



Department of
Environmental
Conservation



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Guidance on Responsible Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Conservation (State Parks) encourage New Yorkers to recreate locally, practice social distancing, and use common sense to protect themselves and others.

Getting outdoors to walk, jog, hike, ride a bicycle, or visit a park or state lands is a healthy way to stay active, spend time with your immediate household family members, and reduce stress and anxiety while practicing physical distancing. While indoor spaces and restrooms at State Parks and DEC's public facilities are closed to prevent community spread of COVID-19, parks, grounds, forests, and trails are open during daylight hours, seven days a week.

State Parks, Lands, Forests, and facilities are monitored by Park Police, Forest Rangers, Environmental Conservation Police Officers and other staff. These parks, lands, forests, and facilities and visitors will incorporate physical distancing to limit the potential spread of COVID-19. In addition, these officers and staff respond to, and assist, local agencies with search and rescue missions, wildfire suppression, and other response activities. Following this guidance will prevent unnecessary burdens on, and dangers to, state resources and local responders during the ongoing COVID-19 response.

While enjoying outdoor spaces, please continue to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/State Department of Health (DOH) guidelines for preventing the spread of colds, flu, and COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick, or showing or feeling any COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, coughing, and/or troubled breathing;
- Practice social distancing by keeping at least six (6) feet of distance between yourself and others, even when outdoors;
- Wear a mask when you cannot maintain social distancing;
- Avoid close contact, such as shaking hands, hugging, or high-fives;
- Wash hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available; and
- Avoid unnecessary contact with surfaces that are often touched, such as doorknobs and handrails.

DEC and State Parks also encourage visitors to State Parks, State Lands, and other parks to:

- Stay local and keep visits short;
- Visit in small groups limited to immediate household members;
- Maintain distance from others while in places where people tend to congregate, such as parking lots, trailheads, and scenic overlooks;
- Avoid games and activities that require close contact, such as basketball, football, or soccer;
- Avoid playground equipment like slides and swings and other frequently touched surfaces;
- Do not share equipment, such as bicycles, helmets, balls, or Frisbees;
- If you arrive at a park and crowds are forming, choose a different park, a different trail, or return another time/day to visit; and
- If parking lots are full, please do not park along roadsides or other undesignated areas. To protect your safety and that of others, please choose a different area to visit, or return another time or day when parking is available.

If you are sick or have had contact with someone who is sick in the last 14 days:

- Stay home; and
- Spend time in the backyard or other personal outdoor space. Do not visit public outdoor spaces.

If you are over 70 or have a compromised immune system:

- Avoid visiting outdoor public spaces;
- Remain indoors or spend time in the backyard or other personal outdoor space;
- Pre-screen visitors by taking their temperature from a safe social distance; and
- Require visitors to wear masks, if available.

Visitors to the Adirondack and Catskill Parks are reminded to always follow the [Hiker Responsibility Code](#):

- Be prepared for changing weather conditions;
- Carry essentials in a day pack;
- Use current maps/guides to plan their trip;
- Leave trip plans with friends or family;
- Be realistic about fitness and skill level;
- Check the weather forecast;
- Have emergency phone numbers handy (911; DEC Emergency Dispatch: 518-408-5850, in the Adirondacks: 518-891-0235);

- Avoid busy trailheads. Find the [trails less traveled](#) and visit when trails are not be as busy during daylight hours;
- Always be safe and sustainable when recreating outdoors. Learn more about how you can protect natural spaces when exploring outdoors by following the seven principles of [Leave No Trace](#); and
- Review additional information available on the DEC [website](#).

Camping Reservations COVID19 Update: July 5th

DEC Campgrounds and Day Use Areas: DEC is actively working to safely reopen DEC campgrounds this summer. Opening dates for campgrounds and day use areas are listed below as well as important information for campers.

DEC is pleased to announce the opening of reservations for the 2020 season. Reservations for dates on or after July 10 will begin at 8am on Monday, July 6. Due to expected volume, we encourage customers to book reservations online. Walk-in camping is not permitted at this time.

- As part of the COVID-19 guidelines, and for the courtesy of other visitors and our staff, face masks must be worn when outside your campsite area at any place where social distancing cannot be maintained. All patrons shall practice social distancing.
- Only registered campers will be allowed in campground areas, no day visitors will be permitted.
- In order to assist with enhanced cleaning, Check-in time is now 2pm and Check-out time is 10am.
- There may be limited shower and/or restroom facilities and they may periodically be closed to allow for enhanced cleaning.
- Use of facility amenities such as, but not limited to playgrounds, pavilions and day use areas may be restricted or prohibited at certain locations.
- Retail sales such as firewood and ice as well as other services such as boat rentals may be restricted or prohibited at certain locations.
- To achieve density reduction in our facilities, day use sales and bather capacity number will be reduced.

Back Country/Primitive Camping on State Land: As of July 2, DEC has resumed issuing backcountry/ primitive camping permits for groups of 10 or more people who wish to camp for more than 3 nights at one location.

Please contact State Parks regarding its campgrounds.