EMERGENCY ALERTS

Coronavirus Update

Stay informed about COVID-19: Latest on cases, guidance, regulations *Jul. 3rd, 2020, 9:00 am*

Read more

Reopening Massachusetts - Learn more about the phased approach *Jul. 2nd, 2020, 12:00 pm*

Read more

HIDE ALERTS

Mass.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Reopening Massachusetts: Baker-Polito Administration Initiates Transition to First Phase of Four-Phase Approach

Public health data, key metrics established to track real-time progress, determine advancement to future phases while mandatory workplace safety standards, sector-specific guidance issued to all Phase 1 industries, businesses, customers and activities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

5/18/2020

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

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

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 released *Reopening Massachusetts,* the Reopening Advisory Board's **report** (/doc/reopening-massachusetts), which details a four-phased strategy to responsibly reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19. The Administration also released a new "Safer At Home" Advisory, which instructs residents to stay at home unless engaging with newly opened activities, as a way

to continue limiting the spread of COVID-19. Starting today, based on current public health data and trends, Massachusetts will begin Phase 1 of a cautious reopening, and workplaces that are permitted to open are required to follow new safety protocols and guidance.

Learn more about the reopening process: **www.mass.gov/reopening** (/info-details/reopening-massachusetts)

VIEW THE FULL REPORT (/doc/reopening-massachusetts)

VIEW GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES (/info-details/reopening-massachusetts#sector-specific-protocols-and-best-practices-)

Detailed in *Reopening Massachusetts,* each phase of the reopening will be guided by public health data and key indicators that will be continually monitored for progress and will be used to determine advancement to future phases. Industries, sectors, and activities that present less risk will open in earlier phases. Those that present more risk will open in later phases.

The 17-member Reopening Advisory Board, co-chaired by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, consists of public health experts, municipal leaders and members of the business community representing many facets of the Massachusetts economy. Since its formation on April 28, the Board met with a total of 75 stakeholder groups ranging from industry associations, regional chambers of commerce, community coalitions, and labor organizations, representing over 112,000 different businesses and more than two million workers across the Commonwealth. The Reopening Advisory Board also considered written comments from over 4,500 employers, organizations, and individuals in the development of its plan.

Safer at Home Advisory:

Effective today, the Department of Public Health also updated the Stay at Home Advisory, replacing it with a new, "Safer at Home" Advisory. The new Safer at Home Advisory instructs everyone to stay home unless they are headed to a newly opened facility or activity. It also advises those over the age of 65 and those with underlying health

conditions to stay home with the exception of trips required for health care, groceries, or that are otherwise absolutely necessary. All residents must continue to wear a face covering in public when social distancing is not possible, and individuals are advised to wash their hands frequently and be vigilant in monitoring for symptoms. Restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people remain in effect.

Public Health Metrics:

Key public health metrics will determine if and when it is appropriate to proceed through reopening phases. They include:

- COVID-19 positive test rate;
- Number of individuals who died from COVID-19;
- Number of patients with COVID-19 in hospitals;
- Health care system readiness;
- Testing capacity;
- Contact tracing capabilities.

Phase 1 Reopening:

Based on the public health metrics, manufacturing facilities and construction sites will open effective today with applicable guidelines.

Places of worship will be able to open with guidelines that require social distancing and encourage services to be held outdoors.

Hospitals and community health centers that attest to specific public health and safety standards can begin to provide high priority preventative care, pediatric care and treatment for high risk patients.

Under a staggered approach, additional Phase 1 sectors of the economy will be permitted to open effective May 25 including:

- Lab space;

- Office space;
- Limited personal services, including: hair salons, pet grooming, car washes;
- Retail: remote fulfillment and curbside pick-up;

Also permitted to open on May 25 with applicable guidelines, are the following:

- Beaches;
- Parks;
- Drive-in movie theaters;
- Select athletic fields and courts;
- Many outdoor adventure activities;
- Most fishing, hunting, and boating;
- Outdoor gardens, zoos, reserves, and public installations.

