

Reopening Rhode Island Guidance & Best Practices

Updated: 6-18-2021

Rhode Island continues to make progress in the fight against COVID-19 while balancing public health and economic needs. The guidance and requirements below outline frequently asked questions relating to sector-specific restrictions and mitigations. Individuals and business owners are encouraged to review guidance in this document. Additional public health guidance relating to quarantine, isolation, and travel can be found on the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) website at covid.ri.gov. Variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 are a great concern to Rhode Islanders based on the increased transmissibility and illness rates associated with them. With a percentage of the Rhode Island population still unvaccinated and children under 12 years old still ineligible to receive a vaccination, it is more important than ever to take caution.

All unvaccinated Rhode Islanders are encouraged to follow best practices by taking actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to:

- [Getting fully vaccinated](#) as soon as you can
- [Wearing a mask](#) that fits snugly but comfortably over their nose, mouth and chin without any gaps and in accordance with state requirements
- Maintaining a physical distance of at least 3 feet from those not in their household
- Cleaning frequently touched or shared objects and washing hands frequently
- Limiting interactions with people outside of their household to those who are fully vaccinated
- [Getting tested](#) often, especially if you work in the service industry

While Rhode Island has ended most restrictions, important masking, screening, and signage requirements remain in place.

- **Masking:** People who are not fully vaccinated must still wear a mask indoors in public settings. Vaccinated people are not required to wear a mask with some exceptions. A business, organization, or other entity may still require visitors to wear masks. Rhode Island follows the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for masking and requires it for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in certain settings, such as schools, healthcare, and transportation. [Executive Order 21-69](#) | [COVID-19 and Wearing Masks](#) | [Protect Your Household from COVID-19](#)
- **Screening:** All organizations are still required to screen employees and customers entering their establishments. Posting this [screening tool signage](#) at the entrance(s) of your establishment satisfies this requirement. Note that organizations with more comprehensive screening methods, such as mobile screening, are not required to post screening signage.
- **Signage:** All organizations are still required to post masking signage at the entrance(s) to their establishments. Learn more about these [signage requirements](#).

In addition, Rhode Island businesses, institutions, and organizations can help minimize transmission of COVID-19 by taking the following steps:

- Cooperate fully with RIDOH when a cluster of cases is detected within any given setting. This includes the requirement to provide critical information to RIDOH to evaluate and assess the severity of any detected cluster of cases.
- Implement, in partnership with RIDOH, active control measures to prevent further disease transmission in a cluster of cases scenario.

- Maintain communication with RIDOH until confirmed clusters of cases have been fully resolved. Actively remind customers through signage or other means that they must wear a mask or cloth face covering indoors if they are not fully vaccinated;
- Ensure that their establishments have their restrooms open, and that they have running water and are stocked with hand soap. If access to restrooms or running water is limited, ensure easy access to hand sanitizer at all times.
- Ensure the performance of environmental cleaning of their establishments once per day, paying close attention to commonly touched surfaces such as shared workstations, elevator buttons, door handles, and railings. Use, and have readily available to service providers, cleaning/disinfecting products designed to clean/disinfect surfaces. Use the products in the manner intended.
- Prohibit the use of water fountains.
- Post contact information for an establishment's point of contact in a conspicuous manner so that all customers can inform the establishment of health and safety concerns.

Mask-wearing & Other Mitigations

Where am I still required to wear my mask?

The CDC's updated guidance is that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask, except in the following settings as defined in [RIDOH's Safe Activities Regulations](#) and Governor McKee's most current Executive Order regarding face coverings ([Executive Order 21-69](#)):

- If a business establishment, organization, or other entity requires it
- Indoors in schools and child care settings
- In healthcare settings like hospitals, doctors' offices, home-based healthcare, and nursing homes
- On public transportation like planes, buses, and trains
- When providing or using paid ground transportation services
- In transportation hubs like airports and stations
- [In enclosed or semi-enclosed transit stops and waiting areas](#)
- In homeless shelters
- In correctional facilities
- When required by other applicable state or federal laws or regulations

People who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks indoors. There is no requirement for them to wear masks outdoors in any settings except for the exceptions listed above.

Someone is considered fully vaccinated once they have received all recommended doses of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or World Health Organization (WHO) and more than 14 days have passed since the final dose.

I run a business. What do the State's remaining requirements mean for my employees who are fully vaccinated versus those who are not fully vaccinated? Can I be more restrictive?

You and your employees must follow all requirements of Executive Order [21-68](#) and [21-69](#) and the [Safe Activities Regulations](#). As a business owner, you can have your own masking and physical distancing policy for your employees and customers that is more restrictive than the above-referenced Executive Order. This means you can require employees and customers to wear masks and physically distance whether or not they're fully vaccinated.

