

Plan for reopening playgrounds, athletic fields, indoor facilities and athletic tournaments/events



There are many unknowns at this time, such as updated guidance from SCDHEC, CDC, Executive Orders in place by the Governor and rate of viral spread. However, while we are not able to anticipate all variables impacting the reopening of parks and recreation facilities, it is important that there is a plan to reopen to provide a much needed service to our citizens. The following assumptions have been made during the development of this plan:

1. Approval and in compliance of Governor's Executive Orders SCDHEC, CDC and medical experts
2. The dates provided below are approximations and could be modified depending on the rate of viral spread.
3. Each local government agency has the funding available to hire staff as needed and operate facilities in a safe manner.

If any of these assumptions change, it could alter this plan as it may need to be revised to incorporate new information. The phases should be based on when the "peak of the virus" occurs and make sure the data supports a decline in the rate of viral spread and not an increase as per the SCDHEC.

Phase One - Municipal and County Parks (Outdoor green spaces and trails) - early to mid-May

While some trails and green spaces are already open, some have been closed due to issues with users not complying with CDC and SCDHEC recommendations related to social distancing. Those that are closed should be given the ability to rehire staff, as needed, and open local parks on a park by park basis. With a staggered approach, parks can be opened based on their specific amenities and when park users have the ability to maintain social/physical distancing. See attached signage.

Phase Two - Playgrounds and local athletic fields for local use only - late May to early June

These spaces need to adhere to Governor's executive orders of groups size, capacity issues and proper physical distancing. Executive Order 2020-17 occurred on March 31, and effectively closed these park amenities. Keeping these closed until late May or early June, per executive order, should give us time to reopen these high touch areas where people tend to congregate and ensure we have proper staffing for the public's safety. These areas are hard to provide oversight, it is hard to enforce social distancing and these areas are high touch and hard to sanitize. The areas opened in phase two are primarily used by youth and it is important that the rate of viral spread has decreased prior to opening. This **DOES NOT** include tournaments/events related to sports tourism due to traveling from individuals from out of state.

Phase Three - Recreation Centers/Gyms for local use only - early June to mid-June

These indoor spaces need to adhere to Governor's orders of groups size, capacity issues and proper physical distancing. Guidance from SCDHEC and CDC on the use of public indoor space will be useful in opening to the public in a safe manner.

Summer Day Camps - early June to mid-June (With appropriate safety and capacity measures in place)

Lifting of part of Executive Order 2020-17, would give people the opportunity to learn how to safely congregate. It also gives local governments the ability to implement appropriate safety measures. This will be harder for some agencies to implement based on the number of COVID-19 cases and the rate of viral spread in their part of the state. However, summer camps could be a key asset as the state returns to work and employees are looking for childcare.

Phase Four - Sports Tourism - Tournament Play (with spectators) - Mid June Early July

Allowing participants from other states/areas to travel to South Carolina will need to be monitored. Also, capacity issues, social distancing and Governor's executive orders or directives related to the sizes of crowds and ability to travel from out of state all need to be considered. ***We would like to note that there needs to be a differentiating between local league play on our fields and sports tourism related events (i.e. sports tournaments) as these events include teams/participants/spectators from out of state.***

Since different parts of the state are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity, the four phases above could be tailored to each local jurisdiction's needs.

The South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the professional development of its members (individuals representing public parks and recreation agencies) and advocacy for parks, recreation and tourism opportunities in South Carolina.