Additional sectors expected to open on June 1 as part of Phase 1 include office spaces in the city of Boston with applicable guidelines.

Reopening Massachusetts In Phases:

The goal of this phased reopening plan is to methodically allow businesses, services, and activities to resume, while avoiding a resurgence of COVID-19 that could overwhelm the state's health care system and erase the progress made so far.

- Each phase will last a minimum of three weeks and could last longer before moving to the next phase;
- If public health data trends are negative, specific industries, regions, and/or the entire Commonwealth may need to return to an earlier phase;
- The Commonwealth will partner with industries to draft sector-specific protocols in advance of future phases (example: restaurant-specific protocols will be drafted in advance of Phase 2);
- If we all work together to defeat COVID-19, we can proceed through each phase.

Success in earlier phases will refine criteria for future phases including travel, sizes of gatherings, as well as additional retail openings, lodging and accommodations, arts, entertainment, fitness centers, museums, restaurants, youth sports, and other activities.

Industry-Specific Guidance:

Businesses are not required to reopen, and may not do so if they are unable to follow safety protocols. The Baker-Polito Administration has developed specific guidance so that each industry reopens as safely as possible. Businesses are expected to implement these protocols in addition to the more general Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards.

As of May 18, materials for the sectors eligible to open in the first phase of reopening are included on the mass.gov/reopening website. Guidance for sectors opening in later phases will be posted online in advance of those phases.

In order to reopen, businesses **must** develop a written COVID-19 Control Plan outlining how its workplace will prevent the spread of COVID-19. Required materials are located on mass.gov/reopening, and include detailed sector-specific circulars and checklists to facilitate compliance.

Self-Certification for Businesses:

Required materials for businesses to self-certify are located on mass.gov/reopening, and include:

- COVID-19 Control Plan template, which must be retained on premises and provided in the event of an inspection;
- Compliance Attestation poster to be posted in a location visible to employees and visitors indicating a completed COVID-19 Control Plan; and,
- Other posters and signs describing rules for maintaining social distancing, hygiene protocols, as well as cleaning and disinfecting.

Businesses operating to provide Essential Services, as defined in the Governor's March 23, 2020 Executive Order, updated on March 31, April 28, and May 15, may remain open and

have until May 25, 2020 to comply with the general workplace safety standards, as well as their industry's sector-specific protocols.

Health Care:

Effective May 18, hospitals and community health centers who attest to meeting specific capacity criteria and public health/safety standards will be allowed to resume a limited set of in-person preventative, diagnostic and treatment services.

Effective May 25, other health care providers who attest to meeting these standards may resume limited in-person services.

Services that may be performed are limited, based on the provider's clinical judgment to high-priority preventative services, including pediatric care, immunizations, and chronic disease care for high-risk patients, and urgent procedures that cannot be delivered remotely and would lead to high risk or significant worsening of the patient's condition if deferred.

In order for the phased in hospital expansion and non-hospital reopening, the following statewide metrics must be met:

- 30 percent of hospital ICU beds (including staffed surge capacity) must be available;
- 30 percent of total hospital beds (including staffed surge capacity) must be available.

As a precursor, health care providers must meet the following requirements to reopen or expand services, which include:

- Attesting to public health standards and specific guidelines;
- Ensuring adequate personal protective equipment is on hand, reliable supply chain and other supplies and policies in place;
- Infection control readiness (workflow, cleaning, social distancing, etc.);
- Workforce and patient screening and testing protocols; and,
- Hospitals must have ≥ 25 percent ICU and total bed capacity and reopen pediatric ICU and psychiatric beds if they had been repurposed for surge capacity.

Child Care:

The Commonwealth's mission in reopening is to increase access to child care and youth programs while continuing to protect children and staff and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Child care and summer recreation camps will reopen in a phased approach. The Departments of Early Education and Care and Public Health are developing guidelines that balance families' need for child care with health and safety. The initial reopening plan will focus on families who have no safe alternative to group care by increasing emergency child care capacity. EEC will also partner with industries returning to work to develop options specific to their workplaces.

