



# **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COVID-19 Updates:**

In order to protect the community as a whole, it is important to keep everyone updated on the latest information regarding COVID-19. The following information is brought to you by the Martha's Vineyard Regional Emergency Management Association, Martha's Vineyard Boards of Health, Martha's Vineyard Medical Reserve Corps, and the Martha's Vineyard Hospital. Please read on for information regarding Massachusetts' rollback to Reopening Plan Phase 3: Step 1, vaccinations, community spread on Martha's Vineyard, and additional resources.

### **Rollback to Reopening Plan Phase 3: Step 1**

Effective Sunday, December 13, 2020, Massachusetts is returning to Phase 3: Step 1 of the Reopening Plan. This will reduce indoor capacities, tighten workplace restrictions, close some businesses, and limit gatherings. This is in response to an increase in new COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations since the Thanksgiving holiday that are straining the healthcare system.

These new measures are designed to prevent infection and viral spread. They will create stronger mask compliance, more social distancing, and limits to the time spent with people outside of your immediate household.

- Outdoor gatherings at event venues will be limited to no more than 50 people
- Hosts of outdoor gatherings of greater than 25 people will be required to provide advance notice of the gathering their local board of health
- Indoor theaters, performance venues, and higher contact indoor recreation businesses will be required to close to the public
- Outdoor theaters and performance venues will be limited to 25% capacity, and no more than 50 people

In all communities, capacity will be reduced from 50% to 40% for:

- Arcades/Indoor and Outdoor Recreational Businesses
- Driving and Flight Schools
- Gyms/Health Clubs
- Libraries
- Museums
- Retail
- Offices
- Places of Worship
- Lodging (common areas)
- Golf facilities

### **Guidelines for Restaurants and Seated Dining Venues:**

- Patrons must wear masks at all times except when eating and drinking
- Restaurants must seat no more than six patrons per table
- Restaurants must impose a 90-minute time limit on tables
- Musical performances at restaurants will no longer be permitted
- Food court seating must be closed in malls
- Customers are encouraged to dine only with members of the same household.

### **Guidelines for Offices and Gyms:**

- In offices, employees must wear masks at their place of work when not in their own workspace and alone
- Employers are encouraged to close or limit the use of break rooms
- Patrons must wear masks at all times in gyms
- All employers are continued to encourage teleworking to their employees when possible

## **Vaccinations**

Vaccines are not distributed until the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) determines the vaccine is safe. Vaccines go through more testing than any other pharmaceuticals, including extensive testing in clinical trials. The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) ensure any vaccine is both safe and effective.

There is still time to get your Influenza (Flu) vaccine! Flu season lasts from October to May, but peaks from December to February. Per State public health officials, the flu immunizations are required for all children 6 months of age or older who are attending Massachusetts childcare, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, and post-secondary institutions (colleges and institutions). **Students must receive the seasonal flu vaccine annually by December 31.**

COVID-19 vaccinations are coming soon in phases based on order of priority. The following are estimated timeframes:

- **Phase One:** Between December and February, vaccines will be prioritized to clinical and non-clinical healthcare workers doing direct and COVID-facing care; long term care facilities, rest homes, and assisted living facilities; police, fire, and emergency medical services; congregate care settings (including corrections and shelters); home-based healthcare workers; and healthcare workers doing non-COVID-facing care.
- **Phase Two:** Between February and April, vaccines will be available to individuals with 2+ comorbidities (high risk for COVID-19 complications); early education, K-12, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works, and public health workers; adults 65+ years old; and individuals with one comorbidity.
- **Phase Three:** Between April and June, vaccines will be available to the remainder of the general public.

When the time comes, everyone is encouraged to immunize themselves. Getting the flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine are one of the most important way to protect yourself and others.

## **Community Spread & Surge of COVID-19 Cases**

Martha's Vineyard is currently experiencing exponential community spread of COVID-19 and an unprecedented surge of COVID-19 cases. Transmission is not from a single source, which makes it difficult to determine the source of the spread. As of December 9, 2020, there have been 390 confirmed cases of COVID-19 the Island according to the Martha's Vineyard

Boards of Health. Of those cases, 19 of them were on December 9, 2020, tying the highest daily report which was on November 11, 2020. Over half of the cases have occurred in the past month and a half.

The State classifies communities according to their risk of COVID-19 transmission by town/population – red (high risk for transmission), yellow (moderate risk for transmission), or green (low risk for transmission). Edgartown is red, Tisbury is yellow, and Oak Bluffs is yellow. If the Island were one town and not six, it would be deemed red – high risk for transmission, by the standards of the State.

**We are urging everyone to continue to follow all of the COVID-19 safety guidelines to protect themselves and the community. Please wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as often as possible, wear a mask when in public, and socially distance at least 6 feet from others at all times. Daily disinfection of surfaces is encouraged. Try to interact with only your own household. This is not a time to travel and visit friends or family. Monitor yourself for symptoms and if you feel sick isolate at home and get tested as soon as possible. Proper ventilation/air flow are important and encouraged when indoors with others. When traveling in a vehicle with another person, masks must be worn by all parties and open windows are strongly advised.**

**Warnings and fines will be issued for failures to comply!**

### **Additional Resources**

- [Baker-Polito Administration Announces Statewide Rollback to Phase Three, Step One, Additional Restrictions Effective December 13<sup>th</sup>](#)
- [Rolling Massachusetts back to Phase 3: Step 1](#)
- [Revised gatherings order](#)
- [COVID-19 Order #57 – Further Revised Order Regulating Gatherings in the Commonwealth](#)
- [COVID-19 Order #58 – Order Returning All Municipalities to Phase III, Step 1 COVID-19 Safety Rules](#)
- [CDC Critical Infrastructure Response Planning information, including critical workers](#)
- [Sector Specific Standards when available including translated documents and chart that compares Phase 3 Step 1 and 2](#)
- [Business Sector Reopening Guidance for Phase 3, Steps 1 & 2 Chart \(available in multiple languages\)](#)
- [Business Contact Tracing Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Houses of Worship Guidance for Clergy](#)
- [DPH Immunization Program Information on School-aged Children and Immunization Coverage](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine plan, FAQs, and more](#)
- [COVID-19 Negative Test Result Myths \(Fact vs. Fiction\)](#)
- [CDC Revised Quarantine Guidance](#)
- [DPH Quarantine Information and Guidance](#)