



## **NJRPA Community Recreation Section**

### **2020 Camp Considerations**

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# **NEW JERSEY RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION**

## **Community Recreation Section**

### **COVID-19 Considerations for Summer Recreation Camp Planning**

#### **Balancing Risk and Reward**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The New Jersey Recreation and Park Association (NJRPA) represents the major providers of summer recreation opportunities for the youth of New Jersey. We represent summer recreation camps including but not limited to: Full Day Camps, Sports Camps, Special Interest Camps, Summer Playground Programs, Travel Camps and summer experiences for residents with special needs.

NJRPA's Community Recreation Section has been working closely with the New Jersey Department of Health's Division of Consumer, Environmental, and Occupational Health on issues to be considered by the Division and for consideration by Governor Murphy as he pursues his six principles for New Jersey's Road Back: Restoring Economic Health through Public Health.

As leisure services professionals, we recognize and celebrate the value of summer camp experience in the lives of our children and the service it provides for our residents who are working parents, especially those who are first responders through the COVID-19 crisis.

Besides the obvious benefits of summer recreation activities, such as fitness, friendships, socialization, education and an exposure to lifetime recreation opportunities. The summer camp experiences provided by our members create better world citizens, teach the children the concept of healthy competition, drug and alcohol prevention, social skills and fun, we also know that these summer programs foster a sense of community during the summer months and keep the kids connected to their community. It often allows for kids to meet other kids from their community, but not necessarily from their school or classroom.

We provide the affordable alternative to private day camp experiences and day care, often with aggressive scholarship opportunities for families in need.

Our summer recreation programs also provide employment opportunities for our teens and college aged residents. Often the summer camp experience serves as a start to a new career paths and foster careers in our profession. We create future leaders.

We recognize that our programs IF opened this summer, will not resemble our programs in the past seasons. We share Governor Murphy’s new mantra that “public health creates economic health,” but the decision to open summer camps must be one based solely on the safety of our employees, members, guests, and visitors.

The decision whether to open summer camps should be based on science and safety, first and foremost. We also ask that the direction from the State Department of Health be made as soon as possible as we need time to complete our hiring, training, and COVID-19 operations planning reflective of the recommendations of the CDC, American Camp Association, The Redwoods Group, the National Recreation and Park Association, the National Recreation and Sports Outreach and the Aspen Institute. Ultimately the direction from DOH and the Governor’s Office is highly anticipated.

There are also serious financial considerations that must be made by each sponsoring agency as we anticipate a reduction in camp size, increased expenses to meet the minimum considerations of the CDC and the DOH, and a decrease in registrations due to the reduction in services, the delays in receiving the Governor’s Guidance and the potential risks.

Further, a philosophical element may present itself in this time of uncertainty. Can your Department or your camp program afford the potential loss of public trust that could come from your participants or greater community if there is a transmission of the virus at your location? Department’s work to ensure that the safety of program participants and staff is its number one priority – are you able to adhere to that within the inclusion of these guidelines?

Recently, there have been many comparisons between the openings of various businesses and services. These comparisons are not always equal. Whereas golf courses can meet the new demands for health and safety per COVID-19, summer day camps by nature are a more intimate, up close, and personal activity. Children are especially excited when they arrive at our programs. Even in the best of

circumstances, we find ourselves repeating safety rules and often have difficulty with compliance. Recreation professionals are torn by their sense of commitment to their communities and they desperately want to return to providing these great services but ONLY if it makes health, safety, and financial sense.

## **PREPARING FOR SUMMER 2020 – DEALING WITH COVID-19**

While the residents of New Jersey work to flatten the curve of this virus, we have looked to the Centers for Disease Control recommendations as well as the guidelines of President Trump’s Opening Up America Again. We have consulted with the major camp licensing agencies recognized in New Jersey along with the National Recreation and Park Association.

Our membership has been formulating tentative plans within the Three Phase Opening of America’s Gating Criteria.

