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**Memorandum**

**From:** Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

**Date:** May 18, 2020

**Subject:** Coastal and Inland Beach Manager and User Guidelines

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The following are guidelines for the management and use of coastal and inland beaches in the Commonwealth for the first phase of reopening.

State-owned inland and coastal beaches managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall open for use by members of the public subject to these guidelines and except where access is closed due to parking restrictions or other restrictions. All other coastal and inland beaches managed by municipalities or other organizations are available subject to the discretion of the city or town it is located in and/or the managing organization.

Beach managers and visitors shall abide by the specific guidelines outlined herein. Property-specific guidelines should be posted at entrance points to beach areas and on relevant social media/websites. Guidelines provided herein apply to inland and coastal beaches unless otherwise specified.

This guidance shall apply until amended or rescinded.

**Coastal and Inland Beaches – Manager and User Guidelines for Parking and Capacity**

- To allow for adequate social distancing for ingress, egress, and transit across the beach, beach capacity should be managed to accommodate a minimum of 12 feet distance between towelings/beach blanket groups (approx. 200 square feet per person or group) or about 200 people / acre of beach **and** limit parking to no more than 50% capacity with one empty space between each parked vehicle. Both beach and parking capacity

guidelines must be achieved. Parking lot capacity limitations apply to any non-adjacent lots, offsite or overflow parking lots that service beaches.

- Beach group spacing (sunbathing and swimming) - Groups are limited in size to 10 people maximum and, when seated on the beach, will maintain a minimum distance of 12 feet between groups.
- Walking access ways from parking lot to beach or any other pedestrian access to/from beach shall be designated one-way if possible and, in any event, single file for on and off beach goers and moving traffic only, no standing.
- Loading and unloading of people and personal items at drop off areas are limited to a 10-minute maximum loading/unloading period. No loitering, tailgating.

### **Beach Activity**

- Beach visitors are required to maintain social distancing of at least six feet or more at all times. Face coverings shall be worn at coastal beaches and parking areas in accordance with COVID-19 Executive Order No. 31 when social distancing is not possible.
- Beach visitors should avoid coming into direct contact with high-touch amenities and facilities. If the touching of amenities and facilities is necessary, visitors are advised to frequently wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer.
- Allowable transitory activities on beaches shall include walking, running, bicycling, and other similar activities that can be performed while maintaining adequate social distancing.
- Allowable passive activities on beaches shall include sunbathing and picnicking or similar activities that allow the beach user to remain in the towel area and maintain adequate social distancing.
- Allowable water sport activities on beaches shall include swimming, kite boarding, surfing, and body boards as long as social distancing is maintained.
- Shellfishing and finfishing are allowed activities but should follow social distancing guidelines and relevant state hunting and fishing guidelines.
- Organized ball games are not an allowable activity including, but not limited to, volleyball, Kan Jam, spikeball, football, soccer, Kadima, and bocce.
- Local managers shall use best judgement in closing access to jetties, floats, piers, or other areas where social distancing may be difficult to maintain.
- No portable grills shall be allowed.
- No campfires shall be allowed.
- All beach activities must meet requirements relating to the protection of endangered species and natural resources.
- Picnic areas shall be open provided the following requirements are met:
  - Each picnic table must be positioned at least 12 feet away from the next closest picnic table.
  - Only visitors within a household should utilize a picnic table at the same time.

- Users of picnic tables, benches, and other surfaces should properly sanitize the area before and after use. Additionally, all users must properly sanitize hands and equipment following the use of the facilities.
- After picnicking, waste should be properly disposed of in proper trash receptacles, and in the event there are none available onsite, waste should be taken with users and properly disposed of.
- Property managers, where feasibility, shall provide no touch, lidless trashcans.

### **Over Sand Vehicle (OSV) Coastal Beaches**

- Capacity for OSV beaches should be calculated by beach manager.
- Methodology for calculating beach capacity of OSV's should account for at least one car length (15 to 20 feet) between vehicles at high tide.
- Capacity for OSV should be clearly outlined and signed for potential users and made available on social media.
- Activities on OSV beaches shall follow guideline of Beach Activities listed above.
- OSV activities must meet requirements relating to the protection of endangered species and natural resources.

### **Lifeguards**

- Lifeguard services shall be provided at the discretion of the beach manager.
- If no lifeguarding, signs shall be posted notifying the public that the beach is unguarded.
- If lifeguarding is offered, guards should be trained to follow guidance developed by the National Lifeguard Association and the American Red Cross.
- A minimum distance of 6 feet shall be maintained between lifeguards, the public and lifeguard stands unless in the case of an emergency.
- Guards shall be provided PPE to be used as needed when interacting with the public and responding to emergency situations.

### **Admissions/Contact Stations**

- Admission/entry transactions must be carried out through a no human contact process such as online reservations, timed-ticketing, permit/sticker issuance, or an on-site electronic transaction method that allows for DPH guidelines to be followed.
- Any necessary visitors-staff interactions, whether in a vehicle or on approaching on foot, must be in accordance with any DPH guidelines.

### **Restrooms, Comfort Stations, Showers**

- Users shall abide by social distancing standards for bathroom lines and follow any established visual guidelines for maintaining a 6-foot distance in all restroom facilities. Whenever possible, visitors should avoid using public restrooms.
- Indoor shower facilities and changing facilities will remain closed
- Outdoor shower facilities will remain closed
- Foot washing stations will remain closed.

- Water fountains and water refill stations will remain closed

### **Public Restrooms - Manager Guidelines**

- In an effort to open public restrooms, the managing entity must adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines pertaining to interior spaces and that social distancing can be maintained. Social distancing standards, if possible, shall be indicated for bathroom lines, establishing visual guidelines for maintaining a 6-foot distance in all restroom facilities
- Additionally, the managing entity should explore utilizing portable restrooms to supplement and/or replace public restrooms to ensure social distancing and maintenance, and vendors should provide cleaning services at least once per day.
- Furthermore, the managing entity must commit to having the facilities cleaned at least once daily by staff and perform deep cleaning and disinfection services at least once per week.
- Restroom facilities should contain hand washing and/or sanitizer stations, and the public should use these stations following the use of the facilities. Foot pump stations are encouraged to reduce contact with surfaces.
- Where feasible, public restrooms (both men's and women's sides) shall be converted to family bathrooms where only one person or family group will use the bathroom at a time. A lock or deadbolt must be put on the door to be locked when family members enter, the owner or managing entities must ensure emergency access and establish an occupied signage system, and doors and windows will remain open wherever possible to limit surface contact and improve ventilation.

### **Food Service, Concessions, and Vending**

- Food service shall follow all applicable food service and restaurant protocols and guidelines.

### **Trash Disposal and Management**

- Trash disposal at state beaches managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are available for public use. Trash disposal at beaches managed by municipalities or other organizations for public use is available at the discretion of the city or town it is located in and/or the managing organization.
- Visitors of beaches should expect limited or no trash disposal receptacles. When visiting beaches without trash receptacles, visitors should adhere to a strict "carry in, carry out" policy and take waste with them.
- Where trash receptacles are available for normal use, beach managers shall, where feasible, provide no touch, lidless trashcans.

### **Shuttle Service to Beach Facilities**

Shuttle services to the beach should be evaluated on a case by case basis by beach managers and such services, if provided, shall ensure proper social distancing, abide by

any applicable guidelines that govern public transportation, and comply with beach capacity requirements.

Any questions regarding this guidance can be sent to [outdoor\\_guidance@mass.gov](mailto:outdoor_guidance@mass.gov)