Information for Local Boards of Health

Privacy and PSAP Notifications

Many local communities are experiencing the need to collectively understand the intention and letter of the law regarding privacy and COVID-19 case disclosure. While it is understandable that many municipal sectors wish to know more details of the cases are within their community, the law does not allow for this level of information sharing. You can find the Order Issued by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health (DPH) online at: https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-of-the-commissioner-of-public-health-regarding-the-sharing-of-critical-information-with/download

Please note paragraph #4: “Local boards of health shall disclose to the official with the responsibility for administering the response to emergency calls in their jurisdiction (Receiving Entity) the addresses of persons living in their jurisdiction who the local board of health has been informed have tested positive for COVID-19. The disclosure of information shall be limited to the address, and shall not include any other identifying information, including name.”

DPH has explained that they interpret the “Receiving Entity” to be the state’s Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) – the ones who receive the 911 calls. The following system in Franklin County has been set up: public health nurses who are notified of cases make sure that they notify their dispatch (Shelburne Control, Greenfield, or Turners Falls) of the address, not the name, of anyone being isolated or quarantined. The dispatches enter the addresses in their CAD systems, to make sure first responders are notified to wear protection when and if there is a 911 call from that residence. Public health authorities are not legally allowed to share addresses with local fire, EMS, police, or EOC staff.

Information for Boards to Share with their Residents

What Does a Stay at Home Advisory Mean?

Last week, the Department of Public Health issued a Stay-at-Home Advisory, built in two parts. The first part is directed to those Massachusetts residents who are 70 years and older and those with underlying health conditions to strongly advise them to stay-at-home with the exception of essential trips for food, medicine, and focused time for exercise and fresh air. As this part of our population has significantly higher fatality rates with confirmed cases of this virus, this DPH Advisory in the strongest terms urges you to stay-at-home unless necessary and to limit your exposure to this virus.
The second part is directed to the population as a whole - both to those who are needed to keep our essential services operational, and for all other residents of the Commonwealth. This part of the advisory also advises staying-at-home for all those who are not providing essential services as described in Executive Order #21 (found online at https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-31-2020-essential-services-extension-order/download), . https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-essential-services

In every instance, this DPH Advisory requires the adherence for safe hygiene practices and vigilant physical distancing. Individuals in the Commonwealth should always practice physical distancing, meaning keeping a distance of 6 feet between you and the other person.

Under this advisory, “staying home” means:

- Only leave your home to address essential needs, get some fresh air and exercise, and if you do, avoid unnecessary contact with other individuals.
- You should still run essential errands such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy but should practice physical distancing when shopping. If you are at high-risk, you should inquire about your local pharmacy/grocery store’s alternative hours for high risk individuals.
- When going to the pharmacy you should fill your prescriptions for 90 days if possible; for some medications this is not allowed. If you are at high-risk, you should try to use a mail-order service.
- You can still go to the gas station, order and pick up take-out food and receive deliveries (e.g. Amazon, UPS, Fedex).
- You can still go outside to get fresh air, however, you must practice physical distancing while outside and avoid touching surfaces frequently touched by others.
- You are encouraged to use remote modes of communication such as telephone or video chat (e.g. Facetime, Skype, Facebook Messenger Video Chat) instead of visiting friends or family. This is especially true for a hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or other residential care setting.
- Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning, and elective procedures must be rescheduled.
- If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.
- Parents should not arrange play dates for children during this time.
- All individuals must eliminate close contact activities such as pick-up sports games.
- Individuals with any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should remain in their homes, and request assistance with accessing essential services, such as obtaining food or medications.
Self-Reporting Symptoms to Your Local Board

If you have been diagnosed by lab test or have a doctor’s diagnosis with 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19) and now have symptoms, or if you have had a high-risk exposure to COVID-19 but have no symptoms:

Stay home and have no visitors to your home. Contact your local Board of Health for guidance on isolation and quarantine. You can find a contact list for each Franklin County community public health nurse online at: https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Local-Public-Health-Contacts-for-COVID-19-for-Primary-Care-Updated-April-1.pdf. Reporting to your Board will allow them to communicate with local dispatch to ensure that any first responder who might need to come to your home for any type of emergency can know to take appropriate precautions.

ISOLATION is required of persons who have symptoms and have a diagnosis of COVID-19. You will be required to stay home and have no visitors unless medically required and wearing proper levels of protection.

ISOLATION may discontinue after the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in respiratory symptoms – e.g., cough, shortness of breath) AND

Maintaining Patience with Physical Distancing and Promoting Social Connectivity

The pandemic can seem overwhelming, but in truth, every person can help slow down the spread of COVID-19. By doing your part, you can make a big difference to your health, and that of others around you.

This video shows how the people who can do the most to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our communities are the people who do not feel sick:

This article provides tips for how to use technology to maintain physical and emotional health and social connection while practicing physical distancing:
- At least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared (illness onset). Onset date (of symptoms) would be considered “day zero”.

**QUARANTINE** is for persons who are not symptomatic but are at high risk for having been exposed to the COVID 19 virus. A person at high risk for exposure without symptoms is required to stay home and monitor symptoms for 14 days. If symptoms develop, quarantine may not be exited until the 14 days have passed AND all symptoms have resolved, which may be later.

MA DPH recently released an infographic covering 10 tips for managing at-home isolation or quarantine. That infographic can be found online at: [https://www.mass.gov/doc/10-tips-for-at-home-quarantine-or-self-monitoring/download](https://www.mass.gov/doc/10-tips-for-at-home-quarantine-or-self-monitoring/download)

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Information for Households

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a webpage providing guidance for households around cleaning and disinfecting, found at:


That page includes:

- updated links to EPA-registered disinfectant list
- Added guidance for disinfection of electronics
- Updated core disinfection/cleaning guidance

The CDC also puts forth guidance for building your own disinfectant if you are unable to find EPA-approved pre-made disinfecting products on store shelves. They recommend:

**Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:**

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water **OR**
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.**