

Updated
04.13.21

Parks and Beaches Guidance for Operations During COVID-19

In accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) [emergency regulations](#), businesses and organizations must prepare and implement a COVID-19 Control Plan. A [checklist](#) and [Control Plan template](#) are available on [Reopening RI's website](#). A [guidance document](#) is available to assist organizations in meeting the requirements outlined in the RIDOH regulations. All businesses, organizations and State and municipal agencies must comply with RIDOH regulations and all active [executive orders](#). The State is also encouraging all businesses, organizations and municipal agencies to abide by all applicable [State of Rhode Island reopening guidance](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#) issued for the parks and recreation sectors.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact DEM.riparks@dem.ri.gov.

General Operations

- **Physical distancing:** Proper physical distancing, in accordance with executive orders and RIDOH regulations must be maintained. To help maintain required physical distancing, operators should encourage visitors who are not in a household group to maintain minimum physical distance and group gathering sizes in accordance with current executive orders, RIDOH regulations and [ReopeningRI.com](#) guidance.
- **Capacity:** Operators should estimate the maximum number of visitors that will be allowed entry to meet physical distancing requirements. In order to do so, operators may:
 - Limit the number of seasonal and daily beach passes sold at beaches;
 - Reduce the number of parking spaces or access points;
 - Require separate entrance and exit points; and
 - Close certain areas as necessary.

Operators should be prepared to adjust capacity restrictions, up or down, depending on the number of visitors and visitor compliance with physical distancing practices and group size requirements. The methodology used to determine the maximum number of visitors for facilities can include visual observations; historical experience of park managers; and technology such as surveys, GIS overlay, and engineering. For saltwater beaches, capacity limits should take high tides into consideration.

- **Quarantine:** Out-of-state visitors should be informed of any current [executive orders](#) related to out-of-state travelers and quarantine requirements through visual messaging, such as signage at facility entrances and/or reference to [executive order\(s\)](#) on the park's website.

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- **Food and beverage sales:** All food and beverage sales offered by operators, concessionaires, or vendors shall follow the current executive orders, regulations, and guidance related to [restaurants](#).
- **Face coverings:** Face covering must be worn in accordance with current executive orders and RIDOH regulations. Employers must arrange for cloth face coverings for each employee at no expense to the employee. Visitors and patrons must be instructed to wear face coverings in accordance with current executive orders and RIDOH regulations. Face coverings should not be worn in the water.
- **Screening:** Screening for COVID-19 related symptoms must be performed in accordance with current executive orders and RIDOH regulations. Operators must ensure proper screening of all employees prior to the start of their workday in accordance with RIDOH regulations. Visitors should be encouraged to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and be discouraged from visiting if symptomatic through the placement of screening signage at facility entrances and in high use areas.
- **Cleaning:** Cleaning of public areas, including commonly touched surfaces (e.g. rails, restrooms, showers, changing rooms, etc.) should be conducted in accordance with [RIDOH regulations](#) and [CDC guidelines](#), with the exception of picnic tables. Operators who rent or provide access to picnic tables should encourage visitors to use table coverings and to bring sanitizing wipes for cleaning picnic tables before use.
- **Public restrooms and shower facilities:**
 - Restrooms and shower facilities must be cleaned in accordance with [RIDOH regulations](#) with particular attention paid to commonly touched surfaces.
 - Operators should adopt and implement practices to ensure that physical distancing requirements are adhered to, including occupancy limits, staggered and marked queueing lines, and/or closing some bathroom or shower stalls.
 - Operators should encourage patrons who use public restrooms and single-occupancy showers to:
 - Wear shoes, water shoes, or flip-flops while in the facility;
 - Wipe down shared surfaces before and after use; and
 - Thoroughly wash/sanitize their hands before and after use.Signage should be posted at entrances to, and inside of, the restroom and shower facilities regarding these practices and the need for proper handwashing.
 - Portable toilets – If restrooms cannot be opened, portable toilets should be used. Portable toilets must be cleaned in accordance with RIDOH regulations with particular attention paid to commonly touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, hand sanitizer dispensers, and toilet seats) and a thorough cleaning at least once per day. Operators who have portable toilets in areas with low use or that are in remote, unstaffed areas should encourage patrons to bring their own sanitizing wipes.
- **Playgrounds:** Outdoor playgrounds and play areas may open, provided operators meet current cleaning and disinfecting protocols in accordance with [RIDOH regulations](#). Park operators should display posters and signs to remind visitors to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Visitors should be encouraged to review [CDC guidance for visiting parks and recreation](#) facilities and to bring hand sanitizer for disinfecting after use.

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- **Events or gatherings:** Events or gatherings held at parks and beaches are subject to current executive orders, RIDOH regulations, and applicable guidance. Special care should be taken to ensure all COVID-19 protocols are followed including, but not limited to, gathering size, physical distancing, face coverings, and sanitization.
- **Outdoor recreation activities and equipment rentals:** Operators who have authorized vendors or concessionaires and businesses or operators who offer lessons, classes, or rentals must comply with applicable executive orders, RIDOH regulations, and guidelines. Cleaning and sanitization of equipment loaned or rented to visitors (e.g. canoes, kayaks, boogie boards, beach chairs and umbrellas) must be performed in accordance with RIDOH regulations.
- **Fees and payments:** Operators are encouraged to use cashless, touchless and online payment options for entrance fees and permits and to communicate the availability of these options.
- **Clear communications plan:**
 - Develop clear messages regarding restrictions and COVID-19 measures and communicate to visitors through website, social media channels, and the media.
 - Develop and post physical distancing reminders and other signage, as needed, throughout facilities.

