

Massachusetts city requires mandatory face masks in public or be fined \$300

Since the pandemic arrived in March Governor Baker and mayors throughout the state have imposed or suggested the donning of face masks in situations where 6' of social distancing was not possible. This was more of a precaution and safety protocol and wasn't made mandatory at all times, everywhere, just when the social distancing protocols couldn't be followed.

Until now.

The City of Cambridge recently announced an emergency order will go into effect on Friday, October 2 mandating that a mask (or face covering) would have to be worn *"..in all public places, businesses and common areas of residential buildings. Public places include sidewalks, streets, parks, plazas, bus stops, non-residential parking lots and garages, and any other outdoor area or non-residential parking facility which is open and accessible to the general public."*

It doesn't matter if that person is 6' feet away or 600' feet away. If you are over the age of two you must wear a mask.

This is in response to spike in Cambridge's positive COVID-19 tests, likely due to the return of university students to the city at the advent of fall classes.

Cambridge City Manager Louis A. DePasquale said "With people spending more time indoors, there is an increased risk of spreading COVID-19. By tightening and clarifying our face-covering requirements now, we hope to continue minimizing COVID-19 risk in Cambridge."

Opponents of wearing face masks say it is an infringement on

their civil liberties, unconstitutional and with some even calling it tyranny. They are worried that there could be a Domino Effect whereby other cities fall Cambridge's footsteps, pushing the "tyranny" even further and stripping people of even more rights.

Proponents quote the scientific data on the effectiveness and preventative nature of masks, that it is a minor inconvenience, and that it will lower infection rates allowing everyone to safely return work and get the economy and life going again.

Do you wear a mask or choose not to? What are your reasons either way? How would you feel if Mayor Mitchell followed Cambridge's mandate and fined New Bedford residents for not wearing one in public? Leave us a comment below or inbox us at info@newbedfordguide.com.

10 more Massachusetts cities added to the list of those deemed 'high risk' for COVID-19

10 Massachusetts communities have been added to the list of those at "high risk" for the coronavirus, bringing the total to 23 – a list that includes New Bedford. The state's designation is determining high-risk is when a town or city's infection rate reaches 8 or more cases per 100,000 residents.

This, unfortunately, means placing a delay upon the ability of those communities to reach the next phase of re-opening which the state is planning on doing on Monday, October 5th.

The new communities are Attleboro, Avon, Boston, Dracut, Haverhill, Lowell, Lynnfield, Methuen, Middleton, North Andover, and Springfield.

Both Governor Baker and Boston's mayor Marty Walsh have stated that house parties, particularly among 20-something college students, is at the heart of the spike in coronavirus cases the state is experiencing. An astounding 50% of new positive test results are from people under 29-years of age.

Particularly alarming for Attleboro is that their recent spike includes 11 members of the Attleboro Fire Department, including one who is in serious condition.

On Wednesdays, Massachusetts's public health officials 510 additional new cases of the virus and 32 new deaths bringing the state's total to 129,750 confirmed coronavirus cases with and 9,242 deaths.

President Trump and First Lady Test Positive for Covid-19

Earlier in the evening it was revealed that White House Aide Hope Hicks had tested positive for Covid-19 and was symptomatic. Given her close proximity to the President there had been rampant speculation that President Trump might be at risk for contracting the virus. In recent days she traveled

with the President to and from rallies and was seen in the oval office as recently as Wednesday. On Twitter, moments ago President Trump announced the he indeed had tested positive as well as First Lady, Melania Trump. This is a developing story.



Tweet



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

...

Tonight, @FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately. We will get through this TOGETHER!

12:54 AM · Oct 2, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

29.2K Retweets **33K** Quote Tweets **55.5K** Likes

New Bedford increases from six to 10 diners per table at restaurants

Michael P. Norton
State House News Service

The city of New Bedford is embracing the governor's new allowances for dining, which allow restaurants to seat parties of ten diners per table, up from the previous limit of six, and to use bar seating for dining as long as social distancing guidelines are followed.