Do I need to carry proof of vaccination with me?

Not necessarily. However, businesses, organizations, and other entities can require you to show proof of vaccination to enter their establishments. For this reason, it's a good idea to carry some type of proof that you are fully vaccinated.

I run a business. Do I have to require proof of vaccination of my customers?

It is not a state requirement, but it is allowable if you wish to implement it as a policy. If you would like to require proof of vaccination from customers or employees but are unsure about any legal issues, please consult with your attorney. Businesses may also wish to seek guidance from their merchants' association, chamber of commerce, or industry association.

What type of vaccination proof should I show to businesses or accept from customers?

Members of the public may choose to carry a physical or digital copy of their vaccination record in case they are asked to show evidence of vaccination. The official COVID-19 vaccination verification documents available in Rhode Island currently include:

- Your COVID-19 Vaccination Record card
- A printed or digital photo of the front and back of your COVID-19 Vaccination Record card
- A printed copy or screenshot of your COVID-19 vaccination record page from Rhode Island's Vaccine Record Lookup Portal at portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord

Signage

Are businesses still required to post signage?

Yes. The [Safe Activities Regulations](#) still require establishments to post signage at the entrances of their premises.

You can access additional information on state signage requirements at reopeningri.com/signage-resources.

Social Gatherings

What is the current social gathering limit?

There are no longer social gathering limits. However, RIDOH strongly encourages limiting interactions with those who don't live with you if you are unvaccinated. The more a person interacts with others, and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread in the community.

Catered Events

What are the requirements and guidelines for catered events?

There are no capacity or spacing requirements for catered events. Standing bar service, cocktail hours, open dance floors, live performances, self-service stations, and buffets are all allowed. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.

Does the updated guidance allow for a licensed caterer to drop off prepared food at a residential location and leave the premises?

Yes, a licensed caterer is no longer required to stay on the premises for catered events.

Funerals and End of Life Ceremonies

What are the guidelines and requirements for funeral homes?

There are no restrictions for funeral homes and end of life ceremonies. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each establishment's discretion.

Venues of Assembly

What settings are considered to be venues of assembly?

Venues of assembly can be categorized into three groups:

1. **Indoor:** all areas are contained, and entrances can be limited (spectator sporting events, comedy clubs, movie theaters, convention centers, performance venues, etc.)
2. **Ticketed outdoor:** all areas are contained, and entrances can be limited (some outdoor events where entrance is ticketed such as concerts, fairs, music festivals, spectator sporting events, etc.)

3. **Additional outdoor:** (parades, fireworks display, road races, walk-a-thons, etc.)

Are there any restrictions, such as DBR approval, for venues of assembly?

There are no restrictions on venues of assembly. However, we understand your organization may want to take additional precautionary steps to help curb the spread of COVID-19. If you have any questions about this or classification of your business/organization, please feel free to reach out to DBR at 401-889-5550. Venues of assembly are encouraged as a best practice to sanitize all commonly touched surfaces (e.g., seats) and objects (e.g., audio guides) between uses. However, this is not required.

Houses of Worship

Are houses of worship allowed to hold services in person?

Yes. There are no restrictions on houses of worship. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each organization's discretion. Houses of worship are encouraged as a best practice to sanitize all commonly touched surfaces (e.g., seats) and objects (e.g., audio guides) between uses. However, this is not required.

Child Care and Education

Are there any remaining restrictions for child care facilities?

Child care facilities remain open and will continue to follow COVID-19 rules and regulations. Facilities operators should continually review updated quarantine guidance at covid.ri.gov/whattodo and industry-specific guidance on www.reopeningri.com.

I'm a college student. Are there any remaining restrictions I must follow?

The State has worked with the Institutes of Higher Education to implement plans for safe return. Please consult your institution's website for further information.

Are summer camps permitted to open?

Yes, summer camps are permitted to open. See summer camp guidance at www.reopeningri.com. *Note: The State of Rhode Island will continue to review new and evolving guidance from our federal partner agencies and update our guidance as appropriate.*

Healthcare and Nursing Homes

Will primary care, specialty providers, and other healthcare businesses remain open?

Yes. Healthcare providers will remain open.

Some Nursing homes and hospitals are currently limiting visitation. Will those limitations continue?

Please consult the facility's website or call for more information on limitations and visitor programs that are specific to their facility or organization.

Restaurants and Bars

Are there any restrictions for restaurants and bars?

There are no restrictions for restaurants and bars. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.

Gyms and Fitness Centers

Can gyms and fitness centers resume operations? What about group classes?

