

Massachusetts State Police remind public that COVID-19 social distancing applies to outdoor areas

REMINDER: PLEASE PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING OUTDOORS AS WELL

On several days last week, our Troopers observed high volume of visitors to state parks and reservations. With warmer temperatures on the way, the Baker-Polito Administration, including the State Police, reminds visitors that precautions recommended to reduce the chance of COVID-19 virus transmission should be practiced in all settings, including outdoor areas.

Specifically, we urge visitors to state parks and other outdoor properties to maintain social distancing of at least six feet, avoid gatherings of people, and to practice healthy personal hygiene, to aid in the prevention of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Furthermore, if visitors of state parks observe areas with high concentrations of people, the public is asked to leave the location and either visit a different park in the area or return at a later date or time.

Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) also advises people to participate in non-contact recreational activities, for example hiking, bike riding, and jogging. Furthermore, if an individual is ill, over 70, and/or part of a vulnerable population, please stay home to avoid the risk of contracting the disease.

The state parks system has over 450,000 acres of property, and every region of the state has hidden gem state park locations to explore that may be less busy than more popular park locations. The DCR website provides visitors the ability to

search state parks by both region and recreational activity.

“The Massachusetts state parks system offers excellent opportunities for us all to get outside, which is important for everybody’s mental and physical health,” said DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery. “However, visitors should adhere to staying at home as much as possible to reduce the risk of becoming in contact with the virus and potentially spreading it to others.”

Visitors are reminded that the agency has removed trash receptacles throughout the state parks system to aid in the prevention of spreading COVID-19. DCR asks that all visitors of state parks adhere to a “carry in, carry out” trash policy during this public health emergency, and urges visitors do their part to help protect our shared natural resources by leaving no trace and taking any trash with them.

DCR has created a Massachusetts State Parks COVID-19 webpage – <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-state-parks-covid-19-update> – that centralizes virus updates that impact the state parks system. The webpage provides visitors of state parks with information including the closure of certain agency facilities, like visitor centers, playgrounds and restroom facilities and other pertinent information.