"Unlike Boston, who will remain limited to a maximum of six diners per table due to the City's recent uptick in cases, New

Bedford will be complying with the update in protocol without any changes,” the New Bedford Economic Development Council wrote in an email Monday. “We recognize how hard small businesses and restaurants throughout the City have been hit by COVID-19 and encourage you to consider buying and dining local in order to help support our community, culture, and economy.”

New Bedford is in the state’s red category for COVID-19 risks, with an average daily incidence rate of 9.4 cases per 100,000 residents over the past 14 days, according to state data. The city’s positive test rate over the most recent 14-day period was 3.83 percent, a reduction from the previous weekly report.

OPINION: Ideas for Trick or Treating on the SouthCoast and enjoying Halloween during the pandemic

“I keep seeing all these posts about trick or treating. How about this year, we all make an effort to make this the best trick or treat these kids have seen?

Turn every porch light on. Give away extra candy. Sit in your driveway with a costume on. Decorate your house more. Play music. Be extra spooky. Buy the BIG candy bars. Go as far as to set up a drink station for adults (we like trick or treat too). Give away hot chocolate. Make every house a party!

Don’t get mad that there are kids from other neighborhoods showing up. (They may not live in an area that has trick or

treat) And for Pete's sake let the kids who may be older come and have something normal that they can enjoy.

So many of these kids are struggling for some normalcy in their lives just as much as the adults. This is the year to just LET THEM BE KIDS! This is such a small way we can help some kids feel like kids again!

Get the word out to your neighborhoods and let's give these kids the best trick or treat EVER! ♥️♥️!"-Renee Moore.

New Bedford's G & S Pizza announces re-opening of dining room

Back in August we announced that G&S Pizza owners Arthur and Fay had retired after 31 years. It is unclear whether their decision was sped up because of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, but they did it in the middle of the heavy restrictions placed on many businesses, and restaurants were among some of the hardest hit.

Restaurants had their dining rooms closed back in mid-March at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and had to solely rely on take-out and/or delivery to survive. With Governor Baker's phased approach to opening, restaurants were eventually allowed to be offer outdoor seating in Phase 2: Step 1. Many restaurants either expanded their outdoor venues or built one from scratch.

Phase 2: Step 2 followed almost 6 weeks later and allowed eateries to allow indoor seating with restrictions:

maintaining a 6' distance as per social distancing guidelines and wearing masks where that was not possible.

Sitting down in a restaurant is part of the foodie experience, a way to get out of the house, not having to clean up the mess, or simply wanting a different atmosphere. A sort of field trip for the family, a night on the town for a couple, or a change of pace for the bachelor. Of course, many "power" lunches for businesses and co-workers were part of that lifestyle.

Restaurants have been cautious about opening their restaurants in spite of Gov. Baker allowing them. Mirasol's Cafe and Starbucks in Dartmouth have yet to open their indoor seating. Starbucks said "We don't plan on opening the inside to sitting any time soon." Mirasol's said it would likely not open inside until spring as they had to address the lengthy serpentine lines that often wrap through the eatery or around the building. Their lines are long enough and with 6' of social distancing between each patron the tail end of the line would likely end somewhere on Faunce Corner Road.

Joining the ranks of restaurants announcing that they are offering indoor seating is G&S Pizza. A Facebook post stated:

"We are so excited to let everyone know that dining room is now open!!!! Please stop by and visit us for some delicious food thank you."

Rejoice pizza lovers!

Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech student tests positive for coronavirus

After a little more than a week since it was announced that a teacher at the Gomes Elementary School tested positive for COVID-19, New Bedford's School Superintendent-Director James L. O'Brien sent an email out to parents across the city addressing the positive test result of a student at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech.

This comes a few days after the school reported that a faculty member also tested positive.

The student was in a group of six students and two teachers or a "pod" where one of those teachers was the recently reported positive case. The superintendent encouraged the other parents of the rest of the students in the pod to be tested. The two teachers and six students will be required to quarantine for 14 days before being allowed to return to the Voc-Tech campus.