There are no longer restrictions for gyms, fitness centers, and group classes. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion. The following steps are encouraged as a best practice:

1. Actively remind customers that they must wear a mask or cloth face covering indoors if they are not fully

vaccinated.

2. Provide adequate time between classes or sessions (e.g., 30 minutes) to thoroughly clean the equipment and exercise space and allow for adequate air exchange.
3. Make hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies available to individuals to clean their hands and equipment before and after use.

Are close contact partner activities, such as martial arts, dancing, boxing, and Jiu-Jitsu, permitted without restrictions?

Yes. In settings where close contact is a fundamental part of the activity, such as ballroom dancing, boxing, and jiu-jitsu, it is recommended as a best practice to set up consistent pairs of partners when possible. However, this is not required.

Are pool and other aquatic venues permitted to open?

Yes, indoor and outdoor pool and aquatic venues are permitted to open without restrictions. It is recommended that 3-foot distancing be maintained at all times in and out of the water except when swimmers briefly swim past each other while in the pool. However, this is not required.

Can people take showers in a gym or aquatic setting?

Yes, people may use both communal and individual showers. Both types of showers should be routinely cleaned.

Sporting Facilities and School Sports

Are all sports currently allowed?

Games and competitions are allowed for all sports. Regular testing is strongly encouraged for athletes who participate in higher-risk sports.

It is encouraged as a best practice but not required that shared equipment and seating be thoroughly cleaned between uses by separate individuals. Other best practices are that all showers be cleaned routinely and at least once a day, and that hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies be made available for people to clean their hands and equipment before and after use.

Are masks still required for athletes while practicing or competing?

Indoor masking requirements for school-aged children, as well as exceptions for swimming and water sports, remain unchanged. There are no masking requirements for outdoor sports. College and professional indoor sporting facilities and teams have been highly regulated under NCAA rules and league rules (Big East, Ivy League, etc.) or associated professional rules. They must continue to follow those requirements set by their leagues and organizations.

Are interstate and out-of-state athletic competitions allowed?

Interstate sporting activities are allowed. Sports teams or groups that play outside of Rhode Island are subject to applicable laws, including executive orders, and regulations in that jurisdiction. Likewise, when any individual, sports team, or group plays in Rhode Island, they are subject to Rhode Island laws, including executive orders and regulations, related to testing, quarantine, and other measures to prevent risks associated with COVID-19.

Tournaments with teams from out of state are also currently allowed. RIDOH recommends tournaments follow best practices and take precautions to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

Are spectators allowed at athletic events?

Yes. RIDOH recommends sporting facilities implement precautions such as physical distancing to help curb the spread of COVID-19, but there are currently no spectator-specific restrictions in place. Spectators who are unvaccinated must continue to wear masks indoors, per the Governor's most recent Executive Order ([Executive Order 21-69](#)). Sporting venues may impose additional conditions or restrictions.

Retail Stores

Are retail establishments subject to restrictions?

There are no restrictions for retail stores. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion. It is still encouraged as a best practice but not required to discontinue the sampling or application of personal goods (i.e., makeup, perfume, lotion) unless they provide single-use applicators or with a no-touch option. It is also a best practice to limit congregation in public or shared space that is being used by such entities.

Recreation, Entertainment, Museum, and Historical Sites

Are recreation, entertainment, museum, and historical facilities subject to restrictions?

There are no restrictions for these establishments. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion. It is still encouraged as a best practice to sanitize all commonly touched surfaces (e.g., seats) and objects (e.g., audio guides) between uses.

Offices and Other Businesses

I work in an office. Are offices closed?

There are no restrictions for offices. Any additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.

Can break rooms be open?

Yes. Unvaccinated employees must continue to follow indoor masking requirements. Where possible, it is recommended that establishments open windows to increase ventilation.

I operate another type of service or repair type business, such as pet services, cleaning service, etc. What are the rules for my business?

There are no restrictions for these establishments. Any exceptions can be found in [RIDOH's Safe Activities regulations](#). Additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.

Personal Services

At what capacity can personal services, such as cosmetology and barber businesses, operate?

There are no restrictions for these establishments. Additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.

While not required, it is recommended to keep 3 feet of spacing between professional-client pairs. It is also recommended as a best practice that hand sanitizer be made available to individuals, and that all commonly touched surfaces, equipment, objects and workstations be sanitized between uses.

Private Transportation

What restrictions remain in place for private transportation companies and operations?

There are no restrictions for private transportation companies and operations (e.g., private bus charters, hotel shuttles, tour buses, limos, valets, and ferries) with the exception of masking requirements outlined in the [Safe Activities Regulations](#) and [Executive Order 21-69](#). Additional health and safety precautions or policies will be at each business' discretion.