

Path to Recovery Framework

Part 5: Phased Reopening Planning – Gradually Restoring Operations to Protect Public Health

Based on public health guidance at the federal level, along with an analysis of phased reopening plans from state, local governments, and local park and recreation agencies, NRPA has developed this phased reopening guidance to help park and recreation professionals outline and implement phased reopening plans. In this document you will find:

- Transition criteria between phases — and outline of key metrics that should be met prior to transitioning into the subsequent phase.
- Key considerations in all phases — the need to assess staff capacity, budget, [availability of supplies and personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#), [prioritization of resources to support vulnerable community members](#), [communications](#) and other key factors.
- Sample phased reopening plan — a sample plan for reopening that outlines in each phase the spaces, facilities and programs that could reopen along with allowable activities, additional mitigation strategies, and protective measures for the public.

In all cases, reopening plans should be made in collaboration with local public health and government officials and must follow state and local policies. Public health officials can provide up-to-date information on community transmission, public health system and healthcare system capacity to determine the level of mitigation needed. At any point, public health officials may determine that more stringent mitigation measures may be necessary, including the possibility of reverting back to previous phases, and park and recreation professionals should adhere to their guidance.

As agencies develop reopening plans, they will also need to weigh staff capacity, budget, availability of essential supplies, community awareness and education, and other factors that will impact their ability to restore operations with enhanced public health measures. [Specific site and program-based guidance](#) will be released as available.

I. Transition Criteria Between Phases

In order to transition from phase to phase, key metrics should be met. **Adhere to all local and state public health guidance and confirm that transition into the subsequent phase is allowable with local authorities.** NRPA recommends a **minimum of three weeks** between phases to allow for monitoring of transmission and ensure public health response, healthcare system infrastructure and personal protective equipment is in place to test, isolate, contact trace and efficiently treat COVID-19.

Transition from Stay at Home Status to Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effectively meet World Health Organization indicators or White House Coronavirus Task Force and CDC Gating Criteria as well as core state preparedness responsibilities as determined by state and local public health officials. ✓ Conduct a risk assessment of all spaces, facilities and programs. ✓ Ensure sufficient park and recreation department staff capacity and budget to support reopening for Phase 1. ✓ Prepare and train staff for Phase 1 to ensure their health and safety. ✓ Continue to provide essential services to community – food, shelter, childcare for essential workers (if already running) in Phase 1. ✓ Assess capacity of critical partners in Phase 1. ✓ Secure cleaning and disinfection supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE) and establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) and associated training for Phase 1. ✓ Ensure community awareness and education of public health measures of Phase 1. ✓ Be prepared to revert to stay at home status if transmission increases.
Transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued downward trajectory in cases and upward trajectory in screening, testing and treating (determined by state and local public health officials). ✓ Ensure sufficient park and recreation department staff capacity and budget to support reopening for Phase 2. ✓ Prepare and train staff for Phase 2 to ensure their health and safety. ✓ Continue to provide essential services to community – food, shelter, childcare, etc. in Phase 2. ✓ Assess capacity of critical partners in Phase 2. ✓ Secure cleaning and disinfection supplies, PPE, establish SOPs and associated training for Phase 2. ✓ Ensure community awareness and education of public health measures of Phase 2. ✓ Be prepared to revert to previous phases if transmission increases.
Transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Widespread community transmission no longer present and ability to identify, isolate and treat all individuals (determined by state and local public health officials). ✓ Ensure sufficient park and recreation department staff capacity and budget to support reopening for Phase 3. ✓ Prepare and train staff for Phase 3 to ensure their health and safety. ✓ Continue to provide essential services to community – food, shelter, childcare, etc. in Phase 3. ✓ Assess capacity of critical partners in Phase 3. ✓ Secure cleaning and disinfection supplies, PPE, establish SOPs and associated training for Phase 3. ✓ Ensure community awareness and education of public health measures of Phase 3. ✓ Be prepared to revert to previous phases if transmission increases.
Transition from Phase 3 to Phase 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vaccine and anti-viral treatments accessible to community. ✓ Ensure sufficient park and recreation department staff capacity and budget to support reopening for Phase 4. ✓ Continue to provide essential services to community – food, shelter, childcare, recovery services (connections to social services, mental health supports, etc.), etc. in Phase 4. ✓ Assess capacity of critical partners in Phase 4. ✓ Secure cleaning and disinfection supplies, document SOPs for normal operations and prepare and train staff. ✓ Be prepared to revert to previous phases if transmission increases.