Phase I:

- Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses reported in a 14-day period.
- Downward trajectory of COVID like syndromic cases within a 14-day period.
- Downward trajectory of documented cases in a 14-day period OR downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period. (flat or increasing volume of tests)

Phase II:

- No evidence of rebound and satisfy the gating criteria a second time.

Phase III:

- No evidence of rebound and satisfy the gating criteria a third time

Each Phase once initiated would represent a two-week period in between each successful Phase. This accounts for our need for 4-6 weeks of preparation once given the “green light.”

The following activities that relate to parks, recreation, and leisure activities by Phase for planning purposes has been:

Phase I: Social settings of more than 10 people should be avoided where appropriate distancing may not be practical. Schools and organized youth activities closed. Gyms with social distancing and sanitization protocols.

Phase II: All individuals when in public should maximize physical distancing from others. Social settings of more than 50 people should be avoided. Schools and organized youth activities can reopen. Large venues can operate with moderate physical distancing protocols.

Phase III: Large venues can operate under limited protocols.

### **Governor Murphy's Road Back**

Governor Murphy unveiled his "Road Back" on April 27, 2020, that included six principles that are intended to keep New Jersey on the road back, using renewed public health to create renewed economic health.

1. Following trends of sustained reductions in new COVID-19 cases and other key metrics reflecting a decreasing burden of disease.
2. Expanding testing capacity and speeding-up the return of results.
3. Robust contact tracing.
4. Ensuring safe places where those positively diagnosed in the future can isolate.
5. Responsibly restarting our economy to restore our economic health.
6. Ensuring our resiliency.

New Jersey is second only to New York in the number of positive cases and deaths due to the Coronavirus. Our road back for summer recreation-based camps is still in question and perhaps under a longer timeline than that proposed by the Opening Up America Again Three Phase Plan. However, we offer these principles and considerations for review and comment from the Department of Health as we plan together for a return to summer camp programming. You are also welcomed to use this as a planning tool and for reporting to your Mayors, Administrators, Commissioners, Boards, and Owners.

As community transmission rates decline in New Jersey and as we learn more about COVID-19, these major operational changes should be considered for

relaxing or adjusting as the science warrants and with guidance from each local health authority based on transmissions, etc.

Governor Murphy's Executive Order #148 raised the limit of approved outdoor gatherings from 10 persons to 25 persons on Friday, May 22, 2020 to lessen the burden on Memorial Day backyard picnics and events, providing the social distancing was still observed and masks still recommended.

This only applies to the outdoor environment and may not even apply to camps once the DOH produces their guidance when we advance in the phases prescribed by the Governor's Office. Indoor gatherings are still held at 10 persons with social distancing.

***Disclaimer: This document is for consideration and planning purposes only. This represents "best practices" and recommendations from the CDC and experiences from around the country in states that have already opened. Consider it a research document until we receive an Executive Order with compliance requirements from the State of New Jersey.***

++ The local decision whether to open recreation summer camps once the NJ Governor's Office approves, should be based on science and safety. Be prepared for decision makers to react to safety concerns, revenue projections, and emotions. Be prepared with the answers to all three.

++ Know your hourly, daily, and seasonal operating costs. Factor in additional costs for supplies and increased staffing needs due to COVID-19. With a possible delayed start to the season and fall school openings not yet determined, the ultimate decision for operations may lie in finances and feasibility alone.

++ Many summer recreation camp experiences utilize school buildings for weather issues and as a programming location. Schools in NJ are reluctant to provide these spaces as they are obligated to sanitize and prepare for the return to school in September, under COVID-19 considerations.

++ Without the school buildings or recreation centers that do not allow for social distancing, outdoor based camps have no "weather emergency" locations and will have to provide portable restrooms and handwashing stations, that will add

increased costs and increased sanitation requirements to meet COVID-19 spread prevention protocols.

