

Town of Southwick Board of Health and Select Board COVID-19 Update for April 30, 2021

As of the most recent weekly public health report, there have been **593** positive cases of COVID-19 in the Town of Southwick. Additional information on case numbers can be found at mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting.

! NEW INFORMATION -This week, 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.

COVID-19 VACCINE – The West of the River Regional Collaborative Vaccine Site on the Big E Fair Grounds will begin administering COVID-19 vaccine on April, 20th. To make an appointment, please visit home.color.com/vaccine/register/westspringfield. For senior residents without access to the internet or who need help registering, please call the Southwick Council on Aging at 569-5498. The State website, vaxfinder.mass.gov, is also available to residents and continues to add appointments on a rolling basis. Additionally, seniors can call 2-1-1 for assistance with locating and signing up for the vaccine. As of April 19th, the general public, ages 16 years of age and older (depending on vaccine administered), are now eligible.

TRAVEL ADVISORY - All visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are advised to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival. Travelers are exempt from this advisory if they have a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. If not obtained before entry to Massachusetts, a test may be obtained after arrival, as long as travelers quarantine until a negative test result has been received. Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after an absence of fewer than 24 hours is exempt from this advisory. Travelers who are fully vaccinated 14 days or more ago prior to visiting/returning and who do not have symptoms are exempt from this advisory. Travelers are encouraged to consult and follow the CDC's guidelines and requirements for travel: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.

The Town Hall north side lobby is open to the public for Town Clerk, Treasurer, Collector, and Assessors services. All other offices are available by phone, on-line, and by appointment. Due to the nature of our operations during the pandemic, please call these other offices before visiting Town Hall. All efforts have been made to ensure that customers and staff are kept safe. The Town of Southwick asks all visitors entering the building to abide by all posted signage. A process is currently underway to determine when the remainder of town hall offices will open.

Residents are urged to continue to follow all public health precautions for reducing the spread of COVID-19: stay home unless absolutely necessary; if you must go out in public, practicing social distancing and proper hygiene etiquette; wear face coverings when inside retail stores and when social distancing cannot be maintained; and if you are experiencing signs of illness - fever, cough, shortness of breath – call your primary care provider for advice.

The Southwick Board of Health and Select Board continue to post case numbers and updated information regarding COVID-19 every week at southwickma.org. For additional up-to-date information please visit mass.gov/2019coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov. For non-emergency information and assistance, please call 2-1-1 or visit mass211.org.