

Phase II guidelines for summer camp

All summer camp providers must 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:

- For 21st century programming or other Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)-funded out-of-school programs, please contact RIDE: Kismet Lantos-Swett, Kismet.Lantos-Swett@ride.ri.gov
- For youth recreation activities, such as tennis lessons or inquiries related to public beaches and parks, please contact Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM): Cindy Elder, Division of Parks and Recreation, Cynthia.elder@dem.ri.gov
- For summer day camps, including organized day camps administered out of municipal recreation centers, please contact Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) at: DHS.Summercamps@dhs.ri.gov

All summer camps should have established cleaning, health screening, and physical distancing procedures in line with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) regulations. An overview of these regulations are [posted online](#). Note that one of the requirements is the creation of a COVID-19 Control Plan, a [Control Plan template](#) is also posted online.

I. Summary of Phase II operations

During Summer 2020, summer camp programs, including day camps and primitive or outpost summer camps, may be open for operation. Requirements, as outlined below, include registering with the State and having the program attest to, and demonstrate their compliance with, summer camp regulations outlined in 216-RICR-50-15-8 and summarized below along with other guidance. The summer camp regulations include group and size limitations; social distancing practices including pick-up and drop-off procedures; and increased cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices.

II. Physical space and occupancy limits

Group and size limits, social distancing, and separation practices will be in place for summer camps.

Summer camp group sizes must be no larger than 15 people, including staff and children. This applies for children age five and older. These groups must be stable groups, meaning the same 15 or fewer individuals, including children, staff, and counselors being in the same group every day. In maintaining stable groups, this means groups may not be combined during drop-off or pick-up or for large group-recreation activities, such as time on a playground. This also means children should not change from one group to another; for example, a program may previously have had a policy of promoting children to a different age grouping upon their birthday. Under the summer camp regulations, children must remain in the same group for the duration of their summer session attendance.

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Stable groups also must occupy the same space each day. At some program sites, this may mean different classrooms. Large spaces are permitted, such as gymnasiums or recreation rooms, to be divided by half walls, dividers, or partitions to create multiple, separate spaces for stable groups. These barriers will create separate spaces for stable groups and reduce the risk of transmission of germ transmission across groups.

For barriers, half walls, or partitions to be effective, they must be taller than the campers head with no wall less than four feet.

To ensure a safe environment for children, walls, dividers, or partitions should be securely anchored to reduce potential accidents or injuries due to tipping or falling of the barriers. These barriers should be installed according to manufacturer's instructions or industry best practice.

Social distancing is recommended when possible but is not required within each stable group. This means children within a stable group may engage in close play with one another. To maintain social distance between stable groups, at least 14 feet should be maintained. This means if groups are gathering in a gymnasium as part of the daily activity, the groups must be arranged in the gymnasium so there is at least 14 feet separating each stable group on all sides from the other groups. For this program, they may choose to measure and tape off spaces where each group can sit or stand.ⁱ

Where not specified above, all organizations should follow the general guidance from RIDOH and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding gathering sizes and social distancing.

III. Business processes, procedures and activities

Enhanced Cleaning and/or Disinfecting Procedures

Consistent cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation practices are required to reduce the potential transmission of germs. Summer camps are required to adhere to the [CDC guidance for cleaning and sanitizing](#). Additional guidance is outlined below.

Surfaces that are frequently touched throughout the day should be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected multiple times per day, or for shared objects, between use.

- For example, staff may choose to disinfect the classroom doorknob after daily drop-off, when children transition back to the classroom from outdoor play, and after daily pick-up. If a program rotates groups through the outdoor playground, the play equipment must be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected between groups.
- To learn more about the [process of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting](#), visit the CDC's website.

As it is more difficult to clean, sanitize, and disinfect porous surfaces (i.e., soft or plush materials), programs are advised to avoid using these items. Examples may include bean bag chairs or stuffed animals.

Disinfectants are strong chemicals and accidental exposure to these toxins can cause significant harm to a child's health. It is essential that when using disinfectants, programs follow the manufacturer's directions, and keep the products away from children. This may include locking products in a storage space when not in use, or disinfecting program space while children are out of the room. With the increased use of disinfectants, it is important to ensure ventilation systems operate properly and to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, open windows and doors, use fans and other methods. Do not open

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windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or children. For example, if a window is at the height where a child may access it and the window does not have screen, or a child in the program has an identified allergy or asthma and symptoms may worsen with increased outdoor airflow, the window should not be open.

Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with stagnant water.

Screening Procedures

Screening protocol should be consistent with all youth programming, including the [child care guidance](#).

Programs shall post a self-attestation form, developed and approved by DHS and RIDOH, in a visible area. At the time of drop off, camps shall conduct a verbal screening for symptoms of COVID-19 using the self-attestation form in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#).

Exclude anyone (campers or staff) with COVID-19 symptoms if they can't be explained by allergies or another non-infectious cause, as [listed by the CDC](#).