### **Snapshot of Summer Recreation Department Based Camps Under COVID-19**

As you continue planning in hopes of receiving guidance from the Governor's Office on the opening of summer camps, it may be helpful to understand that the CDC considerations are recommended minimum behaviors. Each state can impose stricter requirements due to the COVID-19 activity in their state. The NJ DOH will release minimum standards that do not preclude an agency from going above and beyond those standards based on local sensibilities.

To make your local decisions, here is a snapshot of the changes you may have to experience this year in your summer recreation camps and programs per the CDC. These are only the highlights to consider until NJ guidance is received.

- Limited group size to 10 including the Counselors per location.
- No group interaction. Each group must remain independent and removed from other groups to minimize risk.
- No shared equipment, supplies etc.
- No communal eating. Each child, employee brings their own lunch and drinks and does not handle each other's food. No group meals/shared plates and cups.
- Social distancing in all activities. When social distancing cannot be accomplished or the activity moves inside, campers must wear masks.
- Counselors must wear masks (PPE) provided by their employer.
- No guests or outside entertainment to minimize risk of exposure.
- No large gatherings or celebrations that integrates all groups.
- Staff must have daily temperatures taken and recorded.
- Should a camper or counselor become ill, the local health department will be notified and all those in contact with the individual have to be quarantined. Local health department working with Contact Trackers will handle notification.
- Department must follow their lead and inform parents and staff.

- Department provides sanitizer for each Counselor and provides stations for handwashing and hand sanitizer.
- No handling of camper's bags, clothing etc. No sharing of phones.
- If bathrooms are provided, they must be sanitized multiple times during the day.
- No water fountains available. Provide individual water bottles or have them brought from home.

The American Camp Association and The Redwoods Group are resources that can help provide further guidelines to elevate your camp's focus on the variety of procedures and protocols that are important in your preparation for operations. Consider at which level you can realistically operate within the ACA's "Good, Better and Best" practices models.

In addition to the changes to your summer camp offering, be prepared that usual abilities to obtain and acquire supplies may also be stressed. Additional PPE, sanitization products, and the variety of supplies necessary for camp may be limited to obtain as an increase in the demand has grown exponentially.

### **Alternatives to Traditional Camp Experiences**

As we await guidance from Governor Murphy's Office on the opening of Summer Camps, our membership has been showing their great imagination and creativity in providing alternative options for the children of our communities. Around the country, other creative recreation professionals are producing incredible online experiences to substitute their summer camp experiences. Here are just a few:

- Virtual contests – Chalk the Walk, window painting, pet showcases
- Virtual parades, concerts, escape rooms and field trips
- Camp in a Bag- Provide one week of crafts and games with instructions
- Zoom craft, singing, dancing, game show and exercise on demand and live experiences
- Social media trends and activities – Tik Tok Dances and trick shot tutorials
- Explore the backyard nature programming
- Smaller group programs at different locations - 10 person maximum.

- Groups of 25 may be allowed with social distancing, but this remains tentative as it relates to camps.

### **What can I do for the kids who need you the most?**

As recreation professionals we want to provide the very best of experiences for the youth of our community. IF the requirements to create a traditional summer camp experience under COVID-19 conditions become too costly and difficult to provide for your agency have you considered a new partnership as an alternative? We worry for the “at risk” kids or the kids who cannot afford day care that we typically serve. Here’s how you can continue to serve them.

Team up with an area YMCA, Boys Club, or local licensed Day Care Provider who has been serving the children of First Responders and who have become proficient at running day care programs under COVID-19 conditions. Create a community wide scholarship campaign, “Go Fund Me” or work with a local foundation to provide scholarship money to place the most “at risk” kids from your program into a day care program already in existence.

Work with your City or Township Council to appropriate funds that would have gone toward a summer recreation camp and create a scholarship program to place these children.

