



# Rhode Island Department of Health

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## **New Guidance Issued for Large Events in Rhode Island**

*Measures intended to protect all Rhode Islanders, with a focus on more vulnerable populations*

As a part of on-going efforts to limit or prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Rhode Island, Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), issued updated guidance today regarding large events.

This guidance is in line with the [latest guidance](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This guidance is intended to slow the transmission of COVID-19 and to protect people at increased risk for severe illness, including older adults and people with underlying health conditions. Steps to limit large events are most effective at preventing the spread of disease when implemented *before* a community is seeing widespread transmission. This guidance will be revisited in two weeks.

“I am asking for the partnership and support of people who are organizing large events,” said Governor Raimondo. “In accordance with the best science from CDC, I am asking that certain events be cancelled or postponed. I know that this is an inconvenience. I am enormously appreciative of everyone’s patience as all of us – government, the business community, and all Rhode Islanders – work together to keep Rhode Island healthy and safe.”

### Updated guidance

- Do not organize or attend events that will be attended by 250 people or more. This recommendation is specific to organized events at which people will be concentrated for sustained periods of time, such as parties, sporting events, and parades. This recommendation does not pertain to the normal school day for students and to workplaces, as long as 250 or more people are not closely concentrated (within six feet of each other) for sustained periods of time.
- Do not organize events that will be attended by large numbers of older adults. (CDC’s current guidance is for organizations that serve high-risk populations to consider canceling events of more than 10 people. Older adults are a high-risk population.) At any event that older adults will attend, verbally screen people for illness, provide hand sanitizer, ensure that people are washing their hands

- regularly, and ensure that people are not closely concentrated for sustained periods of time.
- Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events, regardless of the number of people at the event. Additionally, those messages should urge older adults to not attend events.
  - Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies, including soap in restrooms, hand sanitizer, and tissues.
  - Develop flexible refund policies for participants. Create refund policies that permit participants the flexibility to stay home when they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

These recommendations are [posted online](#). While these recommendations are important, all communities are unique and will need to weigh all the factors involved in making decisions about whether to cancel events.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is issuing additional guidance for school leadership. This guidance includes recommendations on school assemblies, cleaning schedules, ways to ensure social distancing in schools, and visitation policies. No broad school closures are envisioned at this time.

#### *Data updates*

These numbers are also [available online](#).

- Number of Rhode Island COVID-19 positive (including presumptive positive) cases: 5
- Number of people who had negative test results at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories: 94
- Number of people for whom tests are pending: 8
- Number of people who are currently instructed to self-quarantine in Rhode Island because they had direct contact with a person with COVID-19: approximately 270

Testing in Rhode Island is being done at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories. Confirmatory testing is being done by CDC. Positive results are considered 'presumptive' if they still need to be confirmed by the CDC.

#### *Key messages for the public*

- If you have traveled anywhere internationally (or anywhere overnight in the U.S.) in the last 14 days, monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

- For people who have traveled to China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, or Japan, in addition to monitoring yourself for symptoms, self-quarantine for 14 days. That means do not go to work or school and stay at home.
- Whenever possible, avoid close personal contact with people in public. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. [Additional guidance](#) is available from CDC.
- Although Rhode Island has the testing capacity it needs, people without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.
- People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. These people should not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless they are experiencing a medical emergency). Healthcare providers have a dedicated number that they are then using to consult with RIDOH on potential COVID-19 cases.
- Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness. RIDOH is reiterating CDC's guidance for people older than 60 years of age:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
  - Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
  - More information is [available from CDC](#).
- People with general questions about COVID-19 can visit [www.health.ri.gov/covid](http://www.health.ri.gov/covid), write to [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov), or call **401-222-8022**. **This is the COVID-19 Hotline** that RIDOH has available to the public. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)
- Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island.
  - Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
  - Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
  - Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
  - Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.