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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Plans for Continued Reopening - wburnews

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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Plans for Continued Reopening

Face Coverings Order to be Relaxed for Some Outdoor Settings

BOSTON – Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that Massachusetts will reopen some outdoor Phase 4, Step 2 industries effective May 10th and put plans in place for further reopening on May 29th and August 1st. The Administration continues to take steps to reopen the Commonwealth's economy with public health metrics continuing to trend in a positive direction. This includes drops in average daily COVID cases and hospitalizations. Massachusetts remains first in the nation for first vaccine doses and total doses administered per capita, among states with more than 5 million people. The Administration will also relax the Face Coverings Order for some outdoor settings, effective April 30th.

Phase IV, Step 2 Industries and Gathering Changes:

On March 22, Massachusetts loosened capacity restrictions and advanced to Step 1 of Phase IV of the reopening plan. Since then, case rates dropped by 20%. The positivity rate has dropped to the lowest levels recorded since last summer.

Effective Monday, May 10th:

Large venues such as indoor and outdoor stadiums, arenas and ballparks currently open as part of Phase 4, Step 1 at 12% will be permitted to increase capacity to 25%.

The Commonwealth will reopen some outdoor Phase 4, Step 2 industries including amusement parks, theme parks and outdoor water parks that will be permitted to operate at a 50% capacity after submitting safety plans to the Department of Public Health.

Road races and other large, outdoor organized amateur or professional group athletic events will be permitted to take place with staggered starts after submitting safety plans to a local board of health or the DPH.

Youth and adult amateur sports tournaments will be allowed for moderate and high risk sports.

Singing will also be permitted indoors with strict distancing requirements at performance venues, restaurants, event venues and other businesses.

Effective May 29th:

Subject to public health and vaccination data, gathering limits will increase to 200 people indoors and 250 people outdoors for event venues, public settings and private settings.

Subject to public health and vaccination data, additional Phase 4, Step 2 industries will be permitted to open including:

- Street festivals, parades and agricultural festivals, at 50% of their previous capacity and after submitting safety plans to the local board of health.
- Bars, beer gardens, breweries, wineries and distilleries, will be subject to restaurant rules with seated service only, a 90 minute limit and no dance floors.

Subject to public health and vaccination data, the restaurant guidance will be updated to eliminate the requirement that food be served with alcohol and to increase the maximum table size to 10.

Effective August 1st:

Subject to public health and vaccination data, remaining industries will be permitted to open including:

- Dance clubs, and nightclubs
- Saunas, hot-tubs, steam rooms at fitness centers, health clubs and other facilities
- Indoor water parks
- Ball pits

All industry restrictions will be lifted at that time, and capacity will increase to 100% for all industries, with businesses encouraged to continue following best practices. The gathering limit will be rescinded.

Depending on vaccine distribution and public health data, the Administration may consider re-evaluating the August 1st date.

The Department of Public Health will also continue to issue guidance as needed, including guidance to still require masks indoors.

Face Coverings Order:

Effective April 30th, the Face Coverings Order will be relaxed for some outdoor settings.

Face coverings will only be required outside in public when it is not possible to socially distance, and at other times required by sector-specific guidance.

Face coverings will still be required at all times in indoor public places. Face coverings will also continue to be required at all times at events, whether held indoors or outdoors and whether held in a public space or private home, except for when eating or drinking.

At smaller gatherings in private homes, face coverings are recommended but not required. The \$300 fine as an enforcement mechanism will be eliminated.

For more information, visit mass.gov/reopening.

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