

Thursday, March 19, 2020

COVID-19 Response Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency to support the Commonwealth's response to coronavirus. On March 14, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the creation of a new COVID-19 Response Command Center. Secretary Marylou Sudders is leading the cross-secretariat response to the outbreak.

The Command Center is the Commonwealth's single point of strategic decision making and coordination for the Administration's comprehensive COVID-19 response.

In support of the Command Center, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Framingham has activated to Level 2 (Partial Activation). In addition, MEMA's Regional EOCs in Tewksbury, New Bedford, and Agawam have also been partially activated to support local communities. Representatives from the following agencies and organizations were present in the SEOC today: American Red Cross, Dept. of Environmental Protection, Dept. of Fire Services, FEMA, InfraGard, MA Dept. of Public Health, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, MA National Guard, MA Office on Disability, MA State Police, MassDOT/MBTA, Northwest Incident Management Team, and Salvation Army.

Important protective measures to be aware of:

- [Gatherings of over 25 people are prohibited](#) until April 6th.
- On-premises consumption of food and drink at bars and restaurants is prohibited until April 6th.
- Elementary and Secondary Schools are closed until April 6th.
- Colleges and universities, both public and private, are urged to reduce the need for students to be on campus.
- Employers are encouraged to support alternative work arrangements, including allowing employees to work from home.
- Some government offices are closed, you should check the website or call ahead, to confirm hours of operation.
- MBTA trains and buses are running a [reduced service schedule](#).
- Public & Private daycare providers will be closed effective March 23, and Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs will be established to provide priority access for families of emergency personnel, medical staff, and others critical to confronting COVID-19.
- Professional Licenses for individuals in good standing will be extended for 90-days after the end of the public health emergency.

See a list of all [Public Health Orders & Guidance](#) Issued During the State of Emergency



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts *current as of 3/19*
328 Total Cases

2,208 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory

924 additional tests performed to date by commercial laboratories

United States *current as of 3/19*

Total Cases Reported to CDC*:

** Includes Confirmed & Presumptive Positive*

10,442 Total Cases (+6,216)

290 Travel-Related (+21)

310 Close Contact (+34)

9,842 Under Investigation (+3,349)

150 Deaths (+53)

54 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

If you go out:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

State Actions Today

Governor Activates the National Guard:

- Governor Charlie Baker today activated the Massachusetts National Guard to support the Commonwealth's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, representing a significant addition of supply chain resources available to the Commonwealth and its residents.
- The Governor's order authorizes activation of up to 2,000 National Guard members across the Commonwealth, who will 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. ([News Release](#))

Adding Testing Capacity in MA:

- Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and Secretary Sudders toured a Quest Diagnostics laboratory in Marlborough today. Quest announced today that they are ramping up their COVID-19 testing capacity at the facility.
- The state's initial goal is to increase testing capacity to 3,500 tests each day. This capacity depends on other factors, such as the accessibility of testing materials in a timely manner. The department expects a significant increase in testing capacity soon due to the efforts of private labs, academic/clinical labs, and the State Lab in Massachusetts.

Small Business Administration Approves Massachusetts Disaster Declaration:

- The Baker-Polito Administration **announced** on March 18, 2020, that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved the Commonwealth's disaster declaration, and will offer low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to Massachusetts small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The disaster declaration makes **SBA assistance available in the entire state of Massachusetts**; and the contiguous counties in neighboring states.
- Small businesses, private non-profit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives, and small aquaculture enterprises that have been financially impacted as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) since Jan. 31, 2020, may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred. Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.
- Any interested business needs to [apply directly to the SBA](#).
- The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is **Dec. 18, 2020**.

First Responder Public Health Order:

- DPH issued an order requiring local boards of health to share critical COVID-19 information with first responders. (See all [Orders & Guidance issued](#) during the State of Emergency.)

Federal Actions Today

Department of State - Change in Passport Service Center Operations:

Due to public health measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, effective March 20, 2020, we are only able to offer service for customers with a qualified life-or-death emergency and who need a passport for immediate international travel within 72 hours.

Life-or-death emergencies are serious illnesses, injuries, or deaths in your immediate family (e.g. parent, sibling, aunt, uncle, etc.) that require you to travel outside the United States within 72 hours (3 days). You must provide:

- A passport application with supporting documents
- Proof of the life-or-death emergency such as a death certificate, a statement from a mortuary, or a signed letter from a hospital or medical professional. Documents should be translated or in English.
- Proof of international travel (e.g. reservation, ticket, itinerary).

Click [here](#) for more information.

Stay Informed

Key Public Health Messages for All Residents:

- Protect yourself by following public health advice about keeping your hands clean and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Protect others who are most at risk of COVID-19 by keeping your distance from people (at least 6 feet away from others), especially those who are older, and people living with chronic health conditions.
- If you are outside, avoid crowds.
- Don't shake hands or hug.
- Stay connected to friends and loved ones by phone or through other technology.
- Get information from trusted sources. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid19> for the latest news, case counts, and lab testing results.
- Take care of your emotional health and help others do the same. If you need emotional support during these stressful times, call 2-1-1 and choose the "CALL2TALK" option

Communications Resources:

New [Social Distancing](#) infographic released on website.

- DPH working on an infographic focusing on behavioral health.

COVID-2019 infographic for posting in all public places: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/stop-the-spread-of-germs-respiratory-diseases-like-flu-and-covid-19/download>

A short video for social media, waiting rooms, and other locations: <https://youtu.be/HhUpkGxyjS4>

Social media – follow and retweet DPH on Twitter @MassDPH, updated several times per day.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
DAILY SITUATION REPORT

Massachusetts 2-1-1 -Massachusetts residents are urged to use 2-1-1 for information, resources, and referrals regarding COVID-19. Operators are staffing this hotline 24/7 and translators are available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone or use the live chat option on the [Mass 2-1-1 website](#).

- 2-1-1 answered 1,498 calls on 3/18, bringing the total number of calls to **8,413** since activation (as of 9PM on 3/18). As of 9AM, on 3/19, the total calls increased to 8,811 (398 calls received from 9PM to 9AM). The 2-1-1 website COVID-19 page has had nearly 14,000 hits since going live a week ago.

Website stats (for www.mass.gov/covid19 homepage):

- Total visits since publication: 2,824,495