In March, the Baker-Polito Administration stood up an emergency child care system to support children of essential workers and vulnerable families with extra virus mitigation protocols. During Phase 1, the emergency child care system we have already in place will be utilized to meet the needs of people with no alternatives for care. Currently, only 35% of the 10,000 child emergency child care capacity is occupied and the system has the ability to serve more families to provide care options as more sectors come back online.

Transit:

The MBTA has been and will continue to implement measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 across the system to keep employees and riders safer.

While public transportation unavoidably creates some risk of transmission, working together the MBTA, riders and employers can significantly reduce that risk:

- Riders are required to wear face coverings and must make efforts to distance. Riders are asked to avoid riding transit if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19;
- Employers are encouraged to stagger schedules and implement work from home policies to reduce demand, especially during rush hours;
- The MBTA will continue to take protective and preventative measures such as frequently disinfecting and cleaning vehicles and stations and providing protective supplies to workers.

To mitigate risk while providing appropriate levels of service, the MBTA will:

- Support the transit needs of essential workers and those returning to the workplace in Phase 1 while continuing with limited service to maximize employee and rider safety;
- Ramp up to a modified version of full service by Phase 3, although social distancing efforts will limit effective capacity on vehicles even after full service schedules are restored;
- Actively communicate public health guidance and schedule adjustments in-station, online, and over social media.

Supplies:

In order to operate, all Massachusetts businesses will need to meet the Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards and relevant Sector-Specific Protocols published by the state. To support businesses, the state has developed a guide to educate business owners on what supplies are needed to return to workplaces, and a portal to connect businesses with manufacturers and distributors. These are now available to business owners via mass.gov/reopening.

In order to operate, all Massachusetts businesses will need to meet the Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards and relevant Sector-Specific Protocols published by the state.

The state has developed a guide to educate business owners on what supplies are needed to return to workplaces, and a portal to connect businesses with manufacturers and distributors.

Educational materials will be provided to define how an employer should prepare their work spaces to reopen and what products are appropriate for employees to protect themselves at work.

While face coverings are critical, medical grade face coverings are not necessary for non-health care workers.

Schools and Higher Education:

As previously announced, Massachusetts' K-12 school buildings will remain closed through the end of the 2019-20 school year, with remote teaching and learning in place.

Schools will continue offering essential non-educational services to their communities. Plans are being made for the summer learning programs and 2020-21 school year, and will be shared with the public in the weeks to come.

Massachusetts' diverse higher education institutions continue to foster teaching, learning, student support, and essential research remotely throughout this time.

They are working together and in partnership with the state to ensure a safe and gradual return to campus life. In the upcoming weeks, institutions will develop customized reopening plans with safety of their communities in mind.

###

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)

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

(/orgs/office-of-the-governor)

Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and the Baker-Polito Administration are working to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and

keep Massachusetts residents safe and healthy.

More (/orgs/office-of-the-governor)

Governor's Press Office (/orgs/governors-press-office)

Visit the Governor's Press Office to learn about recent news from the administration, follow our happenings on social media, and for media contact information.

More (/orgs/governors-press-office)

---

150 YEARS
OF ADVANCING
PUBLIC
HEALTH

Department of Public Health (/orgs/department-of-public-health)

DPH promotes the health and well-being of all residents by ensuring access to high-quality public health and healthcare services, and by focusing on prevention, wellness, and health equity in all people.

More (/orgs/department-of-public-health)

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (/orgs/executive-office-of-health-and-human-services)

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.

More (/orgs/executive-office-of-health-and-human-services)

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (/orgs/executive-office-of-housing-and-economic-development)

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development promotes vibrant communities, growing businesses, and a strong middle class.

More (/orgs/executive-office-of-housing-and-economic-development)

RELATED

NEWS

Press Releases Related to COVID-19 (/news/press-releases-related-to-covid-19)

3/18/2020 | *Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency*

Press Releases Related to COVID-19 (/lists/press-releases-related-to-covid-19)

Did you find what you were looking for on this webpage?

◯ Yes ◯ No

SEND FEEDBACK