



CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING: DECEMBER 8, 2020

THE CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING FOR THE TOWN OF WELLESLEY

Visit Wellesley's COVID-19 Information Hub at www.wellesleyma.gov/coronavirus

Total confirmed cases in Massachusetts: 253,649

[View the COVID-19 daily dashboard.](#)

Massachusetts Rolls Back to Phase 3, Step 1.

Due to surges in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, all communities in Massachusetts will go back to Phase 3, Step 1 of the reopening process, effective on Sunday, December 13. [Read the full rollback order.](#) This change was announced by Governor Baker today to help reduce indoor capacities, tighten workplace restrictions, and make restaurants and offices safer. Significant impacts of the rollback include:

- Closing indoor performance venues and high-contact businesses,
- Limiting outdoor gatherings to 50 people (gatherings of 25 people or more must notify the Health Department),
- Reducing capacity limits to 40% for gyms, libraries, offices, stores, golf facilities, and more.

New restaurant guidelines require:

- Diners to wear masks at ALL TIMES except when eating/drinking
- No more than six patrons at a table
- 90 minute dining limit on tables
- No musical performances at restaurants
- No food court seating in malls

New workplace and gym guidelines require:

- Office workers to wear masks at all times except when in their workspace and alone
- Limited break room use
- Gym patrons to wear masks at all times while in gyms/recreation facilities

State Aligns Quarantine Recommendations with the CDC.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has revised State quarantine recommendations for anyone identified as a COVID-19 "close contact" to align with those issued by the [Centers for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC). The new recommendations give options for 7-day, 10-day, and 14-day quarantine periods and went into effect on Monday, December 7. **Specific criteria must be met in order to shorten quarantine and are listed below:**

OPTIONS	CRITERIA	ACTIVE MONITORING	RESIDUAL RISK
7 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 8 IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A test (either PCR or antigen)* taken on Day 5 or later is negative; AND • The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND • The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14 	Individual must actively monitor symptoms and take temperature once daily. IF even mild symptoms develop or the individual has a temperature of 100.0 F,	Approximately 5% residual risk of disease development

10 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 11 IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND • The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14. • No test is necessary under this option 	they must immediately self-isolate, contact the public health authority overseeing their quarantine and get tested.	Approximately 1% residual risk of disease development
14 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 15 IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual has experienced ANY symptoms during the quarantine period EVEN if they have a negative COVID-19 test; OR • The individual indicates they are unwilling or unable to conduct active monitoring. 	No additional active monitoring required	Maximal risk reduction

*DPH is now accepting the antigen (blood) test to determine if quarantine may be shortened.

The guidance for someone who has tested **positive** for COVID-19 has not changed. Positive cases must self-isolate for 10 days AND at least until 24 hours have passed without a fever or other symptoms and without taking fever-reducing medications.

The new recommendations are based on recent data showing that shortened quarantine periods result in only a small chance that someone may develop COVID-19 after leaving quarantine. The changes are intended to improve cooperation by making it easier for anyone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to comply with the quarantine restrictions. [Read the full DPH announcement.](#)

MA Adds More COVID-19 Test Sites.

To help meet the rising needs for COVID-19 testing, the State has added five new testing locations to the State-run Stop the Spread program. [See the MA COVID-19 Test Site Locator.](#) Testing capacity has also been expanded at three current [regional drive-thru express testing locations](#), including one in Framingham, which can now accommodate up to 1,000 people/day.

Health officials continue to urge residents to be tested if they are at risk for Coronavirus exposure. With the new quarantine guidelines, timely testing is critical. Please remember that labs are experiencing delays in processing the high volume of tests, and results are taking longer. It is critical to wait until you receive definitive **negative** results before continuing with your activities.

Hospitals Curtail Elective Procedures.

For patients who can wait, hospitals will temporarily postpone in-patient elective procedures beginning on Friday, December 11. This will help keep staff and beds available for COVID-19 patients. Examples of these procedures include hip/knee replacements, low-risk cancer surgeries, or other surgeries requiring hospital stays. Out-patient or ambulatory procedures and regular screenings such as mammograms, colonoscopies, pediatric visits, etc. will continue.

State Submits Initial Order for COVID-19 Vaccine.

The Commonwealth has ordered 300,000 COVID-19 vaccines in [an initial request to the CDC.](#) This first allotment will make up part one of the required 2-dose regimen for the vaccine. The State’s COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group is working to prioritize distribution of the vaccine. More information is expected later this week.