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Town Manager

# TOWN OF WATERTOWN

Office of the Town Manager

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## Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update May 22, 2020

### COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of May 21, 2020 there are:

- 90,084 cases statewide
- 19,930 Middlesex County
- 6,148 deaths statewide

For more state data, visit [www.mass.gov/coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/coronavirus).

Watertown has a total of 373 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 254 community members have recovered from the virus. Four Town employees have had confirmed cases. Two of those employees are back to work. Watertown has recorded twenty-three COVID-19 fatalities. Our thoughts go out to the families as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

### Watertown COVID-19 Case age Distribution<sup>1</sup>

19 and Under	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over	Unknown/no age recorded	Total
14	47	74	51	55	56	75	1	373

### Elderly Scam Advisory

There is currently a group of individuals targeting senior citizens by way of a telephone scam in our community as well as several Metro-Boston cities and towns. We are requesting your assistance and please see a copy of the [advisory](#).

### Memorial Day

We are deeply grateful to all service members past and present who bravely served our country, and as we mark Memorial Day, we pay special tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in their service to protect us and ensure our freedom. During this difficult time, it is important that we honor and remember them, and share our gratitude and deep respect for their courage.

The cancellation of this year’s Memorial Day Parade did not signify the cancellation of Memorial Day. With the help of a small number of volunteers, the Watertown cemeteries were flagged and the Delta will be lit gold for the weekend in support of Gold Star Families. There will be a Memorial

<sup>1</sup> There is a difference between the Commonwealth’s reported numbers and what the Watertown Board of Health can confirm through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN).

Day presentation on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> beginning at Noon on Community Access TV. The episode will be available online and on demand shortly after its conclusion on television.

### **Watertown Recycling Center Re-Opening May 29<sup>th</sup>**

The Department of Public Works and Watertown Recycling Center Operator, Republic Services are planning to re-open the Watertown Recycling Center on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Access will be limited to one resident in at a time; additional access may be granted, but will be at the discretion of the Attending Operator. All residents entering the Recycling Center will be required to adhere to all protocols related to the Executive Order signed by Governor Baker on May 18<sup>th</sup> outlining required social distancing and face covering guidelines applicable to Phase 1 facility openings.

### **Reopening Massachusetts: Transition to First Phase of Four-Phase Approach**

The Baker-Polito Administration released *Reopening Massachusetts*, the Reopening Advisory Board's [report](#), which details a four-phased strategy to responsibly reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19. The Administration also released a new "Safer At Home" Advisory, which instructs residents to stay at home unless engaging with newly opened activities, as a way to continue limiting the spread of COVID-19. Starting today, based on current public health data and trends, Massachusetts will begin Phase 1 of a cautious reopening, and workplaces that are permitted to open are required to follow new safety protocols and guidance.

Learn more about the reopening process: [www.mass.gov/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/reopening)

[VIEW THE FULL REPORT](#)

[VIEW GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES](#)

### **Safer at Home Advisory**

The Department of Public Health also updated the Stay at Home Advisory, replacing it with a new, "Safer at Home" Advisory. The new Safer at Home Advisory instructs everyone to stay home unless they are headed to a newly opened facility or activity. It also advises those over the age of 65 and those with underlying health conditions to stay home with the exception of trips required for health care, groceries, or that are otherwise absolutely necessary. All residents must continue to wear a face covering in public when social distancing is not possible, and individuals are advised to wash their hands frequently and be vigilant in monitoring for symptoms. Restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people remain in effect.

### **Reopening Massachusetts In Phases**

The goal of this phased reopening plan is to methodically allow businesses, services, and activities to resume, while avoiding a resurgence of COVID-19 that could overwhelm the state's health care system and erase the progress made so far.

- Each phase will last a minimum of three weeks and could last longer before moving to the next phase;
- If public health data trends are negative, specific industries, regions, and/or the entire Commonwealth may need to return to an earlier phase;
- The Commonwealth will partner with industries to draft sector-specific protocols in advance of future phases (example: restaurant-specific protocols will be drafted in advance of Phase 2);
- If we all work together to defeat COVID-19, we can proceed through each phase.

Success in earlier phases will refine criteria for future phases including travel, sizes of gatherings, as well as additional retail openings, lodging and accommodations, arts, entertainment, fitness centers, museums, restaurants, youth sports, and other activities.

