

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS STATEMENT #2

Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Time: 3:00PM

Re: State of Emergency

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker [declared a state of emergency](#), giving the Administration more flexibility to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak. [Read more here](#).

The Baker-Polito Administration also announced new guidance for Executive Branch employees in order to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The guidance goes into effect on Wednesday, March 11, and will be revisited in 30 days or sooner as circumstances dictate. The full details are as follows:

- All work-related travel, both foreign and domestic, is to be discontinued until further notice. Executive Branch employees are also strongly encouraged to avoid any personal international travel.
- Conferences, seminars and other discretionary gatherings, scheduled and hosted by Executive Branch agencies involving external parties, are to be held virtually or cancelled. Regular internal business shall continue, including but not limited to mandated public hearings and board meetings. Meeting organizers are strongly encouraged to utilize alternatives like conference calls, WebEx and other group communication tools.
- Additionally, Executive Branch employees should not attend external work-related conferences, seminars or events. Alternatively, Executive Branch employees are encouraged to participate remotely.
- Executive Branch employees feeling sick with fever or flu symptoms should not come into work. Information available to date regarding COVID-19 indicates that the highest risk population includes older adults and individuals with serious chronic medical conditions. Employees in this risk group are encouraged to talk with their supervisors to review possible alternative work assignments.
- These actions complement additional precautions that have been undertaken in recent days including encouraging proper self-care and hygiene such as washing hands, ensuring bathrooms are stocked with hand washing materials and paper products, frequently cleaning touch points such as doorknobs, handles, elevator buttons and common area surface, and making cleaning products and sanitizers available in all Executive Branch workspaces.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has formed an Interagency Working Group comprised of health, human services, public safety and several other government agencies to develop continuity plans for COVID-19. This working group is broken down into three (3) subgroups that include:

- Planning Subgroup
- First Responder Subgroup
- Logistics Subgroup

These groups are tasked with developing strategies and coordinating the support effort as it relates to COVID-19. This follows the Department of Public Health's infectious disease task force that was stood up in January.

The Baker administration also issued updated guidance to members of the public. This guidance is posted on the Department of Public Health's website, www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

Statewide Conference Calls

Discipline-specific conference calls have been scheduled with various stakeholder groups and will continue regularly. *(This list may not be inclusive of all coordination calls.)*

- Hospitals
- Local Boards of Health
- Nursing/Long-Term Care Facilities
- Shelters and Local Housing Associations
- First Responders (Emergency Management, Law Enforcement, Fire)
- K-12 Education
- Higher Education
- Mass Municipal Association
- Chambers of Commerce/Private Sector
- Courts

Stay Informed

In an effort to ensure you have good situational awareness and early guidance from DPH, all stakeholders and the general public are encouraged to visit the DPH website as updates and guidance changes frequently. The link for DPH website can be found here: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

Planning Guidance

Below are hyperlinks from DPH's website that provide specific guidance and recommendations for: (1) emergency responders and law enforcement, (2) businesses and employers, (3) elementary and secondary schools, and (4) colleges and universities. To access the hyperlinks hold "Ctrl" and click the link.

- Guidance for [emergency responders and law enforcement click here](#).
- Guidance for [businesses and employers click here](#).
- Guidance for [elementary and secondary schools click here](#).
- Guidance for [colleges and universities click here](#)

Regarding continuity planning, employers should consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illnesses and lower the potential impact of COVID-19 in workplaces in the event of an outbreak by taking steps to:

- Reduce transmission among staff
- Protect people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
- Maintain business operations
- Minimize adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains

All private and public sector agencies are encouraged to develop or update contingency plans to ensure they can continue to carry out essential functions regardless of the threat or impact. For guidance and more information on continuity planning visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/continuity-and-safety-planning-guidance>