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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Issues Further Public Health Guidance to Mitigate Spread of COVID-19, Expands First Responder Testing Sites to Include Grocery Store Workers and Authorizes Increased National Guard Activation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

4/10/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Department of Public Health

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

MEDIA CONTACT

Sarah Finlaw, Press Secretary, Governor's Office

Phone

(617) 725-4025 (tel:6177254025)

Online

gov.press@state.ma.us (mailto:gov.press@state.ma.us)

BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration issued further public health guidance, expanded resources for critical workers and increased Massachusetts National Guard activation to support its ongoing response to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

A new Department of Public Health advisory, consistent with CDC guidance, recommends that all residents wear a mask or face covering in public when social distancing is not possible. In addition, the Executive Branch issued similar guidance to state employees recommending when masks or face coverings should be utilized while working.

The administration has also expanded access to the free priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders located at Gillette Stadium and the Big E fairgrounds to include grocery store workers.

Additionally, Governor Charlie Baker authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 more military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard.

Face Coverings and Cloth Masks Advisory: The Baker-Polito Administration today issued guidance to residents and Executive Branch employees recommending the use of a face covering or cloth mask when in situations where maintaining proper social distancing measures are not possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as in a grocery store.

A face covering may include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including a mask, scarf or bandana. Health care masks, such as N95 masks, should not be used and should be preserved for health care workers and first responders. Cloth masks should not be worn by young children under the age of two, persons with difficulty breathing, or those who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Instructions on how to make a cloth mask are available from the CDC **here** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html).

Read the guidance here. (/news/advisory-regarding-face-coverings-and-cloth-masks)

Grocery Store Worker Priority Testing: The Baker-Polito Administration and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security today expanded access to the free, priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders to now include grocery store and supermarket workers. Beginning Saturday, April 11, the men and women who provide critical access to food and other necessities may schedule an appointment to receive COVID-19 testing at the sites located at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro and the Big E fairgrounds in West Springfield.

All appointments must be made in advance by the worker's supervisor or manager, and personnel do not need to be symptomatic to be eligible.

Massachusetts National Guard Activation: Today, the Baker-Polito Administration authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard to support the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response. This order raises the total authorization to up to 5,000 members statewide, who may be tasked with supporting requests from state agencies for equipment, logistics, warehousing and related duties. Local cities, towns and state agencies should submit requests for support through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The activation reflects Governor Baker's statutory authority to activate the Massachusetts National Guard under state active duty to provide necessary assistance to state and municipal civilian authorities.

The Baker-Polito Administration will continue to update the public on developments related to COVID-19. Residents can visit **www.mass.gov/covid19** (/covid19) for the latest information, call 2-1-1 with questions, and text "COVIDMA" to 888-777 to subscribe to text-alert updates.

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and members of their administration are committed to making Massachusetts the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

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The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is the largest secretariat in state government and is comprised of 12 agencies, in addition to 2 soldiers' homes and the MassHealth program. Our efforts are focused on the health, resilience, and independence of the one in four residents of the Commonwealth we serve. Our public health programs touch every community in the Commonwealth.

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