

B.C.B.O.H.A.

BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION

The following document is an abridged version of a memo issued to members of the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association. The **Sandisfield Board of Health** is a member of this organization and has permission to reprint information that is of interest to the public.

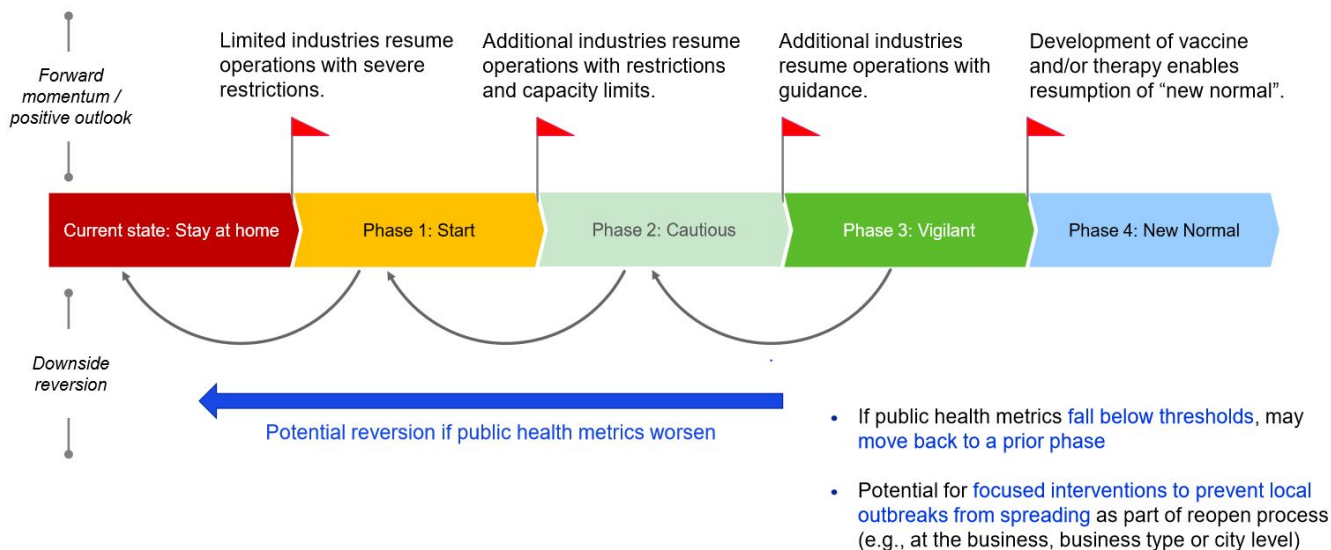
Four-Phase Approach to Reopening Massachusetts

The Baker Administration announced a four-phase approach to reopening non-essential businesses, services and activities and published mandatory workplace safety standards on May 11th. The new workplace standards published by the administration will apply to all workplaces when phased reopening begins. The goal of the phased opening, which will depend greatly on the most current public health guidance, is to methodically allow certain businesses, services, and activities to resume, while protecting the public's health, and limiting the resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

- More information on the Four-Phase plan can be found [here](#).
- More information on mandatory safety standards can be found [here](#).



Four-Phase Approach to Reopening Massachusetts



Updates to Testing Eligibility for COVID-19

The DPH released new guidance that expands testing recommendations for individuals eligible for COVID-19 testing and in particular, for individuals who are close contacts of COVID cases. The DPH recommends that all individuals in Massachusetts identified as a close contact by a Local BOH, the MA DPH, the Community Tracing Collaborative, or a healthcare provider should be tested. A close contact is defined as a person who has been within less than 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting room area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset. Close contact can also occur if an individual has direct contact with infectious

secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended PPE. The DPH has also updated the list of COVID-19 testing sites.

- Information on expanded testing guidelines, as well as the most up-to-date list of COVID-19 testing sites can be found [here](#).

According to the Governor's announcement on May 14, the state expects to be able to test 45,000 people per day by the end of July and 75,000 a day by the end of December, with the goal of decreasing the positivity rate to below 5%.

Masks and Face Coverings Order

Effective May 6, 2020, any person over the age of 2 years, in any place open to the public in Massachusetts, whether indoors or outdoors, and who is not able or does not otherwise maintain a distance of six feet from all others, shall be required to cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering. Those who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition are exempted and are not required to show proof of their medical condition. The order pertains to all customers and workers in essential businesses and other organizations open to the public, including grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail stores, as well as in taxis, mass transit and other transportation, including in waiting areas or transit stops. Businesses may exclude customers or workers who refuse to follow this order. People are discouraged from wearing medical grade masks as those should be reserved for medical personnel and first responders. Additional information and resources may be found [HERE](#). Joint guidance issued by the MA Office of the Attorney General and the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association on the order is attached and may be shared with your first responders and other municipal officials.

