



NEWPORT PARKS & RECREATION

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Issued: April 17, 2020

Vermont has stayed ahead of the curve and slowed the communal spread of COVID-19 by following Governor Scott's Stay-Home, Stay-Safe order implemented on March 24, 2020. [Sector Specific Guidelines](#) outlined by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development are updating frequently as more information becomes available about the impact of COVID-19. Frequent changes require us to adapt quickly to new operational criteria and have prompted many inquiries from clients about reservations at our facilities and the availability of summer programming. This memo is intended to respond to Frequently Asked Questions as a result of the Stay-Home, Stay-Safe and the new Work-Smart, Stay-Safe Phase 1 Executive Order issued on April 17, 2020.

Below is an outline of our plan for spring and early-summer opening based on the best information we have at this time. Please know that these things may change in the coming weeks as updated Executive Orders develop.

Newport's public parks will remain open, not as a place to congregate, but as a place to recreate responsibly according to the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Restrooms and waste receptacles are not available at this time, and use of common-area features like benches, picnic tables and playgrounds is strongly discouraged. We encourage everyone to continue enjoying the beach for walks, open fields to fly kites, riverbanks for fishing and green spaces to run with your dog - but please be cognizant of social distancing protocol when encountering others.

We ask the community to recognize that Stay-Home, Stay-Safe restrictions have limited our ability to continue normal operations and pre-season maintenance at facilities. Sector Specific Guidelines from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development require a delay for non-essential repairs, construction projects and improvements. Work to "get ready" for the season is prohibited. Like many other businesses and organizations, the City has implemented furloughs for all park and facility staff which may cause temporary delays in customer service and effect the appearance of our facilities. Your support, patience and understanding is greatly appreciated as we work through these unprecedented times.

If you have questions about the following information, please contact Jessica Booth, Director of Parks & Recreation by email at JBooth@NewportRecreation.org or leave a phone message, 802-334-6345 and your call will be returned.

PROUTY BEACH CAMPGROUND

According to State mandates, the campground is permitted to operate beginning May 1, providing only essential utilities such as water, pump stations and electricity. Restrooms, laundry facilities, rec room, playground, waste receptacles, Wi-Fi, equipment rentals and campground store will remain closed until May 15. A gradual expansion of services is allowed through June 15. Campground check-ins, reservations and other communications will be conducted online or by phone during designated hours. Fires are permitted at campsites, but wood must not be transported into the campground. Firewood can be purchased online or by phone through the campground store and delivered to campsites on a weekly basis. Picnic tables are located at each campsite but using benches or picnic tables in common areas is not permitted. To uphold the Stay-Home, Stay-Safe order, visitors to the campground are prohibited and all campers must stay on their own site as they would stay on their own property at home.

Please note that park staff and campground hosts will not be on-site regularly until operations and maintenance activities resume on May 15. This means staff will be limited to only critical tasks only when on site, which does not

include litter clean-up, mowing, and weedwacking. If you need assistance, please send an email to ProutyBeach@NewportRecreation.org, or leave a detailed message at the campground office (802)334-7951 and someone will contact you when they are on site. For emergencies, please text or call (802)274-2965.

Transient Camping: We are currently accepting reservations for transient visits scheduled after June 15. No new transient reservations may be booked between May 1 and June 15, except for those essential service workers specified by Executive Order 01-20, Addendum 9. Existing reservations between May 15 and June 15 will be honored, but services available at the campground will be limited as stated above. Those who wish to cancel their reservation can reschedule for a later date, retain a credit for future use, or receive a full refund if requested at least 5 business days before your scheduled visit. If we do not hear from you, we will assume they are planning to come, and will prepare a campsite.

Seasonal Campers: The Agency of Commerce and Community Development is allowing campgrounds to open as regularly scheduled exclusively for seasonal campers who do not have another home. Those who utilize their camper as a seasonal or second home will not be permitted at Prouty Beach until May 15. Those traveling to Vermont from out-of-state must self-quarantine for a mandatory 14 days as required by Executive Order 01-20, Addendum 7.

Seasonal campers who are not permitted to check-in until May 15 are eligible to receive a prorated credit for the 15 missed days, totaling \$160 for residents and \$183 for non-residents. Credits may be applied to your account for future use toward electricity bills or deposit for the 2021 season. We can also issue a refund check by request. Requests for credits must be submitted no later than June 1. Additional prorations cannot be offered to those who arrive after May 15 of their own volition.

Those who do not wish to occupy their seasonal site for the 2020 season may take a 1-year hiatus with all fees refunded less the \$200 non-refundable deposit to hold your spot for this season. Seasonal sites that become vacant may be rented to transients or temporary seasonals for the remainder of the year but will be available to you again next May. Requests for hiatus must be submitted no later than June 1 to receive a refund.

In addition, Canadian or out-of-state seasonals who are delayed by government required COVID-19 border closures beyond May 15 are eligible for a prorated credit for late arrival up to June 15. Additional prorations cannot be offered to those who arrive after June 15. Requests for credits must be submitted no later than June 15.

Any seasonal campers wishing to shorten their stay and revert to monthly/weekly rates may do so without having to move sites or compromise the seasonal status of your site for 2021. If you plan to occupy your site for only a month or so later in the summer, shortening your reservation may help reduce fees for this season and ensure that your site is available when you are ready to arrive. Adjustments to your reservation must be made by June 1 to receive a credit or refund for the difference in fees.

All communications regarding refunds, changes to reservations or requests for assistance at the campground should be emailed to ProutyBeach@NewportRecreation.org or a message left at (802)334-7951.

