

Phase III: Casino Reopening Guidelines

On March 14, 2020, the Rhode Island Lottery suspended operations of the Twin River Casino Hotel and Tiverton Casino Hotel due to the unprecedented public health risks associated with the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and Governor Raimondo's declaration of a State of Emergency and issuance of related orders and advisories.

The Raimondo Administration allowed for the limited reopening of casinos in Phase II, on an invitation-only basis, and set the date for reopening during Phase III in accordance with public health data. In addition to any industry-specific standards adopted by the Rhode Island State Lottery and Raimondo Administration, casinos in the state will reopen in accordance with requirements of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH).

I. Summary of Phase III Operational Changes

Under Phase III of Rhode Island's economic reopening plan, casinos in the state will be allowed to reopen to the public, as permitted by the Rhode Island Lottery, under strict standards, including, but not limited to, increased cleaning requirements, capacity limitations, and physical distancing measures.

During Phase III, casinos in the state of Rhode Island:

- Will no longer operate by invitation only and will be open to the general public;
- May extend operating hours to 24 hours per day, as permitted by the Rhode Island Lottery;
- May open certain table games with physical barriers (plexiglass);
- Will modify the casino floor so that only every other Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) may be in use (at a maximum) and will install plexiglass barriers between VLTs;
- May open restaurants in accordance with the indoor restaurant guidance; and
- May increase capacity limit from 25% up to a maximum occupancy of 66% of fire code as permitted by the Rhode Island Lottery. (Lower occupancy rates are encouraged, but not required.)

II. Space and Occupancy Limits

Casinos must follow the regulations and guidance issued by CDC and RIDOH and be in compliance with all [Executive Orders](#). Any changes to these protocols/practices are subject to prior approval from the Rhode Island Lottery.

Adhere to gathering size limits

- Casino employees and guests must comply with RIDOH regulations found [here](#), and active Executive Orders, found [here](#).
- All rules and regulations must be followed when holding meetings, conferences, or other social gatherings at the casino facilities.

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Apply physical distancing measures

- Casinos may operate at a maximum occupancy limit of 66%, subject to the approval of the Rhode Island Lottery, of the fire code capacity for their establishment as determined by the facility's local fire department.
- Casino employees and guests must remain at least six feet apart at all times. If physical distancing is not feasible, individuals should limit interactions to the minimum time and contact required in the situation. In areas where physical distancing is difficult to maintain, the casinos must implement additional precautions to limit exposure to the extent possible, such as the installation of plexiglass barriers.
- All casino employees and guests must wear a cloth face covering or mask in accordance with [RIDOH guidance](#).
- All casino employees must receive training on proper physical distancing and mask-wearing procedures.
- Casinos must provide all casino employees with a face mask, as needed.

III. Business/Organization Processes, Procedures, and Activities

In addition to the general guidance described above, casinos operating in Rhode Island must comply with the following minimum requirements during Phase III:

- Casinos must develop a written [COVID-19 Control Plan](#) outlining how their workplace will prevent the spread of COVID-19, including procedures that meet, at a minimum, the requirements of the RIDOH regulations and procedures that address the following:
 - Physical distancing protocols for the gaming floor, including distancing precautions to be taken with table games and VLTs, and installation plans for plexiglass or other physical barriers between table game seating and VLTs;
 - Assurance of use of cloth face coverings by guests and employees;
 - Decontamination of surfaces, including VLTs, table games, tables, restrooms, and other common areas/objects per a regular cleaning schedule;
 - Disinfection practices for assuring that all betting chips coming from the cage have been disinfected and chips used on the floor are sanitized once per day;
 - Replacement and/or sanitizing practices for cards, dice, and other gambling implements based on volume and frequency of play;
 - Contact tracing efforts in the event of an outbreak, including registration and logging of guest names and contact information;
 - Management of guests with fevers higher than 100.4° F and/or who exhibit other symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Response to a positive case or outbreak including, establishing a plan to ensure that employees who are required to isolate based on a positive test for COVID-19 or are required to quarantine as a result of exposure can stay out of the workplace until cleared to return; and
 - Minimizing access to the casinos by COVID-19 positive or symptomatic individuals through screening practices.
- Casinos must place posters in relevant languages educating employees and guests about:
 - Healthy handwashing at handwashing stations and in restrooms;
 - Physical distancing and mask wearing requirements at building entrances;
 - Screening requirements at building entrances; and
 - Physical distancing requirements throughout the accessible casino floor area.

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- Casinos must place hand sanitizer stations, readily accessible to guests, throughout the casino floor and at building entrances. All hand sanitizer provided should contain at least 60% alcohol.
- All guests shall be screened at building entrances in accordance with the guidelines issued by RIDOH. At all points of access, the casino should create separate entrances and exits to avoid two-way flow of traffic.
- Specific casino staff must be designated to monitor guest compliance and to monitor entry areas to ensure proper screening is being conducted.
- Casino staff (or other staff, e.g., hotel staff, security staff, etc.) must be designated to implement and monitor procedures for elevators, escalators, and stairs to ensure physical distancing.
- No valet service may be provided until further notice (unless necessary due to physical or geographic constraints in order to accommodate individual guests with access and functional needs).
- Each casino must have a communications plan and post information to its website to inform the public of COVID-19 related measures they will encounter and must follow at each property.
- Smoking inside the casino will continue to be banned during Phase III.