### **NJRPA Community Recreation Section**

#### **Summer Camp Guidance Topics and Questions**

**The NJRPA Community Recreation Section held several Zoom Camp Planning Meetings that covered the entire state with all NJRPA Districts represented. Their questions and concerns were then sent to the NJ Department of Health and were well received by Loel Muetter and Danielle Clemons who are responsible for making recommendations to the Governor’s Office for consideration for opening of summer camps.**

**The following questions and concerns were shared with the DOH on behalf of the NJRPA Membership.**

### **Temperature checks and Communication**

- Guidance on temperature checks for campers and staff and what type of procedure should exist?
- What are the qualifications for the person conducting the tests? Certified medical professional or “certified” staff member?
- Elevated temperature notification and guidance of communication responsibility
- Positive testing notification requirement

### **Campers**

- Physical distancing guidelines
- With the understanding that some parks are quite large, what is the total amount of campers and camp staff allowed in the park? Should there be a balance of size of the park to number of camp persons present?
- Is there guidance for a camper to camp staff ratio?
- Pick Up/Drop Off procedural recommendation?
- Public in the park – Recommendation on closures of spaces
- Since many programs may be functioning in a broader swath of the Township and not the typical 1 – 2 parks or facility
  - Face covering guidance
  - School bus transportation, busing of campers to camp guidance
  - Out of town camper guidance

### **Facility and Activity Guidance**

- Directive and guidelines on disinfection of facilities, bathrooms, craft spaces, supplies, sports equipment, storage bins and spaces and multi-use spaces.

- Handwashing requirements guidance for facilities or temporary camp spaces.
- Guidance on acceptable number of people in a space i.e. caged in courts/picnic areas/athletic fields.
- Recommendation on group activities to avoid.
- No communal eating or sharing of food or drink

### **Communication**

- Elevated temperature notification and guidance of communication responsibility of camp management or local health department.
- If someone has tested positive, or someone has been in contact with someone who has tested positive – guidance on handling communication to camp parents.

### **Resources for Assistance in Planning and Implementation for Recreation Camps**

There are several very comprehensive documents available to you to help you to plan for the potential opening of summer camp programming. Rather than repeat their information in this document, the Community Recreation Section recommends the following free documents:

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Considerations for Youth and Summer Camps (Updated: May 19, 2020) ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))**

**The Redwoods Group- Responding to COVID-19. Continuing Your Mission ([www.redwoodsgroup.com](http://www.redwoodsgroup.com))**

**The Redwoods Group- FREE Online Training for Camp Staff ([www.redwoodsgroup.com](http://www.redwoodsgroup.com))**

**The American Camp Association- Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance & FAQ- The American Camp Association Approach to COVID-19 ([www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org))**

**The National Recreation and Park Association- Specific Guidance for Common Park & Recreation Spaces, Facilities and Programs ([www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org))**

**Facebook Sites: NJRPA, NRPA, Recreation Done Right**

# Addendum 1 – NJ Responsible and Strategic Multi Stage Economic Restart Plan



## The Road Back: Restoring Economic Health through Public Health



◀◀ If health metrics develop unfavorably, measures from the maximum restrictions stage or stages 1, 2, 3 may be reinstated