In the event that an employee or child, pursuant to screening or otherwise, is identified as having acute respiratory illness symptoms or is positive for any other COVID-19 symptoms or risk factors, or is currently directed to be in quarantine or isolation, the provider shall send the employee or child home and take any additional necessary and appropriate action, in accordance with applicable laws and current RIDOH guidance.

Camps may also choose to supplement screening questions with temperature checks. [CDC guidance on temperature checks](#) is posted online.

Employers may also choose to screen visitors in the same manner as employees.

Any employees or children sent home may not return to the summer camp until he or she (or his or her parent) provides competent evidence to the camp demonstrating that:

- After being sent home he or she was tested negative for COVID-19; or
- After being sent home he or she was tested positive for COVID-19 but he or she has since met RIDOH guidelines for ending isolation; or
- They can provide a doctor's note stating he or she is not contagious.

Please see RIDOH's website for [how to get a COVID-19 test](#). Please respect individual privacy. Employers should not disclose the name of any employee who tested positive for COVID-19 except as otherwise required by law.

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Face masks and other personal protective equipment

Guidance from the [CDC](#) (adopted and incorporated as section 8.2(A) of the summer camp regulations) advises all adults and staff caring for children to wear a cloth face covering to prevent the spread of germs. It should be noted, “cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children younger than age two because of the danger of suffocation.”

Employees and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless an employee and/or visitor can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six feet of distance from other employees and/or visitors for the duration of his or her work and/or time in a building.

For employees that are younger than age 18 (i.e. camp counselors), it is expected that they follow the same guidance as employees and wear a cloth mask while working.

Cloth face coverings 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 assistance.

Cloth face coverings may be used if tolerated by children older than age two. However, wearing cloth face coverings for long periods of time is uncomfortable and could hamper speech and social development.

As face coverings are not recommended when children are at home with family members, it is reasonable to not require them, even of older children, in childcare when interactions are limited to only children and adults in the stable group.

Face coverings could be considered for children older than age two, as tolerated, in common areas of the center and at drop-off and pick-up times when there may be some unavoidable close interaction between the stable groups.

Specific Guidance for Summer Camp Settings – Visitors to Facilities

Visitors and/or observers should be discouraged from visiting a camp during the COVID-19 crisis to limit possible exposure to the children and camp staff.

1. Any individual who must visit shall document their arrival and departure time on a visitor log that must be kept onsite and available.
2. Any individual who must visit shall verbally complete a self-attestation form, developed and approved by DHS and RIDOH, for the purpose of screening for symptoms of COVID-19.
3. Any individual who visits must adhere to RIDOH’s social distancing requirements and maintain a six-foot distance from anyone else at the camp.
4. Visitors are required to wear face coverings unless an employee and/or visitor can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six feet of distance from other employees and/or visitors for the duration of his or her work and/or time in a building



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Procedures to Safely Quarantine & Isolate Symptomatic or Confirmed COVID-19 Individuals

During this crisis, the camp must immediately contact DHS and RIDOH if any employee has been instructed to isolate or quarantine due to having contracted, or been exposed to, COVID-19, in order to assess the need for creating an alternate care plan.

During this crisis, the camp shall have an isolation room or area that can be used to temporarily isolate a sick child pending pickup by a caregiver, in accordance with their child illness policy.

Clear Communications Plan

When a summer camp posts plans, policies, or procedures, it allows for information to be clearly communicated to parents, guardians, and oversight agencies. Summer camp programs are required to post their COVID-19 approval forms and plans.

Once a camp's COVID-19 Summer Camp Plan has been approved, they will receive written approval from DHS to reopen. A copy of the approved plan must be posted in a visible area during all hours of operation while the current emergency regulations are in effect.

Translate information in the languages most frequently used by your campers.

Continue to message the importance of employees staying home if they are sick.

Other Processes and Activities

To reduce the risk of exposure to germs, the regulations discourages, but does not exclude, visitors and/or observers from visiting summer camp programs. Requirements for allowing visitors and/or observers onsite include:

- Maintain a visitor log, document the arrival and departure time of each individual.
- Require individuals to respond to a self-attestation form developed and approved by DHS and RIDOH, for the purpose of screening for symptoms of COVID-19. Programs should maintain these forms onsite for oversight agencies to review.
- If a provider intends to serve youth indoors during inclement weather, enrollment numbers should be in adherence to group size and social distancing requirements outlined in the summer camp regulations.

Increased handwashing hygiene must be practiced by all summer camp programs to reduce the risk of contagion spread.

8.7.E.2. outlines activities where staff must wash hands with liquid soap and warm, running water or hand sanitizer if liquid soap and warm running water are not feasible; these activities include, but are not limited

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to: after each diaper change; after going to the bathroom or assisting a child with toileting; after wiping a runny nose; after touching bodily fluid; before and after using water, sand, or other sensory tables; after messy play, and before any food preparation or service.