II. Things to Consider in all Phases

There are several considerations that must be made in all phases, including staff protection measures, staff capacity, policies regarding PPE, training and communications. Make sure to review these key considerations:

- Establish and continue communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in your community; monitor the status of transmission in your community closely.
- Implement [staff protection measures](#) including:
 - Obtaining PPE and establishing policies regarding PPE.
 - Allowing staff to telework when possible and creating shift schedules.
 - Establishing protocols for conducting health screenings (physical and mental) of staff.
 - Implementing environmental controls in offices to enact and support physical distancing.
 - Documenting SOPs to ensure staff is prepared when in shared spaces, providing services and interacting with users.
 - Ensuring staff feel empowered to protect themselves and clarifying how to handle situations.
- Protect and support staff and community members, especially those who are at higher risk for severe illness.
- Provide [real-time communication](#) to public regarding allowable activities and protective measures in place.
- Provide essential services to [vulnerable community members](#) – food, shelter, childcare for essential personnel, etc.
 - If facilities have been used to provide these services, consider creating a phased approach to reinstating full operations.
- Follow [specific guidance](#) as outlined by [CDC](#) and other public health leaders for safely operating specific parks and recreation spaces, facilities, events, and programs.
- Ensure you have accurate emergency contact information for all participants and staff.
- Ensure you have necessary supplies, PPE, staff capacity, training, policies and budget to support each phase.
- Provide options for virtual programming and other options as feasible to reduce risk.
- Ensure external community organizations and third-party vendors that use spaces and facilities follow this guidance.
- Ensure you have an [emergency plan](#) in place for reinstating mitigation strategies if you need to revert – there will undoubtedly be some level of fluidity between phases.

III. Phased Reopening Sample Plan

This sample phased reopening plan may serve as a helpful tool in guiding agencies through the process of creating a plan. **This is not meant to be a prescription for reopening, as we know that every park and recreation space, facility, and program is unique and each state and locality may be operating under their own policies and plans that park and recreation agencies must adhere to.** Professionals will need to make decisions after [analyzing their individual spaces for risk](#), assessing staff capacity and ability to monitor for physical distancing, [securing supplies](#), [prioritizing program and facility openings based on community needs](#), and other factors that may influence the ability and plan to reopen.

Phase 1

Phase 1 (only if WHO or White House Coronavirus Task Force and CDC indicators are met)	
Allowable Activities	
This outlines the spaces, facilities and programs that could reopen, along with the types of use allowed.	
✓	Outdoor park and recreation spaces that allow for physical distancing can open to public for individual and household unit use.
✓	Permanent outdoor restrooms should open to promote public health and hygiene with enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures.
✓	Provide essential services to community members – food, shelter, childcare to essential workers with enhanced public health measures.
✓	Playgrounds, splash pads, swimming pools, recreation centers, athletic fields/complexes, outdoor exercise equipment, skate parks, senior centers stay closed.
✓	No organized small or large group programs or events and no sharing of equipment.
Mitigation Strategies Implemented by Agency	
This outlines the additional measures that agencies should put in place to lower the risk of transmission.	
✓	Limit times of use if necessary.
✓	Monitor spaces to reinforce physical distancing – implement environmental controls or reinstate closings if needed.
✓	Install signage clearly identifying what is allowable and what is not in Phase 1; ensure signage is inclusive.
✓	Launch community awareness and education campaign centered on public health measures individuals must take in Phase 1.
✓	Implement enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures.
✓	Ensure adequate supplies and PPE to support hygiene, including staff modeling behaviors.
✓	Continue offering virtual programming.
✓	All vulnerable individuals should continue to stay home as much as possible.
Protective Measures for Public	
This outlines the protective public health measures that park users and participants should follow.	
✓	Must adhere to physical distancing .
✓	Follow CDC guidance for face coverings , hygiene, staying home if symptomatic and as much as possible.
✓	No gatherings of more than 10 people.

Phase 2

Phase 2 (only if transition criteria for Phase 1 to Phase 2 is met)

Allowable Activities

This outlines the spaces, facilities and programs that could reopen, along with the types of use allowed.

