

Contact:
Donna Gaukler, Director
gaukler@ci.missoula.mt.us
(406) 552-6265

600 Clegg Lane
Missoula, MT 59801
www.missoulaparks.org



MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through June 5, 2020

Parks and Recreation COVID-19 Program Updates – June 1, 2020

In collaboration with the [Missoula City-County Health Department](#), Parks and Recreation continues to support residents' health and well-being during this public health emergency.

As we gradually reopen parks facilities and resume recreation programming, the staff of Missoula Parks and Recreation would like to thank the community for its goodwill, patience and cooperation during these challenging times.

Montana continues to see new cases of COVID-19, and so we must remain vigilant to protect our families and our community. Residents should follow [CDC recommendations](#) when visiting parks and trails. Remember that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. Stay at least 6 feet from others; avoid crowded places and mass gatherings. Park fixtures, like tables, trash cans and playgrounds, are not sanitized; park visitors should bring hand sanitizer or a way to clean hands if soap and water are not available. Bring a water bottle, avoid water fountains.

Here are the latest Parks and Recreation program and facilities updates:

Parks, trails and open space: Parks, trails, open space and athletic fields remain open. Park Operations is opening restrooms on a rolling schedule through June 4.

Restrooms and water fountains are cleaned regularly, but cannot be sanitized to a level that would prevent potential contact with coronavirus. Visitors should use at their own risk and follow [CDC recommendations](#) to protect themselves.

Due to staffing reductions during the pandemic, some lower-priority park maintenance tasks, like mowing and trimming, have been delayed. The Department will return to its regular maintenance schedule in the coming weeks.

Playgrounds: Park Operations is reopening playgrounds on a rolling basis through June 5. Each playground will undergo a safety inspection and a sanitation treatment; staff will remove "closed" signs when the work is completed. Playgrounds will not be sanitized after each use. Families should wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after play, use physical distancing, avoid crowded playgrounds, and observe [CDC recommendations](#) for visiting parks. Do not visit a park or playground if you or a member of your household are not feeling well.

Most recreation programs, including [tennis lessons](#), [adult sports](#) and [summer camps](#), will resume or begin June 15; participants may register [online](#) or phone 721-PARK (7275.) The deadline to register for [Adult Soccer, Volleyball and Softball](#) leagues is June 1. The Parks Registration Desk and Administrative offices are currently open by appointment only, phone 721-PARK (7275) or email parksrec@ci.missoula.mt.us.

Pools, spray pools, and splash decks: The Health Department is currently reviewing Parks and Recreation's COVID-19 mitigation plan for aquatics facilities. Watch for pools to open at reduced capacity and with restrictions in place by mid-June. Recreation (open) swim will likely begin later in June; details will be announced at www.missoulaparks.org. An opening date for neighborhood spray decks is yet to be determined, pending approval from the Health Department.

Picnic Shelters: Beginning June 5, picnic shelters are available for reservation for groups of 50 or less and with physical distancing, email fisherp@ci.missoula.mt.us to make a reservation or phone 721-PARK (7275.)

Sports fields and courts are available for reservation for groups of less than 50 with physical distancing. Email kinseys@ci.missoula.mt.us to reserve a facility or phone 721-PARK (7275.)

Please observe these [CDC Guidelines for visiting parks, trails, and open space](#):

- **Don't:** Visit parks or any public area if you are sick with COVID-19, were recently exposed (within 14 days) to someone with COVID-19, or just don't feel well.
- **Don't:** Visit crowded parks where you cannot stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- **Do:** Stay 6 feet away from others ("social distancing") and take other steps to prevent COVID-19.
- **Do:** Avoid gathering with others outside of your household.
- **Do:** Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Do:** Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to use if soap and water are not available.

Additional Parks and Recreation Guidelines for visiting parks, trails, and open space:

- **Don't:** Assume restrooms, playgrounds, and other park facilities are maintained to a standard that would prevent potential contact with the COVID-19 virus. Facilities are cleaned intermittently but are not regularly sanitized throughout the day. Use at your own risk.
- **Do:** Leash your pet in all City parks, trailheads, and commuter trails and remove your pet's waste.
- **Do:** Pack it in, pack it out: due to reduced staffing, trash pickup is limited.

The City of Missoula is taking these measures to protect the health of residents and our employees while providing essential services. Parks and Recreation continues to rely on our community's support and cooperation to prevent the spread of disease and ensure parks programs and facilities remain available to all residents.

Visit www.missoulaparks.org for more information and updates, give us a call at 721-PARK (7275) or email us at parksrec@ci.missoula.mt.us. Get COVID-19 Community Information at <http://covid19.missoula.co/>, and visit the City's website for [City Services Changes and Updates](#).