O'Brien tried to alleviate the concerns of parents by stating that the student who tested positive had not been circulating with the rest of the school's students and did not take a bus to school where the virus may have been transferred.

"Parents of Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech Students,

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School was informed that a student tested positive for COVID-19 this morning. This student was in a vocational-technical pod along with five other students and two teachers.

All of these individuals have been dismissed from the campus and will be required to quarantine for 14 days. Our two faculty members will undergo testing for COVID-19 and we are

encouraging the parents of these five additional students to have them tested as well.

This student was not in contact with the general school population, was not on a school bus or in contact with the faculty member that tested positive on September 17.

The career/technical area, as always, will be thoroughly disinfected by our facility maintenance/custodial staff. Protocols from the Centers for Disease Control, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the MA Department of Health, and the local Board of Health are guiding our response to this situation, and we will continue to rely on that guidance.

As a reminder, it is vitally important for the well-being of everyone, if your child is not feeling well or is displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 we ask you to please keep your child home.

Sincerely,
James L. O'Brien
Superintendent-Director."

22 New Bedford firefighters test negative after possible exposure to COVID-19

The following statement was released by the New Bedford Mayor's office:

"Last week, one New Bedford firefighter tested positive for COVID-19. After that firefighter's interaction with colleagues

and potential exposure, 22 firefighters were required to self-quarantine pending the results of their COVID-19 tests. All 22 firefighters who self-quarantined have now tested negative and can be cleared to return to duty.”

Over 900 COVID-19 Cases, 41 additional deaths in Massachusetts over weekend

Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

The number of patients currently hospitalized for COVID-19 crept up over the weekend as state officials reported more than 900 new confirmed cases of the highly infectious virus and 41 more deaths.

Active hospitalizations rose to 364 in the Department of Public Health’s Sunday data report, 26 more than in Friday’s report and 51 more than the Sept. 13 update. Of those counted Sunday, 61 are in intensive care units and 34 are intubated. The rolling average number of active hospitalizations in Sunday’s report was 19 percent higher than the record low of 302 set in late August, DPH said.

The department on Saturday reported 569 new confirmed cases from 21,298 individuals newly tested by molecular tests, a positivity rate of about 2.7 percent. Sunday’s report confirmed 340 more cases from 17,399 people tested for a positivity rate of about 2 percent. Despite those increases, officials reported no change in the seven-day weighted average positive test rate, which stayed at a record low of 0.8

percent in Sunday's report.

DPH confirmed 26 deaths linked to the virus in Saturday's report and 15 in Sunday's version, pushing the cumulative count of confirmed or probable COVID-19 deaths to 9,310 since the pandemic hit in March.

Faculty member of Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech tests positive for COVID-19

Yesterday, the day after **Gomes Elementary school reported a staff member testing positive for COVID-19**, Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech reported one of their staff member tested positive. The following letter was sent out by James L. O'Brien, the Superintendent-Director Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech:

"Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you that a member of the faculty at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech tested positive for COVID 19 and is now home self-isolating.

This individual did not have contact with any students. However, several co-workers who have been in close contact with the infected employee are now also self-isolating as well and will be tested for COVID-19, we anticipate having the results of those tests tomorrow. Those co-workers have not shown any symptoms of COVID-19 at this time. However, based on the results of COVID-19 testing anticipated tomorrow, we may need to take other steps to isolate this situation.

Protocols from the Centers for Disease Control, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Health are guiding our response to this situation, and we will continue to rely on that guidance throughout this pandemic.

I will continue to update you as developments warrant with regard to this situation and how they may impact your child, if at all. Please be assured that the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is our number one priority. This school year is going to be one where we are faced with continuing challenges as a result of COVID-19, and we will be required to respond to those challenges with little warning.

This may be the first incident, but may well not be the last and I thank you all for your support of our school, each other and for your patience.”

Regards,
James L. O'Brien
Superintendent-Director