

May 10, 2020
Revised FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)
Based on revised Ordinance effective 05/08/2020

1. When does the order take effect?

The original emergency ordinance began on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The entire emergency ordinance, as amended, is in effect until midnight on June 1st, 2020.

This addendum goes into effect on Friday May 8th, 2020 that refines the ordinance as Block Island moves much closer to the state COVID 19 regulations.

2. What is the big picture regarding the COVID 19 regulations on Block Island

On Friday May 8th, 2020 the Town Council voted unanimously to align with the state of Rhode Island COVID 19 regulations with ONE major exception – off island workers coming to Block Island to work must register with the Town of New Shoreham by contacting the Town Manager designee.

Everyone MUST:

- Maintain social distancing (6 ft)
- Wear a mask (cloth or better) when near other people. One does not need to wear a mask when walking on the beach or nature trails but a mask should be worn if you are in proximity of others.
- Wash your hands frequently
- Clean surfaces
- Follow the state of Rhode Island COVID 19 regulations

The Town Council strongly requests that all residents, visitors and businesses on Block Island do their best to keep the island safe and healthy for everyone. This means that we all need to live by a social contract to help each other. This is not just about one person but about everyone.

Please follow the CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines. To learn more about the state regulations, please visit www.reopeningri.com to learn more.

3. Are Block Island Residents required to “Stay at Home”?

Officially the “Shelter-in-Place” Order was lifted by the governor but everyone is encouraged to stay at home and maintain social distancing and the CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines must be followed.

4. Do visitors coming to Block Island have to Quarantine?

Yes – if you are coming from out of state! The state of Rhode Island has a 14-day quarantine on all visitors coming into the state. This quarantine can be conducted on Block Island.

"Self-Quarantine" means that you must proceed from the ferry or airport directly to your residence without making any stops, remain at your residence except for medical care or emergencies, have food and other necessities delivered, and monitor yourself for symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. You may leave Block Island at any time directly going to the airport or ferry. If you are under quarantine you may leave Block Island at any time by driving directly to the airport or ferry. If you return to Block Island the 14-day quarantine clock begins again.

If you are coming from Rhode Island and have already quarantined in the state for 14 days, then you do NOT need to quarantine when coming to Block Island.

5. Do workers coming to Block Island need to quarantine?

Workers coming to Block Island must go from the ferry to their place of work and back. If they are from out of state and need to spend the night on Block Island, then they must quarantine once they leave work. This means they must go from their place of work to their on-island accommodations and quarantine there. They cannot go out. Food or other essentials must be brought to them as needed.

6. Do on-island workers need to register to work

No. The registration process for island workers has been lifted as the shelter-in-place and island quarantine was finished

7. I have a large boat and am planning to come to Block Island, anything I should know?

The Harbors Department is following the Rhode Island State regulations and RIDEM guidelines. These can be found at <https://www.dem.ri.gov>

Marina facilities are limited to seasonal slip holders only. The use of marina facilities by transient and out of state vessels is prohibited per order of the governor and DEM, but a vessel may get fuel or water. Please be sure to contact your marina before you come over.

Out of state vessels still need to self-quarantine for 14 days. Out of state vessels must register with the Department of Health and can follow the link: <https://health.ri.gov/covid>.

The emergency and town moorings will be installed over the next few weeks for those vessels that do not want to anchor. Rafting will not be permitted on moorings for now. We have pump-out service in New Harbor.

Adhere to social distancing guidelines and protocols.

For any vessels arriving to Block Island, please contact the Harbormaster on VHF CH 12.

8. How many people can be in a gathering or group?

Please follow the state of Rhode Island regulations. Currently only 5 people can be in a gathering at least through May 22nd. Social distancing and masks are still required for everyone.

9. How many workers or people can be on a job site or parcel of land

The State of Rhode Island is regulating social gatherings to 5 people. If there are five workers working on a house that are socially distanced and wearing masks, etc. then that is fine. If two other workers (say lawn mowing or landscaping) are also on the site but far away, that is also fine. The gathering cannot be more than five.

10. Will grocery stores and liquor stores be open?

Yes, grocery stores and liquor stores are essential services will still be operating with restrictions – please check the business to understand accommodations.

11. Is the Block Island Ferry and New England Airlines still operating?

Yes, the ferry service and plane service are operating, but on limited schedules and with precautionary seating. Please check their websites for updated information.

12. Are retail stores open?

Yes. Retail stores can now open as long as they follow the state guidelines.

13. What happens if I don't comply with this order?

You may be putting yourself and others at risk of infection and you could be fined up to \$500 per day and 30 days in jail per offense.

14. What about trash?

The Transfer Station is still open regular hours. Haulers are considered essential and will continue to pick up public garbage and dumpsters. Individuals make take their own trash to the Transfer Station as usual. The Town reminds everyone to use precautions and to practice safe social distancing.

15. Can I still go to church?

Only 5 people are allowed in a gathering so most Houses of Worship on Block Island have stopped gathering in person, however, some of these groups are holding on-line services. Check with the House of Worship for schedules.

16. My neighbors just returned from out of state and they are not self-quarantining. What should I do?

If you are concerned, please call the Block Island Police Department at 401-466-3220.

17. I went off island for 3 hours and I just got home. Do I have to Self-quarantine?

No, you do not need to self-quarantine if you stayed within the state of Rhode Island.

If you go out of state for any length of time visiting people or spending the night, then YES you do need to self-quarantine. Anyone visiting from out of state must self-quarantine for 14 days by order of the Governor.

Please visit the reopeningri.com website if you have questions as this is a pretty tricky topic and is changing based on the Governors directive.