- ✓ Outdoor park and recreation spaces and facilities can open to public for individual and household unit use and small group activities if physical distancing and conditions on gatherings are followed.
- ✓ Additional park facilities and infrastructure can open based on risk and ability to physically distance (may include swimming pools, athletic complexes, dog parks, community gardens, courts, etc.).
- ✓ Temporary outdoor restrooms can open with enhanced cleaning and sanitation.
- ✓ Provide essential services to community members – food, shelter, childcare for essential workers.
- ✓ Recreation centers can open for individual use and small group use with enhanced public health measures and physical distancing.
- ✓ Playgrounds, splashpads, skate parks, and outdoor exercise equipment stay closed.
- ✓ No organized large group programs or events and limit equipment sharing.
- ✓ Senior centers stay closed.

Mitigation Strategies Implemented by Agency

This outlines the additional measures that agencies should put in place to lower the risk of transmission.

- ✓ Limit times of use and hours of operation if necessary.
- ✓ Monitor spaces to reinforce physical distancing.
- ✓ Install signage clearly identifying what is allowable and what is not in Phase 2; ensure signage is inclusive.
- ✓ Implement environmental controls in indoor facilities when necessary – installing physical barriers (e.g. sneeze guards), hand sanitizer stations, zero-touch soap dispensers, spacing equipment 6 ft. apart, etc.
- ✓ Establish protocols for health screenings of participants.
- ✓ Maintain accurate participation records and contact information.
- ✓ Continue community awareness and education campaign centered on public health measures individuals must take in Phase 2.
- ✓ Implement enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures.
- ✓ Ensure adequate supplies and PPE to support hygiene, including staff modeling behaviors.
- ✓ Continue offering virtual programming.
- ✓ All vulnerable individuals should continue to stay home as much as possible.

Protective Measures for Public

This outlines the protective public health measures that park users and participants should follow.

- ✓ Must adhere to [physical distancing](#).
- ✓ Follow [CDC guidance](#) for [face coverings](#), hygiene, staying home if symptomatic.
- ✓ No gatherings of more than 10 people.

Phase 3

Phase 3 (Only if transition criteria for Phase 2 to Phase 3 is met)

Allowable Activities

This outlines the spaces, facilities and programs that could reopen, along with the types of use allowed.

- ✓ Playgrounds, splashpads, skate parks, outdoor exercise equipment and other frequently touched infrastructure and park facilities can open with enhanced public health measures and physical distancing.
- ✓ Childcare programs can open with enhanced public health measures and physical distancing.
- ✓ Group programs, including youth and adult sports, can run with enhanced public health measures, physical distancing and no travel.
- ✓ Provide essential services to community members – food, shelter, childcare.
- ✓ Senior centers can open with enhanced public health measures and physical distancing.

Mitigation Strategies Implemented by Agency

This outlines the additional measures that agencies should put in place to lower the risk of transmission.

- ✓ Limit times of use and hours of operation if necessary.
- ✓ Monitor spaces to reinforce physical distancing.
- ✓ Install signage clearly identifying what is allowable and what is not in Phase 3; ensure signage is inclusive.
- ✓ Implement environmental controls at indoor and outdoor facilities when necessary – installing physical barriers (e.g. sneeze guards), hand sanitizer stations, zero-touch soap dispensers, spacing equipment 6 ft. apart, etc.
- ✓ Maintain accurate participation records and contact information.
- ✓ Establish protocols for health screenings of participants.
- ✓ Continue community awareness and education campaign centered on public health measures individuals must take in Phase 3.
- ✓ Maintain enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures.
- ✓ Ensure adequate supplies and PPE to support hygiene, including staff modeling behaviors.
- ✓ Continue offering virtual programming.

Protective Measures for Public

This outlines the protective public health measures that park users and participants should follow.

- ✓ [Physical distancing](#) still encouraged.
- ✓ Follow [CDC guidance](#) on hygiene and protective measures.
- ✓ No gatherings of more than 50 people.

Phase 4

Phase 4 (Only if transition criteria for Phase 3 to Phase 4 is met)	
Allowable Activities	
This outlines the spaces, facilities and programs that could reopen, along with the types of use allowed.	
✓	Provide essential services to community members – food, shelter, childcare and recovery services for community (connections to social services, mental health supports, etc.).
✓	All operations can resume, including large community gatherings with enhanced public health measures.
Mitigation Strategies Implemented by Agency	
This outlines the additional measures that agencies should put in place to lower the risk of transmission.	
✓	Continue community awareness and education campaign centered on potential need to reinstate mitigation measures as needed.
✓	Maintain enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures.
✓	Ensure adequate supplies to support hygiene, including staff modeling behaviors.
Protective Measures for Public	
This outlines the protective public health measures that park users and participants should follow.	
✓	Practice good hygiene and stay home when sick.