	Maximum restrictions	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	New normal
<b>What is happening?</b>	Strict social distancing Non-crucial industries closed	Restrictions relaxed on low-risk activities that may be easier to safeguard	Moderate-risk activities restarted with safeguarding	Higher-contact activities restarting with significant safeguarding	
<b>Which precautions apply across stages?</b>	Work that can be done from home should be done from home	Clinically high-risk individuals who can stay at home should do so	Residents and businesses should follow state and federal safeguarding guidelines: Wash hands regularly Wear masks in public Respect social distancing Limit gatherings Disinfect workplaces No mass gatherings		
<b>Which businesses are open?</b>	Crucial industries with safeguarding and modifications, e.g., emergency healthcare, essential construction with social distancing	Easiest to safeguard work activities with safeguarding and modifications, e.g., non-essential construction with protections, curbside retail	More work activities allowed with safeguarding and modifications, e.g., outdoor dining, limited personal care	Most work activities allowed at physical locations with safeguarding & modifications	
<b>Which social activities are allowed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socialization only with household members, family, caretakers, romantic partner</li> <li>Only leave home for limited reasons such as essential shopping and exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor recreation (e.g., hiking) and beach visits allowed with social distancing</li> <li>Other limited activities may be allowed with significant restrictions, e.g., drive-in activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More activities with proper safeguards, capacity limitations, and sanitation protocols may reopen, e.g., libraries and museums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher-density settings may be considered with safeguards, e.g., limited entertainment, bars with limited capacity</li> </ul>	
<b>Are childcare and education operating?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care open for children of essential workers</li> <li>K-12 and higher education engaged in distance learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care may expand with capacity restrictions</li> <li>K-12 and higher education engaged in distance learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care may expand with capacity restrictions</li> <li>Potential for some in-person learning with modifications in K-12 and higher education</li> <li>Summer school and summer camps may have limited in-person engagement if health conditions improve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care likely open for most</li> <li>K-12 and higher education may operate in person with reduced capacity</li> <li>Day and summer camps likely open for all with safeguards and modifications</li> </ul>	
<b>Is public transit available?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit with enhanced safeguards (e.g., regular vehicle disinfection) encouraged only for essential workers</li> <li>Service may be modified with off peak travel encouraged</li> <li>Personal protection measures, e.g., social distancing, face coverings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit with enhanced safeguards (e.g., regular vehicle disinfection) encouraged only for those who cannot work from home</li> <li>Service may be modified with off peak travel encouraged</li> <li>Personal protection measures, e.g., social distancing, face coverings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit with enhanced safeguards (e.g., regular vehicle disinfection) encouraged only for those who cannot work from home</li> <li>Service may be modified with off peak travel encouraged</li> <li>Personal protection measures, e.g., social distancing, face coverings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit with enhanced safeguards (e.g., regular vehicle disinfection) is no longer discouraged for any passengers</li> <li>Service may be modified with off peak travel encouraged</li> <li>Personal protection measures, e.g., social distancing, face coverings</li> </ul>	
<b>How do I take care of my loved ones and myself?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I stay at home as much as possible and check in virtually with my loved ones</li> <li>When I have to go outside, I wear a mask and stay 6ft away from others</li> <li>I call a doctor in the event of fever, cough, or shortness of breath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I stay at home as much as possible and check in virtually with my loved ones</li> <li>When I have to go outside, I wear a mask and stay 6ft away from others</li> <li>I have access to elective healthcare</li> <li>I call a doctor in the event of fever, cough, or shortness of breath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I continue to stay at home for the majority of my time</li> <li>I engage in small social activities with a limited circle of friends and family</li> <li>I can engage in some outdoor activities with social distancing</li> <li>I call a doctor in the event of fever, cough, or shortness of breath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I follow all safety guidelines posted in public spaces, e.g., I anticipate and respect capacity limits at my local restaurants</li> <li>I call a doctor in the event of fever, cough, or shortness of breath</li> </ul>	

Widespread use of vaccine or life-saving treatment  
 In-person work can resume for all  
 Measures from previous stages may be swiftly reinstated if health conditions deteriorate

### WHAT DRIVES STAGES?



**Health indicators:**  
 New cases; hospitalizations; use of ICU; use of ventilators



**Availability of testing and contact tracing capacity per 100,000 residents**



**Healthcare system resiliency (beds, health workers, PPE)**



**Ability to effectively safeguard workplaces**



**Safeguarded child care, education, transit availability**



**Compliance of individuals and employers**

Addendum 2: Mask Up Signage

# MASK UP!



**Protect yourself and others from COVID-19.  
Wear a mask, especially within six feet of  
others, including on:**

**Trails • Paths • Parking Lots**

