Massachusetts Police and health officials to enforce COVID-19 guidelines with hefty fine and non-compliance hotline

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has created a year like no other in recent memory. We've heard stories about wildfires in Australia and California, murder hornets, deaths of George Floyd and subsequent riots, protests, and unrest, locust plague in Kenya, economic hit, loss of jobs, closing of businesses, the loss of Kobe Bryant, Sean Connery, Chadwick Boseman, and Alex Trebek, deadly train derailments, plane crashes, earthquakes, and flash floods that return of Ebola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Beirut chemical explosion, postponement of the Summer Olympics, and while not deadly we had a minor earthquake in Dartmouth. And with how 2020 was unfolding an earthquake surprised, but shocked – pardon the pun – no one.

2020 isn't over: we have Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve to celebrate. While a time when the economy gets a boost from all the plane, car, and train travel and families gather around a table – often after not having seen each other in a long while.

Of course, that too will be affected, even ruined in some cases, because well…it's 2020.

How will the COVID-19 effect our holiday celebrations? For starters, Massachusetts health officials have set guidelines:

- No more than 10 people allowed in a household.
- Everyone must leave the gatherings and go home by 9:30pm.

• Wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
• Stay at least six feet apart from others.
• Keep visits short.
• Do not share food, drink, or any utensils.
• For 14 days after the gatherings, minimize contact with other people and only leave home for essential services like going to work, buying groceries, and appointments with doctors.

While proponents of these guidelines feel these will best protect the community by limiting the spread of the coronoavirus, opponents call them draconian measures that trample constitutional rights.

Expecting residents to resist the guidelines, Massachusetts has put a plan in place to address it: non-compliance to these specifics will draw the attention of the police and health departments who have been given the authority to enforce them. That means you may be hit with a hefty fine of $500.

The state is so serious about enforcing these guidelines that they have created a non-compliance hotline where you can call and report your neighbor for violations.

What will you be doing differently, if anything, this year? Let us know in the comments.