Reopening Advisory Board

On April 28, 2020 the Baker Administration extended the essential services emergency order, the Stay at Home Advisory and all other guidance, including limitations on gatherings of 10 or more people until May 18th. Governor Baker also announced the formation of the Reopening Advisory Board, which is charged with advising the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases based on health and safety metrics. Comments from the public are welcome and can be submitted [HERE](#). A report will be produced by May 18th that will include DPH workplace safety standards, industry frameworks and customer protocols and guidelines, including enforcement mechanisms and coordination with municipal leaders. The Administration emphasizes that while the report will be completed by May 18th, public health data and guidance from health care experts will dictate the timeline of the re-opening process.

Farmers Market Orders

The DPH Commissioner has released a set of 17 orders for the operation of farmers markets across the Commonwealth. The orders provide guidance related to numbers of customers within the market at one time, social distancing protocols, signage, enforcement, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, bagging of produce, and more. In addition, market managers, staff, and vendors MUST use face coverings or masks and disposable gloves at all times during market operations. The order can be found [HERE](#).

Extension of School and Non-Emergency Childcare Facility Closures

The Baker Administration announced on April 21, 2020 that the closure of all public and private schools in the Commonwealth will be extended through the end of the school year; also, closure of all non-emergency childcare programs is extended until June 29, 2020. Emergency Child Care programs approved by the Department of Early Education and Care (ECC) will continue operating. In addition,

ECC and Care.com have partnered to assist currently unemployed childcare workers and families to provide skilled in-home care.

Grocery Store Guidance

Further guidance on the operation of grocery stores was provided by the Department of Public Health and Baker Administration on April 7, 2020 to reduce the exposure of shoppers and employees to COVID-19. The full order can be found [HERE](#).

Hotel/Motel and Short-Term Rental Guidance

The Department of Public Health released new guidance on March 31, 2020 regarding the operation of hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, and other short-term residential rentals. The guidance states that hotels, motels, and short-term rentals may only be used for efforts related to fighting COVID-19, such as housing front line health care workers or individuals, or for Massachusetts residents who have been otherwise displaced from their residences. All other rentals are banned. Guidance can be found [HERE](#).

Public Health Advisory

On March 24, 2020 the MA Department of Public Health issued a public health advisory strongly urging those who are 70 years and older and those with underlying health conditions to stay-at-home with the exception of essential trips for food, medicine, and focused time for exercise and fresh air. Those not providing essential services are also strongly advised to stay at home at this time to help protect those who are providing essential services. The DPH also urges keeping at least six feet between individuals who do not live in the same household at all times. Grocery stores and pharmacies must provide at least one hour per day for shoppers 60 years of age and older. Additionally, these establishments must include strategies to reduce COVID-19 exposure to their employees, including access to handwashing facilities, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, disinfecting wipes, and procedures to ensure both employees and customers remain at least six feet apart at all times. Employees who are sick should not report to work and if they do come to work they must be sent home. The full advisory can be found [HERE](#).

Traveler Quarantine

The Federal Government has recommended that all those leaving New York for other locations self-quarantine for 14 days as a precaution. Berkshire municipalities with large numbers of second-home owners should be aware and pay attention to short term rentals and hotels. This guidance is displayed as posters at service plazas along 1-90 eastbound, distributed as flyers at major transportation hubs and posted on highway message boards. Visitors are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms. Health care workers, public health workers, public safety workers, transportation workers and designated essential workers are exempt from this requirement.

COVID-19 Testing in Berkshire County:

The drive-through testing facility at Berkshire Medical Center is currently operational. All testing requires a physician order. Symptomatic individuals may call the BMC hotline at 855-BMC-LINK, OR 855-262-5465. After hotline screening, those qualified will be referred for a telemedicine appointment with a physician, and if appropriate, given an order and a time for testing.

Questions from the General Public and Worried-Well

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and United Way 211 call and information service is now operating 24/7 and is answering calls for community members who are not

sick but would like to receive information related to COVID-19. Residents across the state can also sign up for the new text notification system including updates, news and prevention information by texting COVIDMA to 888-777. Also encourage your residents to sign up for your municipalities outgoing-911 alert system (such as Code Red, Reverse911, or similar).

For those needing emotional support during these stressful times:

- o Call 2-1-1 and choose the “CALL2TALK” option.
- o Call or text Samaritans 24/7 helpline at 877-870-4673.
- o The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including disease outbreaks like COVID-19. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the US and territories.

Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):

The CDC is recommending personal preparedness and protective measures, including Personal Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs). NPIs are measures taken to help prevent the spread of diseases that do not include medications. Currently, there are no medications or vaccinations available to prevent COVID-19, however, everyone should practice these respiratory illness prevention protocols:

- diligent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- stay home from school, work and other people when you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever or a cough
- avoid close contact (within 6 feet) of people who are sick
- if you are over the age of 60 or have underlying health conditions you should stay home as much as possible.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/personal/index.html>

Please only use reputable sources for information gathering. Further information can be found at the following links.

MDPH Information on COVID-19: <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19>

HMCC Resources: <https://region1hmcc.org/>

CDC General Information Page on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC Communication Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

MDPH Printable Fact Sheets:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19#-printable-fact-sheets->

CDC Response Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#cdc-response>

CDC Cases in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

CDC Guidance for Medical Professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

CDC Information on Travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

CDC Information for Businesses & Travelers:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html