Path to Recovery Framework

Part 3: Assessing the Risk of Spaces, Facilities and Programs

With guidance from local park and recreation professionals, leading public health organizations, and other like-minded nongovernmental organizations, NRPA has developed an assessment tool that can be used by local park and recreation professionals to help them better understand the risk of specific park and recreation sites, facilities and programs. Assessing the risk of reopening these spaces, facilities and programs, and easing mitigation measures, requires park and recreation professionals to balance the risk of increased transmission of COVID-19 against the benefits these amenities provide to communities.

The tool guides professionals through key questions that should be answered and plans that should be in place prior to reopening in accordance with public health guidance, while helping professionals identify which spaces, facilities and programs are ready to reopen in a phased approach or which need additional time and preparation prior to reopening.

I. General Assessment of Park and Recreation Spaces and Facilities

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Health Security recently released Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors. The document provides an assessment of the risk of transmission in a variety of organizations and settings, including outdoor spaces, organized sports, community gathering spaces and schools and childcare facilities. Assessments were made across three dimensions – 1) contact intensity, 2) number of contacts, and 3) the degree to which activities are considered to be modifiable through mitigation measures.

- **Contact intensity** was rated as low, medium or high, taking into account close contact vs. distant contact and duration of contact. For example, low contact intensity activities are brief and fairly distant, like walking past someone on a trail. High contact intensity involves prolonged close contact, like sharing a dorm room.
- **Number of contacts** were rated as low, medium or high, defined by the approximate number of people in the setting at the same time.
- **Modification potential** is defined as a **qualitative** assessment of the degree to which activities can be modified to reduce risk. In this case, high modification potential is better. For example, a high modification potential allows for substantial changes to the space or activity to limit contact. This may include implementing physical distancing measures, creating physical barriers between people, using technology to facilitate communication, or having people wear PPE. A low modification potential may only allow for one or two of these measures.

A variety of settings that park and recreation professionals often managed were assessed on these three levels:

Category	Contact Intensity	Number of Contacts	Modification Potential
Parks, walking paths, trails, dog parks	Low	Low	Low
Noncontact sports	Low	Medium	High
Beaches, piers	Low	High	Medium
Pools	Medium	Low	High
Gyms, fitness studios	Medium	Medium	Medium
Playgrounds, skateparks and other outdoor recreation spaces	Medium	Medium	Medium
Athletic fields and other outdoor congregate settings	Medium	Medium	Low
Community centers	Medium	High	Medium

Theatres, museums and other indoor leisure spaces	Medium	High	Medium
Overnight programs	High	Medium	Low
Childcare facilities	High	Medium/High	Low/Medium
Contact sports	High	Medium/High	Low
Mass gatherings, community events, festivals, sports related tournaments and games	High	High	Medium
Outdoor large venues (concerts, sports)	High	High	Medium
Indoor large venues (concerts, sports)	High	High	Low
Summer camps	High	High	Low

* These risk assessments may be helpful in planning for reopening as sectors and activities with low contact intensity, low numbers of contacts, and ability to modify operations to diminish potential spread will be safer to open sooner than those with higher levels of risk. This is not meant to be a prescription for reopening, and we know that every park and recreation space, facility and program is unique. Professionals will need to make decisions after analyzing their individual spaces for risk.

II.   Coordination with Public Health Officials

As phased reopening plans are developed, park and recreation professionals should coordinate with state and local public health and government officials for specific guidance and approval. Prior to implementation of phased reopening plans, park and recreation professionals should also coordinate with state and local public health officials to ensure the community has met the indicators and gating criteria to begin lifting mitigation measures as outlined by the World Health Organization or the White House Coronavirus Task Force and CDC.

III.   Specific Questions that Should be Answered Prior to Reopening

These questions should be answered, and plans should be developed prior to reopening spaces, facilities or programs.

1. Physical Distancing and Limiting Gatherings

- Does the space/facility/program allow for physical distancing of the public and staff?
- Does the space/facility/program allow for avoiding any national/state/local maximum gathering requirements?
- Can signage be installed reminding community members to physically distance and limit gatherings?
- Can physical distancing and gathering requirements be monitored/enforced?
- Have policies or procedures been developed for the monitoring and enforcement of physical distancing?
- Do you have enough staff capacity and resources needed to monitor/enforce physical distancing and gathering requirements?
- Have staff been trained on proper procedures for monitoring physical distancing?
- Do you have a contingency plan in the event of losses in staff capacity to monitor/enforce physical distancing?
- Do you have a communications plan for sharing information on physical distancing, gathering requirements and monitoring procedures?

