

# Reopening Massachusetts: Governor Baker initiates transition to Phase 3

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that on July 6th, Phase III of the Commonwealth's reopening plan will begin and updates on gatherings will be in effect. For the City of Boston, Phase III and the gatherings order will take effect on Monday, July 13th.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) also issued updated guidance to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

## Step One of Phase III:

On May 18, the administration released a four-phased plan to reopen the economy based on public health data, spending at least three weeks in each phase. Key public health data, such as new cases and hospitalizations, have been closely monitored and has seen a decline allowing for Phase III to begin on July 6th. Phase III will begin on July 13th in Boston.

The public health dashboard designating the progress of key COVID-19 data metrics has been updated to reflect the number of COVID-19 patients in Massachusetts hospitals to green, indicating a positive trend.

Since mid-April, the 7-day average for the positive COVID-19 test rate is down 94 percent, the 3-day average of hospitalized patients is down 79 percent and the number of hospitals in surge is down 86 percent.

More than 1,000,000 total COVID-19 tests have been administered, and testing continues throughout the state.

The following businesses will be eligible to reopen in Step One of Phase III, subject to industry-specific rules

concerning capacity and operations:

Movie theaters and outdoor performance venues;  
Museums, cultural and historical sites;  
Fitness centers and health clubs;  
Certain indoor recreational activities with low potential for contact;  
Professional sports teams, under the authority of league-wide rules, may hold games without spectators

Full guidance and list of businesses eligible to reopen in Step One of Phase III can be found at [www.mass.gov/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/reopening). Businesses and sectors set to begin opening in Phase III are subject to compliance with all mandatory safety standards.

### **Revised Gatherings Order:**

Under the updated gatherings order, indoor gatherings are limited to eight people per 1,000 square feet, but should not exceed 25 people in a single enclosed, indoor space.

Outdoor gatherings in enclosed spaces are limited to 25 percent of the facility's maximum permitted occupancy, with a maximum of 100 people in a single enclosed outdoor space. This includes community events, civic events, sporting events, concerts, conventions and more. This order does not apply to outdoor, unenclosed gatherings if proper social distancing measures are possible.

This revised order does not supersede previously issued sector guidance, and is effective beginning Monday, July 6. It will be effective Monday, July 13 in the City of Boston.

### **Public Health Guidance:**

In Phase III, health care providers may continue to provide in-person procedures and services as allowed in Phase II, with the addition of certain group treatment programs and day programs. These programs include adult day health, day

habilitation programs, and substance abuse services day treatment and outpatient services. Certain human services programs can reopen including community based day services for adults with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and psychosocial rehabilitation clubhouses.

Health care providers are subject to compliance with all mandatory safety standards, and must continue to utilize prioritization policies established in Phase II for care delivery and scheduling, as well as monitor patient volume for non-essential, elective procedures and services.

In Phase III, visitation guidelines have been updated for 24/7 congregate care facilities and programs overseen by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, including the Departments of Developmental Services, Youth Services, Children and Families, Public Health, Mental Health and the Mass Rehabilitation Commission. Offsite visits, including overnight visits, will be allowed, under specific guidelines. Other updated guidelines, including visitation for long term care facilities, will be released later today. Complete visitation guidance is available at [www.mass.gov/hhs/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/hhs/reopening).

MassHealth will also extend its current telehealth flexibility through at least the end of the year to ensure member access to critical health care services and encourage continued adherence to preventative public health precautions.