NEWPORT CITY DOCK

The courtesy dock and boat launch are currently open for responsible use by the public according to the guidelines set forth by the CDC. While boating itself is an inherently socially distant activity, boaters should refrain from inviting guests on your excursion, congregating in groups on the dock or boarding any other vessel except your own. Restrooms and waste receptacles are not available at this time and use of common areas, benches and picnic tables is discouraged. Out of necessity, a port-o-let will be located on site for public use.

Boaters who are registered with the Newport City Harbormaster will be able to access slips and essential utilities like water and electricity as regularly scheduled on May 15. Access to Wi-Fi, fueling operations, pump-outs and the dock store may not be fully available until June 15. Dock check-ins, reservations and other communications will be conducted online or by phone during designated hours.

Please note that regular in-person operations and many maintenance activities are prohibited until May 15, so staff will be limited to only critical tasks only when on site. If you need assistance, please send an email to Harbormaster@NewportRecreation.org, or leave a detailed message at the dock office (802)334-5726 and someone will contact you when they are on site. For emergencies, please text or call (802)274-2965.

Transient Boaters: We are currently accepting reservations for transient visits scheduled after June 15.

Seasonal Slip Holders: The Newport City Dock will open to seasonal boaters as regularly scheduled on Friday, May 15 with limited access to amenities. No prorations or credits will be available for those who arrive after May 15 of their own volition.

Those who do not wish to occupy their seasonal slip for the 2020 season may take a 1-year hiatus with all fees refunded less the \$200 non-refundable deposit to hold your spot for this year. Seasonal slips that become vacant may be rented to transients or temporary seasonals for the remainder of the year but will be available to you again next May. Requests for hiatus must be submitted no later than June 1 to receive a refund.

In addition, Canadian or out-of-state slip holders who are delayed by government required COVID-19 border closures beyond May 15 are eligible for a prorated credit for late arrival up to June 15. Additional prorations cannot be offered to those who arrive after June 15. Requests for credits must be submitted no later than June 15.

Any seasonal slip holders who wish to shorten their stay and revert to monthly/weekly rates may do so without having to move slips or compromise the seasonal status of your slip for 2021. If you plan to occupy your slip for only a month or so later in the summer, shortening the duration of your dockage may help reduce fees for the season and ensure that your slip is available when you wish to arrive. Adjustments to your reservation must be made by June 1 to receive a credit or refund for the difference in fees.

All communications regarding refunds, changes to reservations or requests for assistance at the dock should be emailed to Harbormaster@NewportRecreation.org or a message left at (802)334-5726.

GARDNER MEMORIAL PARK

Restrooms and playgrounds are currently closed at the park and use of common area features like benches and picnic tables is discouraged. Please carry out your trash. Note that regular in-person operations and maintenance activities are prohibited until May 15. Staff are limited to only critical tasks when on site, which does not include field maintenance, mowing, and litter-clean up. If you need assistance, please send an email to info@NewportRecreation.org, or leave a detailed message at the Parks & Recreation office (802)334-6345 and someone will contact you. For emergencies, please text or call (802)274-2965.

Organized Sports Leagues: Athletic fields should be playable by May 22. This is assuming the Stay-Home, Stay-Safe order is lifted on May 15 and nature cooperates for one week of intense maintenance catch-up. Whether teams choose to practice or play will be up to the discretion of their individual league organizations. Any field use scheduled prior to May 22 will be cancelled and refunded to your account for future use. Refund checks can also be requested by mail or email. Cancellations that occur after May 22 may be credited to your account for future use.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Green-up Day: Green-up Day has been postponed to May 30th. According to the State of Vermont, this event is “*by nature an activity of social distancing as citizens of all ages get outside and clean up miles of Vermont roads. Supply pick up and trash drop off locations specific to towns can be managed with little to no close contact in keeping with CDC guidelines.*” Parks & Recreation will remain as the distribution point for bags but will not be hosting our normal public gathering at Gardner Park to assign routes. Families will be encouraged to pick up bags during designated hours and

choose their own clean-up area based on need. Parks, bike paths and shorelines are recommended as safe-family friendly areas, while following proper social distancing protocols when encountering other individuals.

City Wide Yard Sale: This event has been cancelled for 2020.

Memorial Day Celebration: This event has been cancelled for 2020.

July 4 Celebration: We will reassess on May 15. This event may be pared down to a fireworks display from the long bridge only. Currently, we do not plan to host the bed races or food trucks/live music in the park.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Summer Rec Program: At this time, we are planning to move forward with our Summer Rec Program scheduled for June 29-August 14. This program plays an important role for childcare for families in our community and could be managed within CDC guidelines. Capacity will likely be limited to 20 participants with enrollment available for 4-week or 8-week increments to limit exposure for participating families and staff. Registration will open on May 15. Early enrollment opportunities may be available to essential service providers first. Fees will be the same as last season with payment plans available. Scholarships are not available from the City at this time but are accepted from third party organizations.

Counselor in Training Program: This program is scheduled to run in conjunction with our Summer Rec program and can be managed within the CDC guidelines. Enrollment will be limited to 6 participants for each session, July 6 - July 31 for returning CIT's, and July 20 - August 14 for new CITs. Registration will open May 15. Fees will be the same as last season with payment plans available.

Mini Camp Programs: We will reassess on May 15 to determine whether smaller, one week programs including Junior Field Hockey, Track & Field, Challenger Soccer and Let's Go Fishing can operate successfully within CDC guidelines given the necessity for shared equipment and in some cases, closer than 6 foot contact. These programs are typically 1-2 hours per day in duration and therefore do not meet a need for full time child-care. While lower priority, these activities do provide important outlets for the personal growth of children in our community and are popular by those who participate annually. When guidelines are updated, we will have the information needed to decide whether these programs can be adapted in a way that is healthy and safe.