VLT operations

- Casino operators shall promote physical distancing of VLT play by either maintaining a minimum of six feet of distance between operating VLT positions or by installing plexiglass dividers not less than six feet high between operating VLT positions.
- At a minimum, every other VLT shall be disabled, and chairs must be removed from disabled machines.

Table game operations

- For Blackjack-style tables, casinos must install plexiglass dividers which extend at least 31 inches from the top of the playing surface and separate the dealer from the player(s). Dividers between player positions are also required.
- No more than three player positions may be available at each Blackjack-style table, and chairs for unavailable positions must be removed.
- If two table games do not allow for six feet of distance between seated players at their respective tables, the chairs at those two tables shall either be removed or repositioned in such a way as to allow for a minimum of six feet of distance between the non-compliant seating positions. Otherwise, if permitted by the Rhode Island Lottery, the casino must install a plexiglass divider, at least six feet tall, between the two table games.
- No craps or poker will be allowed, until further notice.

Enhanced cleaning and/or disinfecting procedures

- Casino staff will disinfect operating slot machines and chairs as frequently as possible between players and at regular intervals, at least every four hours.
- Casino operators shall make sanitizing wipes (if available through the operators' best procurement efforts) readily and easily available for guests wishing to wipe down the slot machine and chair before use or shall create prominent signage informing guests that they may ask for casino staff to do so.
- Casino operators will maintain a log of VLT cleaning.

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- Guests shall be encouraged to use hand sanitizer prior to start of play.
- Casinos shall develop protocol for disinfecting betting chips and the disinfection replacement of cards and other gambling paraphernalia (dice, etc.) between uses.
- Restrooms shall be cleaned and disinfected at least every two hours, and a log of cleaning times shall be maintained.

Food and beverage services

- Casino restaurants and food courts will limit food service and consumption in accordance with [RIDOH restaurant regulations](#).
- Casino bars will reopen, and guests will be able to place orders when seated at physically distanced tables in proximity to the bar. Walk-up service is not allowed at the bar. Sitting and/or congregating at the bar is prohibited. Guests will only be served by a bartender or waitstaff when seated in approved seating areas. Guests may remove their mask to consume beverages and food on premises, and all beverages will be served with a straw.
- Live entertainment will not be allowed during Phase III.

Casino screening procedures

Casinos must screen employees and guests for self-reported symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and other COVID-19 risk factors upon entering the building.

- Screenings can be conducted verbally, by app, by phone, or by another method of the casino's choosing including, if necessary, the posting of an informational poster that communicates the screening requirements, as permitted by Rhode Island Lottery.
- Entry can be denied to people with [COVID-19 symptoms if the symptoms cannot be explained by allergies or another non-infectious cause](#), as listed by the CDC.
- In the event that an employee is identified, pursuant to screening or otherwise, as having acute respiratory illness symptoms or is positive for any other COVID-19 risk factors, or is currently directed to be in quarantine or isolation, the casino must send the employee home and take any additional necessary and appropriate action, in accordance with applicable laws and current RIDOH guidance and regulations.

Temperature checks

Casinos will also supplement screening questions with temperature checks.

- For casino employees, a thermal imaging camera system or temporal thermometer will be utilized at all employee entrances with a queuing system to enable physical distancing during arrival for the work shift.
- Employees who have a temperature of 100.4° F or higher, on two consecutive tests, shall be prohibited from entering the facility.
- For casino guests, a thermal imaging camera system will be utilized at all guest entrances with a queuing system to enable physical distancing at entry. Guests who have a temperature of 100.4° F or higher, on two consecutive tests, shall be prohibited from entering the facility.

Procedures to respond to cases of illness in the workplace

To assist in contact tracing efforts, casinos will collect the following information about all employees and licensed vendors entering the facilities:

- Full name

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- Phone number
- Date and time(s) on site
- DBR license number

Likewise, casinos will collect and retain, for 30 days, the following information about all guests entering the facilities:

- Full name
- Address
- Date and time(s) on site

The personal information above will be used solely in the event RIDOH requires assistance with contact tracing. After 30 days, all records containing such personal information shall be destroyed.

Access to cleaning materials and hand hygiene

Casinos must provide employees with cleaning/disinfecting wipes and/or cleaning materials so that commonly used surfaces can be disinfected (for example, workstation or a cash register).

- Disinfecting products approved by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are preferred.
- Any cleaning product permitted by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is acceptable.

IV. Human resources

Guidance to minimize spread of COVID-19 among employees

Each casino will have a minimum of one representative per facility appointed to work with RIDOH on testing employees, contact tracing, case investigation, isolation and quarantine, and any other follow-up related to outbreak containment.

Casinos will also adopt workforce management practices for staff to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among employees including:

- Organizing work assignments to decrease the amount of employee-to-employee interactions;
- Staggering employee break schedules and shift times (if possible) to avoid congregating in back-of-the-house areas;
- Establishing protocols to maintain physical distancing of employees in employee dining areas, uniform control areas, shared office spaces, and other high-density areas;
- Providing employees with proper training on COVID-19 safety measures, such as how to wear and take off face coverings safely, proper hand-washing, etc; and
- Communicating information and instructions to employees to ensure compliance with all COVID-19 safety measures and requirements.