

State of Connecticut
Regulation of
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Concerning
State Park Rules

Sec. 23-4-1. General regulations

(a) Hours of operation.

State parks and state forest recreation areas shall be open for public use daily between sunrise and sunset. State parks shall be open to public vehicular traffic daily between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and sunset, except as otherwise specifically authorized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Other state forest areas shall be open between one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset.

(b) Vandalism and possession of food or beverage inside historic structures.

(1) No person shall deface, destroy, alter, remove or otherwise injure in any manner any structures, buildings, vegetation, earth or rock material, trees, or fuelwood, nor shall any wildlife be molested or disturbed except as authorized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The Commissioner may grant upon written application, permission to collect specimens, take samples and conduct other investigations for scientific or educational purposes. Such permission shall be in writing and shall be subject to such conditions as the Commissioner deems necessary.

(2) No person shall possess food or beverage inside of historic structures unless permitted by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

(c) Hunting/weapons.

Hunting or carrying of firearms, archery equipment or other weapons, including but not limited to air rifles and slingshots, is not permitted in any state park or forest except as authorized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. All carrying or use of weapons is subject to applicable provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and regulations adopted thereunder.

(d) Fishing.

Fishing is permitted in all state parks and forests, except in designated swimming areas and other areas so posted. Fishing where permitted, is allowed from sunrise to sunset unless otherwise posted. All fishing is subject to the provisions of Chapter 490 of the General Statutes and regulations adopted thereunder.

(e) Alcoholic beverages.

(1) The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the following state parks and state forest recreation areas is prohibited:

- (A) Bigelow Hollow State Park;
- (B) Black Rock State Park and campground;
- (C) Burr Pond State Park;
- (D) Eagleville Dam;
- (E) Hopeville Pond State Park and campground;
- (F) Housatonic Meadows State Park and campground;
- (G) Indian Well State Park;
- (H) Kent Falls State Park;
- (I) Kettletown State Park and campground;
- (J) Macedonia Brook State Park and campground;

- (K) Mansfield Hollow State Park;
- (L) Mashamoquet Brook State Park, East Killingly Pond area;
- (M) Miller's Pond State Park;
- (N) Nepaug State Forest;
- (O) Osbornedale State Park;
- (P) Mt. Misery and Green Falls campgrounds in Pachaug State Forest;
- (Q) Scantic River State Park;
- (R) Silver Sands State Park;
- (S) Squantz Pond State Park; and
- (T) Sherwood Island State Park.

(2) For any state park or state forest recreation area not listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the following requirements apply:

(A) The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on state park beaches, state forest recreation area beaches, boardwalks and other areas so posted.

(B) The possession of beer in containers larger than one liter is prohibited.

(C) The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited, unless authorized in writing by the commissioner.

(D) The C[c]ommissioner shall have the authority to temporarily ban, for periods up to a maximum of ninety days, the possession or use of alcohol at specific recreation areas if its possession or consumption is creating public safety issues as determined by the C[c]ommissioner.

(E) The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by a minor on lands under the C[c]ommissioner's control is prohibited.

(f) **Pets and riding animals.**

(1) Pets and riding animals are prohibited in Sherwood Island and Squantz Pond State Parks from April 15 to September 30, inclusive. Except as provided in subdivision (5) of this subsection, riding animals and pets must be on a leash that is no longer than seven (7) feet in length, and must be under the control of their owner or keeper at all times.

(2) Pets and riding animals, including, but not limited to dogs and horses, are prohibited in the following areas of state parks and forests at all times: all buildings, swimming areas and other areas so posted. No person shall allow any pet or riding animal under their control to enter a waterbody in which there is a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection designated swimming area from anywhere on Department of Energy and Environmental Protection property containing that swimming area from April 1 through [October 31] September 30, inclusive.

(3) In state forest campgrounds, no more than two pets shall be allowed per campsite. Pets are prohibited from state park campgrounds.

(4) Trained service animals, required to perform a specific task and for the ongoing treatment of a disability or health condition, are permitted in all areas not closed to the public while accompanied by the person needing their assistance.

(5) This subsection shall not apply to the proper use of dogs while in the act of hunting, training or deployment of certified search and rescue dogs or to Law Enforcement or Department of Energy and Environmental Protection personnel acting in the course of their employment.

(6) Persons bringing pets or riding animals to state recreation picnic areas, athletic fields, man-made structures, paved surfaces, beaches where permitted and campgrounds, with the exception of horse camps, shall remove and properly dispose of pet waste (feces) left by the pet or riding animal under their control.

(g) **Notices and signs.**

No person shall erect, post or distribute any notice or sign upon state park or forest property unless authorized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection manager in charge of such

park or forest property.

(h) Commercial restrictions.

The use of state park or forest lands or any improvements thereon for private gain or commercial purposes is prohibited, except by concessionaires or vendors with written permission of the Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, or by Special Use License issued by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

(i) Meetings and proselytism.

Political meetings and proselytism may be conducted only in areas and at times approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Commissioner's designee. Such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

(j) Littering.

No person shall dispose of any material in a state park or forest, except in receptacles provided for such disposal.

(k) Dumping.

Disposing of any material in a state park or forest which was not accumulated during the use of such facilities is prohibited.

(l) Trails and roads.

(1) Trails are open to non-motorized, multiple use activities unless posted closed. Use of any trail, road or path posted as closed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is prohibited.

(2) Use of Connecticut Blue-Blazed Trails and the National Park Service Appalachian Trail crossing state property shall be limited to hiking except where Department of Energy and Environmental Protection blazed trails supporting other uses coincide.

(3) Public roadways in state parks and forests are open to registered motor vehicles as defined in Section 14-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes and other non-motorized multiple uses unless posted closed.