## **Town Re-Opening Plan Coming Next Week**

Now that the Governor has released the state's Reopening Report, the Town is preparing to re-open Town buildings and facilities in the coming weeks but no earlier than June 1<sup>st</sup>. We are determining the best ways to responsibly and safely reopen Watertown. We will share more information next week, including what employees and members of the public will be required to do in order to help maintain the health and safety of our community. Information will be provided in next week's Update, on social media and on the Town's website.

## **Emergency Order Mandating Face Coverings**

The Watertown Board of Health adopted an Emergency Order on April 30<sup>th</sup> mandating face coverings effective Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **Mask and Face Covering Order Took Effect Wednesday, 5/6**

The Baker-Polito Administration has ordered all residents over the age of two to use a face covering or mask in public places where maintaining proper social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is not possible. This statewide order goes into effect on May 6th and supersedes previously issued guidance relative to mask use.

This order applies to all workers and customers of businesses and other organizations that are currently open to the public and permitted to operate as COVID-19 Essential Businesses, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail stores. Residents are also required to wear a mask or face covering at all times when using any means of transportation service or public mass transit.

[Read the Order here](#)

## **Watertown COVID-19 Resource Guide**

The Watertown Free Public Library has developed a COVID-19 resource guide for Watertown residents. The guide will be updated frequently. [www.watertownlib.org/covid19guide](http://www.watertownlib.org/covid19guide)

## **How will you find out about local emergencies?**

To get Emergency Alerts from the Town of Watertown text WATERTOWNMA to 888-777. Your cell phone number will be in the system without having to establish an Everbridge account. You also have the opportunity to add your email address into the system at this time. You would then receive all emails and/or texts from the system. If you already have an Everbridge account, this is not necessary, as you will continue to receive the notifications sent by the Town.

## **Watertown COVID-19 Informational Call Center and Email**

For general COVID-19 questions not specific to the Town of Watertown, all Massachusetts residents are encouraged to call the State's 2-1-1 Hotline that is staffed by operators 24/7 and with translators available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cell phone or use the live chat option on the Mass 2-1-1 website (mass211.org).

The Town of Watertown has established a COVID-19 informational call center to allow residents and business owners to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Watertown. The call center

will be staffed Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm and the number for the call center is # 617-972-6565. Questions can also be emailed to COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov.

**Please call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.**

**Calls should not be made to 9-1-1 for questions regarding COVID-19.**

Four (4) electronic sign boards have been placed around Town with the message: "Wear Face Coverings". Further message updates will be provided as needed.

### **State Implements New Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation**

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that Massachusetts residents who are eligible for the federal CARES Act and qualify for having exhausted their regular unemployment compensation may now receive the new Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). The launch of this program marks the third and final benefit available for the Commonwealth through the CARES Act. [Read the full release.](#)

For additional unemployment resources and information please visit [COVID-19 Resources for Businesses and Nonprofits](#) page.

### **Administration to Distribute \$502 Million from Federal COVID-19 Relief Fund to Cities & Towns**

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that it is preparing to distribute up to \$502 million from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to local cities and towns for eligible costs related to the COVID-19 response effort. The Administration is also providing guidance to local municipalities on this formal distribution process and establishing protocols to maximize the use of federal resources and promote compliance with federal restrictions.

Please [click here](#) for the full guidance for municipalities regarding the Baker-Polito Administration's approach to distributing Coronavirus Relief Funds and [click here](#) for a letter from Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan to Municipal Chief Executives.

### **Expanded Eligibility for COVID-19 Testing**

On May 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced expanded eligibility for COVID-19 testing. All symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested for COVID-19. All individuals in Massachusetts identified as a close contact by a local Board of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Community Tracing Collaborative, or a health care provider should be tested. [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)

### **Massachusetts COVID-19 Test Site Locator Launched**

The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new public resource for locating COVID-19 testing sites throughout the Commonwealth, continuing [its push to expand capacity](#) and access to COVID-19 testing for residents of Massachusetts.

