



## Massachusetts COVID-19 Updates – May 20, 2020

- As of Monday night, DPH reported a total of 87,925 cases of COVID-19. The state has now confirmed a total of 5,938 deaths from the virus.
- **Full details of the re-opening plan are available on our website and there is a link included above.**
- The governor's reopening plan on Monday didn't address when the statehouse will reopen to the public.
- House and Senate leaders are also not yet committing to any timeframe for reopening the State House.
- Boston Mayor Marty Walsh said he has no plans right now to lift the city's curfew and worries that allowing offices to reopen at a quarter of normal capacity next month might be "too much" to start.
- Mayor Walsh stressed the importance of moving cautiously in the capital city into this first phase of jump-starting the economy.
- The mayor outlined a more deliberate approach to resuming construction activities in Boston, and said the city was working on a plan that could be ready in the next week or two revolving around outdoor dining once restaurants are allowed to reopen.
- The mayor said that Boston is unique in that it is the third most densely populated major city in the country, and roughly doubles in population size every day as people commute in to work.
- Mayor Walsh said construction on schools, hospitals, smaller residential projects and open-air construction will begin this week with contractors required to submit COVID-19 safety plans before returning to work, while all other work allowed by the state won't resume until next Tuesday, after Memorial Day.
- Boston is also working with employers to develop more specific guidance and support structures to help businesses bring workers safely back to office buildings throughout the city on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Mayor Walsh also said he may reduce the initial capacity to lower than 25 percent.

- Officials on the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force are advising business owners to begin planning now for how they'll reopen, with public health precautions in place, when they are allowed to do so.
- The taskforce has been highlighting to Baker's reopening advisory board the seasonal nature of the local economy and its reliance on tourism.
- The task force is also emphasizing to residents and visitors the importance of adhering to public health guidance around practices like wearing masks, washing hands frequently and maintaining distance from others, including on beaches.
- The administration's new standards for beaches also prohibit organized ball games and require beachgoers to comply with the state order mandating that masks or other face coverings be worn if a distance of six feet from others cannot be maintained. Masks are not required when swimming.
- The beach guidance document can be [viewed here](#).
- Boston College announced Tuesday that it will be open this fall for students to attend class on campus.
- The House on Monday referred a number of newly filed COVID-19 response bills to committees for review and to take up a handful of local bills ahead of a Wednesday formal session where legislators are expected to vote on a more than \$1 billion information technology bond bill.
- During Monday's session, lawmakers referred to committee two bills dealing specifically with elections, including one that would have absentee ballots mailed to all voters for this year's state elections.
- The House meets Wednesday in a formal session to take up the IT Bond Bill.
- The Senate on Monday adopted a new draft of the Covid -19 data collection legislation explicitly including the Holyoke and Chelsea soldiers' homes and intermediate care facilities under the umbrella of sites that would be subject to ramped-up data reporting.
- The draft approved by the Senate also includes privately-owned elder housing, authorizing DPH to work with an academic institution to collect the data.
- The Senate will meet again on Thursday in informal session.
- Democrats claimed victory in two special elections Tuesday, seizing Senate seats that had long been held by Republicans.
- Representative John Velis of Westfield prevailed to take the seat that Don Humason gave up after he was elected mayor of that city.

- Susan Moran of Falmouth was elected to serve in a district formerly represented by Plymouth Republican Vinny deMacedo.
- The wins leave Republicans with just four seats in the 40-member Senate.
- The GOP, whose top officeholders in Massachusetts are Governor Baker and Lt. Gov. Polito, only holds 31 seats in the 160-seat Massachusetts House.
- House Speaker Robert DeLeo will address the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce virtually this Thursday afternoon.
- Mass Save, the energy efficiency program run by the state's utilities plans to follow the steps outlined by the Baker administration this week to eventually resume in-home and in-businesses appointments.
- The Department of Family and Medical Leave has two plans to gather public input on its latest update to the rules for the new paid family and medical leave program, one involves a virtual hearing and the other calls for two in-person hearings in mid-June if state regulations allow for them.
- The department has scheduled a virtual hearing via WebEx for June 11 and said interested parties will have a chance during that session to orally present testimony on [the amendments](#) to the new benefit program, for which a payroll tax is already being collected.
- Written testimony [can be submitted](#) any time until 5 p.m. on June 12, DFML said. If the state's reopening plan advances to the point where an in-person hearing would be feasible, the department said it plans to host two.
- The MBTA's independent oversight panel warned on Tuesday that the transit agency may need to scale back plans on transforming fare collection, weekend pilot programs and other spending because of a dire revenue outlook brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The MBTA Advisory Board, which represents the 176 cities and towns within the T's service area, said in an [oversight report](#) that the organization "cannot continue to grow expenses by greater than its revenue growth for long."

Source-MLA Lobbyists at  
O'Neill & Associates  
Boston, MA