

Party and charter boat operation guidelines

Party and charter boat operations may begin seasonal charter trips. In accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) emergency regulations, party and charter boat operators must prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Control Plan](#). The RIDOH emergency regulations can be found [here](#). The State prepared a [guidance document](#) to assist businesses in meeting the requirements outlined in these RIDOH regulations. Party and charter boat operators must comply with RIDOH regulations and active [executive orders](#).

The guidelines below summarize **additional** steps Rhode Island is asking party and charter boat operators to take.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact Dean Hoxsie at dean.hoxsie@dem.ri.gov.

I. Operations:

- **Physical distancing:** Passengers, whenever possible, should maintain six (6) feet of physical distance between themselves and others who are not part of their household. In addition, to allow for adequate distancing, party and charter boat operators should limit cabin capacity and request passengers to remain on deck, if safe to do so, during the duration of the trip (weather permitting).

Special circumstances (e.g. inclement weather or unique needs of passengers) that require people to be within six (6) feet of one another may arise. The captain should do their best to limit the duration of these interactions and take appropriate measures to return to compliance with physical distancing guidelines.

- **Group size:** Passengers booking multiple tickets for a group should limit the size of the group to comply with current executive orders.
- **Face Coverings:** All persons (captain, crew, and passengers) on the boat should comply with current RIDOH regulations and executive orders regarding the wearing of face coverings during party and charter boat operations. (See [Executive Order 20-30.](#))
- **Cleaning Procedures:** In accordance with RIDOH regulations and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting, all cabins, heads, commonly touched surfaces, and equipment on the boat or used by passengers (e.g. fishing poles or nets) should be sanitized between trips and at the end of the day. The entire boat should be thoroughly cleaned at least once a day. Additionally, soap and water and/or hand sanitizer must be readily available for frequent hand cleaning.
- **Capacity:** In order to maintain 6 feet of physical distance, boat capacity should be limited to take into account the number of people that can safely occupy the boat in adherence with COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. Boat capacity should be determined by a formula that takes into account the category, length and beam (measurement of the boat's widest point) of the boat. The formula will be different based on four categories of boats as defined below.

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To help determine the capacity of their boat, captains may use this link: www.dem.ri.gov/chartercalculator. See the Appendix for the exact formulas.

For inspected boats less than 65 feet in length:

Maximum capacity (passengers and mate(s)): Double the length of the boat, add the length of the beam, then divide by ten (6ft physical distance plus 4ft for buffer and occupied space). All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.

For inspected boats 65 feet in length or greater:

Maximum capacity (passengers and mate(s)): Double the length of the boat, add the length of the beam, and then divide by eight (6ft physical distance plus 2ft occupied space; no need for added buffer given larger size of vessel). All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.

For uninspected vessels (known as “six pack” boats) less than 25 feet:

Maximum capacity (passengers, mate(s) and Captain) is limited to four people.

For uninspected vessels (known as “six pack” boats) 25 feet or greater:

Maximum capacity (passengers, mate(s)): Double the length of the boat, add the length of the beam, then divide by ten (6ft physical distance plus 4ft for buffer and occupied space). All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.

- **Food & Beverage Sales:** All food and beverage sales should follow the most recent executive orders, regulations, and/or guidance related to restaurants.
- **Bookings:** Online ticket sales should be encouraged whenever possible to eliminate the need for paper tickets and cash transactions.

II. Appendix:

For inspected vessels less than 65 feet in length

$$C = (L \times 2) + B \text{ divided by } 10$$

Where, C_i = maximum capacity for an inspected boat less than 65 feet (includes the passengers and mate(s) but not the captain), L = boat length in feet (multiplied by 2 for both sides of the boat), B = length of beam in feet, and this sum is divided by 10 for 6 feet physical distancing plus an additional 2 feet for occupied space of the passenger and 2 feet for an additional buffer. All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.

For inspected vessels 65 feet in length or greater:

$$C = (L \times 2) + B \text{ divided by } 8$$

Where, C = maximum capacity for an inspected boat 65 feet or greater (includes the passengers and mate(s) but not the captain), L = boat length in feet (multiplied by 2 for both sides of the boat), B = length of beam in feet, and this sum is divided by 8 for 6 feet physical distancing plus an additional 2 feet for occupied space of the passenger. All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.

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For uninspected vessels (six pack boats) less than 25 feet:

$$C = 4$$

Where, C = maximum capacity for an uninspected vessel less than 25 feet (includes the passengers, mate(s), and captain)

For uninspected vessels (six pack boats) 25 feet or greater:

$$C = (L \times 2) + B \text{ divided by } 10$$

Where, C = maximum capacity for an uninspected vessel 25 feet or greater (includes the passengers and mate(s) but not the captain), L = boat length in feet (multiplied by 2 for both sides of the boat), B = length of beam in feet, and this sum is divided by 10 for 6 feet physical distancing plus an additional 2 feet for occupied space of the passenger and 2 feet for an additional buffer. All estimated maximum capacity numbers should be rounded to the lowest whole number.