Residents can visit [www.Mass.Gov/covidtestmap](http://www.Mass.Gov/covidtestmap) and search for testing sites by zip code or city/town. The interactive map quickly provides information about testing location hours, testing protocols, insurance coverage, and users can also download directions to the testing site. Because the information on the map is updated regularly, residents are strongly encouraged to contact the testing site for details **before** traveling for a test. Many sites may also require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.

Earlier this week the Administration [outlined its plan](#) to expand COVID-19 testing in Massachusetts. That plan will be submitted to the federal government later this month.

### **Update on Mobile Testing Numbers for Long Term Care, Assisted Living Residences and EOHHS Group Homes & Sites**

The Mobile Testing Program can test both symptomatic and asymptomatic residents and staff at nursing homes, rest homes, Assisted Living Residences, and EOHHS group homes and care sites. The program was launched by the Command Center on 3/31 and operates under the auspices of the Massachusetts National Guard, in partnership with the Department of Public Health, Fallon Ambulance, and Broad Institute of Cambridge. See a summary of testing activity on the next page.

## Onsite Testing

Date	Number of Tests Completed	Unique Facilities Visited
5/21	468	6
<b>Total (as of 5/21)</b>	<b>46,590</b>	<b>434</b>

## Mobile Testing at EOHHS Group Homes & Care Sites (as of 5/20)

DDS, DMH, DCF and DPH Facilities	
Clients	11,029
Staff	15,940
<b>Total Tests</b>	<b>26,969</b>
Number of Locations	<b>1718</b>

## Cases in Long term Care Facilities (as of 5/21)

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	<b>19,106</b>
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	<b>344</b>
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	<b>3,755</b>

## Disaster Recovery Information

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA's Recovery Unit has developed a [website](#) with information and guidance regarding the disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process.

## COVID-19 Public Resources Map

MEMA, together with MA VOAD and other partners, has developed a [COVID-19 Public Resources Map](#) showing the location of resources available to the public, such as food banks, houses of worship, and Project Bread site locations. Please note that this map is not inclusive of all resources, and is only as accurate as the information that has been provided to MEMA.

## DPH Daily Dashboard Released

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Baker-Polito Administration released an enhanced, comprehensive and detailed COVID-19 data report, including trend data in a variety of areas. The new daily dashboard is 23 pages in length and includes information on cases rates, testing, and breakdowns by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and geography of confirmed cases. It also includes a similar breakdown of death data. Beyond the case data, the report also includes specific information on COVID-19 hospital census information, a list of nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities and rest homes with known clusters of COVID-19 cases and data on PPE distribution by recipient type and geography. ([See the new Daily Dashboard report](#))

## Health Department

The Health Department has created a portal for COVID-19 Information: COVID-19 Resource Center where all COVID-19 related information will be posted:

<https://www.ci.watertown.ma.us/978/COVID-19-Resource-Center>

## Watertown Public Schools

Watertown Public Schools (WPS) will continue to support students, staff members, and parents through its robust Extended Learning Plan through June 16 as Governor Charlie Baker announced that all school buildings in Massachusetts will be closed for the remainder of this school year. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will release guidance to districts shortly and the District will make any necessary adjustments to ensure that our students continue moving forward through the end of the school year. With this announcement, the School Department continues to plan for keeping our students and staff healthy when school buildings reopen and to ensure that we meet all of our children where they are academically once the Extended Learning Plan comes to an end.

The School Nutrition Department continues to provide Grab n Go meals to any student who could benefit from this service on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the WHS parking lot from 11am to 1pm. They are currently serving meals to 200+ students.

The WPS has formed a 40+ person Reopening Task Force to consider all scenarios and the accompanying safety implications for reopening school buildings in the fall.

## Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library will **remain closed pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan which will be issued next week.** The Watertown Free Public Library offers curbside pickup of library materials. All items showing as available in the [library catalog](#) will be eligible for pickup. Simply call the library Monday – Friday from 8am to 4pm at 857-228-8308 and the items will be set aside and delivered to your car's trunk (or outdoor area for walkers and bicyclists). More details via the link <https://www.watertownlib.org/537/4929/Curbside-Pickup>.