(4) Service, logging and other roads closed to public use by motor vehicles are open to non-motorized multiple use activities unless posted closed.

(m) Boats.

(1) Boats shall be restricted to areas posted for boating by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and are prohibited in swimming areas.

(2) No person shall fasten a boat to any state park or forest pier or anchor in any launching area so as to prevent free access to the pier or launching area.

(3) Vessels launching from Squantz Pond State Boat Launch are prohibited from using a motor or combination of motors in excess of 25 horse power. Larger motors may be attached to such vessels but the propeller must be removed and the motor inclined out of the water or as high as possible. No motorized vessels may land or offload/unload passengers or equipment on Department of Energy and Environmental Protection owned property outside of the launch area.

(4) Vessels launching from Lake Waramaug State Park are prohibited from using a motor or combination of motors in excess of 12 horse power. Such motor boats may only be launched from the State Park property if they can be carried by no more than two individuals into the water. Prior to launching, all such motor boats shall be inspected for the presence of invasive plant material at the Town of Washington boat ramp.

(n) Gambling.

Gambling in any form on state park or forest property is prohibited.

(o) Disorderly conduct.

Disorderly conduct, public nudity, intoxication, and obscene or indecent behavior are prohibited, and all forms of rough play, or activities or contests creating hazards to persons or property,

including, but not limited to, the use of paintball guns or other similar devices, are prohibited.

(p) Picnicking.

Picnicking is allowed unless otherwise posted by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

(q) Fires.

(1) Fires may be kindled only in grills, stoves, fireplaces or other designated campfire facilities.

(2) No person may kindle or maintain a fire within five (5) feet of any tree, building or shrub, except in those locations where the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has provided fireplaces or grills.

(3) Fire residue shall be properly disposed of in hot coal/ash receptacles, where provided.

(4) Fire residue shall not be disposed of in a manner that may damage property or cause injury to a person.

(5) No fire shall be left unattended.

(r) Athletics.

The playing of baseball, football, soccer, golf or other athletic games is allowed unless otherwise restricted.

(s) Swimming.

(1) Swimming is allowed except where posted as prohibited by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

(2) All persons in swimming areas shall obey the lifeguards.

(3) Swimming hours are from sunrise to sunset.

(4) No person shall swim in long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, a skirt, a dress or other restrictive clothing.

(5) Washing of persons or articles in the waters of swimming areas is prohibited.

(t) Glassware.

The possession or use of glass on the beach or in swimming areas is prohibited.

(u) Fireworks.

The possession or use of all classes of fireworks in any state park or forest is prohibited except as authorized by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection. Such authorization shall be in writing and subject to the applicable provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and regulations adopted thereunder and such conditions as the Commissioner deems necessary.

(v) Swimming aids.

(1) Inflatable or buoyant devices (including, but not limited to, inner tubes, ring buoys, balls, air mattresses and rafts) are prohibited in those areas at state swimming areas that are protected by on-duty lifeguards, except for U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices when worn by swimmers. The use of U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices may be required in certain areas as determined to be appropriate by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. These areas shall be designated by the posting of conspicuous signs notifying individuals of the required use of the U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices.

(2) Snorkels are prohibited in guarded swimming areas.

(3) Goggles, facemasks and flippers are permitted in swimming areas.

(w) Under-water fishing devices.

Under-water fishing devices are prohibited in designated swimming areas.

(x) Noise.

No person shall cause or allow any noise which infringes on the ability of others to enjoy state park or forest property, except as authorized by the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Commissioner's designee.

(y) Avoidance of fees.

The avoidance of fees established in accordance with Section 23-26 of the Connecticut General Statutes at the various state parks and forests is prohibited.

(z) Buildings and structures.

(1) No person shall use any building or structure for any purpose other than that for which it is designated.

(2) No person may attach any electrical extension cord to any electrical receptacle unless authorized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection manager in charge.

(aa) Public water facilities.

(1) The use of public drinking water facilities for the purpose of washing is prohibited.

(2) No person shall attach any item to a faucet without prior approval of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection manager in charge.

(bb) Losses or theft.

The state assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of any article in any state park or forest.

(cc) Tents.

(1) Full coverage tents are not permitted in day-use areas, including, but not limited to, beaches, parking lots and picnic areas.

(2) Rigid frame (event-type) tents are not permitted to be erected on state park or forest property except as authorized in writing by the Commissioner of Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Commissioner's designee.

(dd) Closure of parks, forests and access areas for public health and safety reasons

(1) Lands under the control of the Commissioner, including, but not limited to State Parks, Forests and Boating Access areas may be closed to additional visitors or vehicular traffic when designated parking areas have reached capacity or when the number of park, forest or access area visitors exceed the capability of public safety or park staff or park sanitary facilities to safely or effectively provide services to protect the health and safety of additional persons.

(2) Lands under the control of the Commissioner, including, but not limited to State Parks, Forests and Boating Access areas may be closed to all persons in the event of severe weather conditions.

(3) Upon being notified by authorized personnel or official signs indicating that an area is closed, no person shall enter such area that has been closed in accordance with this regulation.

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These regulations propose a number of changes to the rules of operation of Connecticut State Parks. These regulations include a prohibition on the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages at Burr Pond and Scantic River State Parks and Nepaug State Forest. The regulations propose to change the date annually after which dogs and other pets are allowed on State Park beaches and swim areas from October 31, to September 30. They include provisions related to launching and inspection requirements of vessels at Lake Waramaug State Park. The regulations create the ability for staff at a Park to prohibit entry of new vehicles and visitors when a Park reaches capacity or during severe weather events. These regulations also update the name of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.