8.7.E.3 requires children wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water, or hand sanitizer if liquid soap and warm running water are not feasible, related to the following activities: after going to the bathroom; before each meal or snack; after wiping or blowing their nose; after touching any bodily fluid; before and after using water, sand, or other sensory tables; after messy play; and after being outdoors.

The CDC provides guidance, along with program materials such as [posters, on proper hand washing procedures](#). They are available at:

The CDC advises hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) be used only where access to soap and running water is limitedⁱⁱⁱ. For example, a group may be taking a nature trail walk where there are no accessible bathrooms. In this case, a program may use hand sanitizer as an alternative method to hand washing. However, programs must be mindful of hand sanitizer use with young children, as ingestion poses serious risks to a child's health.

Where not specified above, all organizations should follow the general guidance from RIDOH and CDC regarding cleaning, screening, face coverings, and planning.

IV. Human Resources

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures

Summer camp programs are required to create a drop-off and pick-up protocol as a part of their Plan that adheres to CDC guidelines. The drop-off and pick-up protocols are intended to encourage social distancing and limit gatherings of large groups in confined spaces. How a program decides to implement pick-up and drop-off protocols will depend on their program type, space, and staff. These procedures will look different from program to program.

Strategies may include:

- Dropping-off or picking-up children from specific locations rather than large group spaces like gymnasiums or multipurpose rooms;
- Staggering the arrival or departure times for different age groups; and/or
- Having camp staff get or bring children to a parent's car, rather than a parent entering a building.

The CDC recommends when parents are entering a program facility, they clean their hands through the use hand sanitizer or a hand washing station. It is also recommended the same adult pick up or drop off the child each day to minimize the exposure to and spread of pathogens [CDC guidance on pick-up and drop-off routines](#) is posted online.

V. Supplies

Each organization should develop a plan for sourcing and maintaining any additional supplies needed to continue safe operations during Phase II.

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Likely supplies needed for Phase II

Per 8.7.E.1, “providers shall stock, and make accessible, a sufficient supply of items required to maintain personal hygiene for children and staff”. Here a sufficient supply means there is enough volume of items available to meet the needs for the children and staff on-site during operation. For example, a program does not run out of hand sanitizer or soap while children and staff are on-site during program operation. Supplies may need to be replenished between sessions or days to ensure they are sufficiently stocked.

VI. Certification & Enforcement

Certification Guidelines for Reopening

To operate, summer camp programs must register at: <http://www.dhs.ri.gov/>

As part of the registration, programs will be asked to attest to the requirements listed in in 216-RICR-50-15-8.

All programs must create a COVID-19 Control Plan “required by § 7.4(A)(1) of the [RIDOH regulations 216-RICR-50-15-7] (8.5). For programs with more than 50 children, this plan must be submitted “to DHS for review and approval” (8.6.A). Programs serving fewer than 50 children are not required to submit their plans; however, the plans must be made available “to DHS or RIDOH upon request”. (8.6.B)

VII. Other Considerations

Equipment

Programs are advised to limit the use of shared equipment. This includes indoor or outdoor equipment, such as play structures, sports equipment, or toys. Where equipment must be shared across stable groups, programs must sanitize any shared equipment between uses, or at a minimum, after use by a stable group (8.7.F.4).

Programs are advised to stage equipment to encourage social distancing and limit multiple touches. This may include setting up outdoor stations with equipment at least 14 feet apart or requiring children or staff to return used equipment into a wash box or area after use to identify the equipment as off-limits for other groups until it has been cleaned.

Close Contact Sport Activities

Sports can have a fun and important role in the physical and social development of young children. Stable group and social distancing measures still apply during sports activities. To protect the health of children while playing sports:

Stable groups are encouraged to focus on practice drills for skill development. Stable groups must be at least 14 feet from other groups but are not required to maintain social distancing within each individual stable group. For example, a summer camp organizing a soccer game or practice may set up cones designating a 14-foot divide across the middle of a soccer field while a stable group practices at each end of the field.



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Games should occur within stable groups. Games between stable groups are discouraged because maintaining social distance and preventing cross-contamination of equipment cannot be effectively practiced.

Pools and Water Activities

Camps should refer to www.reopeningri.gov website for the most up to date guidance around pool and water activities.

Residential “Sleep Away” Camps

Residential camps are expected to follow all of these guidelines. Stable groups should be consistent across all camp activities, including sleeping arrangements. Whenever possible, social distance of six feet or more between beds should be practiced.

Extra precaution should be taken in shared living spaces, shared meal spaces, and shared restrooms where there are more common surfaces.

Please reference the [CDC guidelines for youth summer camps](#) for additional best practices for operating residential camps.

CDC study shows that transmission can happen at distances up to 13.1 feet. For stable groups, the state recommends that distances are kept at 14 feet. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-0885_articleⁱ

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>

