

SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

June 2020

REOPENING PUBLIC OUTDOOR PLAYGROUNDS

On Friday afternoon, June 26, Governor Murphy issued [Executive Order # 157](#) which permits public playgrounds to reopen beginning on Thursday, July 2, 2020. Paragraph 14, on page 19 of the Order, did not comment on the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) issuing guidance. The [DOH website](#), as of June 29, only says, "On July 2, playgrounds, outdoor amusement parks, and outdoor water parks can reopen subject to required protocols."

The Safety Director recommends owners of public playgrounds review the protocols from the Centers for Disease Control as they prepare their playgrounds to safely open.

CDC issued [Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreational Facilities](#) with the following recommendations:

- Provide signage advising visitors of good hygiene practices:
 - Stay home if sick
 - Practice social distancing
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Wash hands often
 - Avoid touching face
 - Wear cloth face-covering unless age or health concerns indicate otherwise

The Safety Director generally advises against signs that warn visitors to "use at own risk."

Most importantly, owners of playgrounds should consult with their counsel for specific guidance on signs for your circumstances.

- Decide if and how often playground equipment will be cleaned. Follow the CDC's [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
 - Coronaviruses on surfaces and objects naturally die within hours to days. Warmer temperatures and exposure to sunlight will reduce the time the virus survives on surfaces and objects.
 - Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and in parks is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. Owners should maintain existing cleaning and hygiene practices for outdoor areas.
 - Routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. Use low-pressure delivery systems, such as garden hose, to minimize the potential for aerosolizing contaminants from the surface being cleaned.

Owners of playgrounds may also include messages signage users how they are cleaning playgrounds. The Safety Director recommends sharing what you are doing to clean play equipment. Owners are discouraged from including verbiage on what the agency is not doing.

- If possible, restrooms in parks with playgrounds should be reopened. If restrooms will remain closed, notify visitors on the organization's website or at the entrance to the park.
 - Establish a cleaning and disinfection schedule, especially for high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches. Follow the CDC's *Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces* to develop, implement, and maintain a plan to perform regular cleanings to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
 - Clean and disinfect restrooms daily, or more often if possible, using EPA-registered disinfectants that are effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - Stock restrooms with supplies for handwashing, including soap and paper towels for drying hands or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and no-touch trash cans.
 - Restroom facilities without running water, such as portable toilets, are typically not stocked with hand hygiene products. Encourage visitors to bring their own hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for use in these facilities.

As further information becomes available, the Safety Director will share it with our members.