

As mandated by Public Health and Human Services (PHHS) Order No. 2020-03, the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department will be closing all playground equipment, sports courts, fields and other active recreation areas where it could be difficult to maintain recommended social distancing guidelines.

Other closed facilities include golf courses (L.A Nickell and Lake of the Woods), picnic shelters, basketball and tennis courts, ballfields, skate parks, and other active recreation locations. Parks and trails where social distancing can be maintained remain open.

Gatherings of 10 or more people for games, picnics, parties and other events will not be permitted.

Limited number of restrooms within parks will continue to be open to the public, and will be cleaned and sanitized daily. However, it is recommended that all park users bring and use sanitizer for all critical touch points.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has flagged mental health as a top concern associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. We recognize that social distancing may take a toll on our mental health, especially during high-stress and anxiety-producing global public health emergencies. We also know that parks provide a connection to the outdoors and green space as well as opportunities for physical activity which studies demonstrate reduces stress and improves mental health.

“We recognize that with schools being closed and people adapting to new work habits, our parks and open spaces can provide an important break in these stressful times. It is clear, however, that we must continue to be vigilant in these places as well, and make sure all our residents put into practice PHHS directives,” said Mike Griggs, Director of Columbia’s Parks and Recreation Department. “Go for a hike. Take the family for a stroll. Kick a soccer ball around with your kids. But use good sense and avoid gatherings, team sports, pick-up games, and playground equipment. Every single resident should take social distancing guidelines to heart – it could save someone’s life.”

As noted by the National Recreation and Park Association, there are a number of [specific recommendations for practicing safe social distancing when in parks or on trails](#), including:

- Follow CDC’s guidance on personal hygiene prior to heading to parks and trails — wash hands, carry hand sanitizer, do not visit public spaces if you have symptoms, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, etc.
- Observe at all times CDC’s minimum recommended social distancing of six feet from other people. Practice it and know what it looks like. Keep it as you walk, bike or hike.
- While on trails, warn other users of their presence and as they pass, and step aside to let others pass.
- Leave no trace. Deposit trash and recycling materials where appropriate and help us keep our parks and trails clean. Even better, please practice a pack it in, pack it out policy.

Park restrooms that are currently open include:

- Cosmo Park, Lamb Shelter
- Cosmo-Bethel Park
- Albert-Oakland Park restrooms by Shelters #2 & #3
- Stephens Lake Park - Gordon Shelter restroom
- Grindstone Nature Area
- MKT Forum Trailhead
- MKT Scott Trailhead
- Bear Creek Trail/Garth Nature Area
- MU Health Care Pavilion (open only during Farmers Market)

Until restrooms are open, portable toilets are also available at the following locations:

- Cosmo Park Harris Shelter area
- Cosmo Park remote control track
- Cosmo Park Soccer Field 9
- Cosmo Park Antimi sports fields
- Douglass Park parking lot
- A. Perry Philips Park lake dock parking lot
- Stephens Lake Park lower east parking lot
- Bear Creek Trail: Creasy Springs
- MKT Trail: Stadium Trailhead
- Twin Lakes Recreation Area dog park
- Indian Hills Park
- Bonnie View Nature Area
- Strawn Park/Harmony Bends Disc Golf Course