The library continues to provide a wide range of online resources and virtual programming. Please see the website for all of the details. <https://watertownlib.org/>

## Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center/Food Pantry

The Watertown Senior Center and the Senior Shuttle Bus **remain closed pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan which will be issued next week.** Please call the Senior Center for information about new virtual programs (Art with Dawn, Exercise with Joanna, Seated Strength with Pearl and more!). The Watertown Food Pantry continues to be open Tuesdays, 10 AM until 2 PM at 80 Mt. Auburn Street, rear. When going to the Food Pantry, please wear a mask or other face covering to protect your own self and those around you in the parking lot and at the Food Pantry. See above for links about masks and other face coverings. Food donations (canned goods, cold cereals, peanut butter) are accepted at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays starting at 9:00 AM until 2 PM. Senior Center staff are available to answer your questions and to help connect you to resources you may need. Call the Senior Center at (617) 972-6490 or send an e-mail to [SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov).

## Watertown Veterans' Services

Watertown Veterans' Services is closed to the public but is still available to assist with administering and applying for benefits. Families and Veterans may reach out to inquire about applying for benefits.

Watertown Veterans' Services, in partnership with the Greater Boston Veterans' Collaborative has a detailed spreadsheet with benefits and services—including but not limited to: financial, mental health, transportation, and food resources—available to Veterans and others during this pandemic. The list is

constantly being updated and interested Veterans and families should contact Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) for the most up to date list. Please contact the VSO at: [PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov) or (617) 972-6416 (Office) and (781) 645-9127 (Cell)  
[COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

### **Parks and Recreation**

All programs offered by the Watertown Recreation Department **remain cancelled and all fields, courts, track, tot lots and dog parks in Watertown remain closed pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan which will be issued next week.** Please adhere to this request and follow all guidelines by the Watertown Health Department and all governmental agencies.

**Town Hall will remain closed to the public pending further guidance from the Town's Re-Opening Plan which will be issued next week. Town Hall and the Department of Public Works Administrative Offices remain available only by phone or online.** All calls and emails will be responded to Monday through Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

[Visit the Department directory for phone numbers.](#)

This includes the following Town Offices:

- Town Manager, [TownMgr@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:TownMgr@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6465
- Health Department, [Health@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:Health@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6446
- Senior Center, [SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6490
- Recreation Office, [Recreation@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:Recreation@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6494
- DPW Administrative, [DPW1@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:DPW1@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 617-972-6420
- Inspectional Services, [buildinginspector@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:buildinginspector@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6480
- Treasurer/Collector, [Treas&Collectors@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:Treas&Collectors@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6450
- Assessor, [Assessor@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:Assessor@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6410
- Town Clerk/Vital Records, [TownClerks@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:TownClerks@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6486
- Veterans Services, [PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov), (617) 972-6416

### **Emergency Management Team**

The Town of Watertown Emergency Management Team is meeting daily to monitor the developments in the outbreak of the coronavirus. We have used these meetings to keep an organized flow of information and to develop strategies to best respond to the needs of our community. We will continue to update the community through the Watertown Health Department's web page.

<https://www.watertown-ma.gov/965/CORONAVIRUS>.

### **Please continue to take the following actions to limit the spread of COVID-19:**

- Stay safe, stay home
- Practice social distancing – when in public spaces try to remain at least 6-feet away from others.
- Stay home if you are sick – and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth – when you cough or sneeze use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands – with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based sanitizing gel.

**We also recommend the following resources:**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Resource Page:

<https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) (11) [Statements/Updates](#)

**We are in this together**

We are living in an unprecedented time where our world, our nation and our community, is faced with the threat of an international pandemic known as COVID-19.

All of our Town employees are incredibly committed to ensuring the Town can safely meet the needs of our community while we are also protecting our employees' safety. All departments have implemented vigorous social distancing and hygiene protocols. I am so grateful for all of our employees' efforts under difficult circumstances.

The members of the Honorable Town Council continue to be available to help all residents and to provide updates/information to protect the health and safety of all the residents of Watertown.

I want to thank all of the members of our community for your cooperation and efforts to date; and for your continued actions to limit the spread of COVID-19. **Additionally, please check on your neighbors who may live alone. If you have any concerns, please email us at [COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov](mailto:COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov) or call the Police Department at (617) 972-6500; and we will follow up.**

Watertown is a resilient community and we are all in this together. We will continue to support each other and stay strong, Watertown Strong!