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- Do you have a contingency plan in the event that mitigation and gating measures need to be reinforced due to a resurgence in COVID-19 case counts?

2. Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

- Can the space/facility/program materials be properly cleaned/disinfected regularly in accordance with CDC guidance?
- Have maintenance plans/checklists outlining cleaning protocols and frequency been created to prepare staff for implementation?
- Have you secured cleaning/disinfection supplies and PPE for staff?
- Do you have a plan in place for securing additional needed cleaning/disinfection supplies within the supply chain?
- Have you trained staff on proper cleaning/disinfection?
- Do you need to provide hand sanitizer to users?
- Do you have a plan in place for securing hand sanitizer within the supply chain?
- Do you have a communications plan for sharing information on cleaning and disinfection practices (e.g.) how often spaces are cleaned?

3. Staff Capacity

- Do you have a staffing plan in place to reopen spaces/facilities/programs?
- Do you need to repurpose staff (e.g. full time to staff seasonal operations; admin shifting to maintenance/sanitization roles, etc.)?
- Is there a plan in place for protecting vulnerable/high-risk staff?
- Is there a contingency plan in place in the event of losses in staff capacity?

4. Measures to Protect Staff and the Public

- Do you have a policy on personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for staff?
- Have you secured necessary PPE?
- Do you have a plan in place for securing additional PPE within the supply chain?
- Have you trained staff on proper use and disposal of PPE?
- Is there a policy in place regarding hand washing frequency of staff?
- Do you have updated emergency contact information for staff?

5. Site-Based Questions

Based on specifics of your spaces, facilities and programs, have you created a plan for additional staff and user protective measures that may be required? This may include:

- Do you need/have updated emergency contact information for participants?
- Do you have a plan to implement health screenings and temperature checks?
- Are you able to limit the number of patrons or stagger entry times?
- Can signage be installed reminding public to physically distance, limit gatherings, wear face coverings, and practice proper personal hygiene per CDC guidance?
- Can equipment or office set ups be adjusted to support physical distancing?
- Will adjustments to equipment or office space meet ADA requirements?
- Have you developed a drop-off system for childcare programs?

- Is there an isolation room on site in the event someone falls ill during a program?
- If you are providing food, what policies are in place for food deliveries and distribution?
- Do you need additional organization vehicles?
- Will you need to install physical barriers to keep frontline staff safe?

*NRPA will be developing and sharing guidance for specific spaces, facilities, and programs as available.

- Playgrounds
- Outdoor Restrooms (Permanent and Temporary)
- Outdoor Courts, Skateparks, Exercise Equipment
- Swimming Pools and Splashpads
- Sports – Youth and Adult
- Dog Parks
- Childcare Programs and Summer Camps
- Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Centers
- Farmers Markets
- Senior Centers

6. Population Served and Addressing Equity and Inclusion
- Who is the primary population served by the space/facility/program?
- Is there a high percentage of high-risk individuals served by the space/facility/program?
- Is there a plan in place for protecting high-risk individuals?
- Have you analyzed your reopening plans to ensure that recreational opportunities are equitably accessible across the community?
- Have you analyzed community need to ensure you are meeting the essential needs of those most vulnerable?
- Have you meaningfully engaged the community in your reopening planning process to ensure all voices are represented?
- Is there a plan to address ADA requirements?
- Is there a plan to ensure all feel welcome and can participate equally?

7. Communications and Community Awareness
- Has a communications plan been developed to relay up-to-date information regarding openings/closings/proper use/mitigation strategies?
- Has a communications plan been developed to raise community awareness of proper use of spaces in accordance with national/state/local public health guidance?
- Do you have enough staff capacity and resources needed to implement communications plan?
- Do you have a contingency plan in the event of losses in staff capacity to implement communications plan?
- Is there a plan to ensure all people, especially those most vulnerable, receive and understand communications?

8. Mitigation Strategies
- Is there a mitigation plan in place for each site?
- Can mitigation measures be instated rapidly if there is an increase in community transmission?

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- In the event of exposure at a managed site, is there a plan in place for communicating possible exposure of virus to community members (i.e. participant tracking)?