, whirlpools, saunas, and steam rooms may be operated and used in accordance with [applicable regulations issued by RIDOH](#).
 - Close-contact fitness activities (ballroom dancing, boxing) can take place. Consistent pairs of partners are recommended.
 - All **licensed pools** may only be operated in accordance with [RIDOH regulations](#).

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- All communal areas, such as waiting areas, lobbies, and locker rooms, may open at a capacity of one person per 100 square feet of space. These areas must have a documented cleaning schedule and be supplied with cleaning materials and sanitizer.
- All exercise space and equipment must be cleaned thoroughly between uses.

Other business settings

- **Elective medical procedures and other medical services** shall continue according to plans submitted by healthcare providers and approved by RIDOH.
- **Childcare services** shall continue in small, stable groups pursuant to [emergency regulations](#) created by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services.
- Summer camps are open pursuant to RIDOH regulations.

Other business requirements

- All businesses and organizations must complete a COVID-19 Control Plan, keep it on file at the business, and make it available to RIDOH upon request.
 - A [COVID19 Control Plan template](#) is available online.
 - All businesses and organizations must designate someone to monitor and ensure compliance with requirements.
- All businesses and organizations shall ensure the placement of posters or signs at entry to its establishments with information about entry screening, required physical distancing, use of cloth face coverings, and other subjects as provided in guidance issued by RIDOH. A poster (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Cape Verdean Creole](#)) containing all required messaging is available on Reopening RI's website.
- All businesses and organizations will be expected to ask visitors for contact information so it is available for contact tracing, if needed.
- All businesses and organizations shall ensure that restrooms are open, have running water, and are stocked with soap and towels.
 - If access to restrooms or running water is limited, the business shall ensure access to hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol at all times.
- All businesses and organizations shall prohibit the use of water fountains.
- The use of shared hookahs or waterpipes at any establishment is prohibited.

Other general guidance

- Outdoor activities are preferred. Open windows or doors, when possible, to improve ventilation in indoor spaces. Increased use of HVAC is not recommended if outdoor airflow cannot be introduced inside.