



Michael J. Driscoll
Town Manager

TOWN OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the Town Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov
townmgr@watertown-ma.gov

**Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
May 15, 2020**

COVID-19 Numbers

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting that as of May 15, 2020 there are:

- 83,421 cases statewide
- 18,683 Middlesex County
- 5,592 deaths statewide

For more state data, visit www.mass.gov/coronavirus.

Watertown has a total of 346 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 186 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-two COVID-19 fatalities. Our thoughts go out to the families as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

Watertown COVID-19 Case age Distribution¹

19 and Under	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over	Unknown/no age recorded	Total
12	45	67	49	48	53	72		346

Four-Phase Approach to Reopening

On May 11th, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a four-phase approach to reopening the Massachusetts economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and published Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards that will apply across all sectors and industries once reopening begins. The goal of the phased reopening, based on public health guidance, is to methodically allow certain businesses, services, and activities to resume, while protecting public health and limiting a resurgence of new COVID-19 cases.

- Phase 1 will be “Start:” limited industries resume operations with severe restrictions.
- Phase 2 will be “Cautious:” additional industries resume operations with restrictions and capacity limits.
- Phase 3 will be “Vigilant:” additional industries resume operations with guidance.
- Phase 4 will be the “New Normal:” development of vaccine and/or therapy enables resumption of new normal.

¹ 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).

Businesses and activities that provided “COVID-19 Essential Services,” pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 23rd order, will continue to operate. Certain businesses and activities with a lower risk of COVID-19 transmission will open in earlier phases. Decisions and timing will be influenced by public health metrics for when the first phase of reopening begins, as well as when it is safe to move into concurrent phases. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the four-phased reopening approach. [CLICK HERE](#) for today’s presentation from the Reopening Advisory Board.

Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards

The Department of Public Health (DPH) and the COVID-19 Command Center, in consultation with the Reopening Advisory Board and based on feedback from industry, labor, and community coalitions, has developed Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission as employees and customers begin to return to workplaces during the first phase of reopening. These Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards are applicable to all sectors and industries that will be open in phase one, and create new workplace requirements for social distancing, hygiene, staffing and operations, and cleaning. These standards are being released to give workplaces time to plan and prepare for reopening.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards.

In addition to these Mandatory Standards which apply to all workplaces, the Reopening Advisory Board is developing Sector Specific Safety Protocols and Best Practices that will detail how particular industries should operate upon reopening.

The Reopening Advisory Board is scheduled to provide its full report to Governor Baker on Monday, May 18th.

Given all of the above, decisions on the reopening of the Watertown Free Public Library, Senior Center, Town Hall, Department of Public Works Administrative Offices, Recreation Programs and Parks will not be made until further guidance is received from Governor Baker regarding the four-phase approach to reopening.

Emergency Order Mandating Face Coverings

The Watertown Board of Health adopted an [Emergency Order](#) on April 30th mandating face coverings effective Monday, May 4th.

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](#)

Tweet from Watertown Police

Watertown Police (@WatertownPD) tweeted at 8:43 AM on Fri, Apr 17, 2020:

Please watch this very easy way to make a homemade mask. Protect yourself and others by wearing one in public places. □ #stayhome #StaySafe

(<https://twitter.com/WatertownPD/status/1251129053664419846?s=09>)

Get the official Twitter app at <https://twitter.com/download?s=13>

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

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.

Eversource Reminds Customers to Remain Vigilant Against Scams

Eversource energy company is reminding people to remain vigilant and protect themselves against scams. The COVID-19 outbreak has led to an increase in scam activity, with sophisticated scammers finding unique and intimidating ways to exploit people and steal their money during these uncertain times. With the wave of scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Eversource is reminding customers about common signs to recognize a scam and specific pandemic-related scams to look out for, [here](#).

Bids on Elementary Schools Project Under Budget

Town Council President and School Building Committee Chair, Mark S. Sideris announced at the May 12th Town Council Meeting that the School Building Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, May 20th at 6 PM. One of the items on the agenda will be consideration of bids for the construction of the new Hosmer and Cunniff Schools. Mr. Sideris indicated the low bid came in significantly under budget and further details will be provided at the May 20th meeting.

Expanded Eligibility for COVID-19 Testing

On May 11th and 13th, 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. [Link1](#) [Link2](#)

COVID-19 Testing

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has posted to their COVID-19 website information on testing and mobile testing site locations ([available here](#)). This information is updated twice weekly.

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 below.

Onsite Testing

Date	Number of Tests Completed	Facilities Visited
5/14	1210	21
Total (as of 5/13)	42,077	684

Mobile Testing at EOHHS Group Homes & Care Sites (as of 5/14)

DDS, DMH, DCF and DPH Facilities	
Clients	9,465
Staff	14,212
Total Tests	23,677
Number of Locations	1490

Cases in Long term Care Facilities (as of 5/13)

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	17477
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	340
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	3,338

Disaster Recovery Information

On March 27th, 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 20th, 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 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.

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library will **remain closed pending further guidance from Governor Baker regarding the four-phase approach to reopening**. The Watertown Free Public Library offers curbside pickup of library materials for Watertown residents. 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 Governor Baker regarding the four-phase approach to reopening.** 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.

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 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 Governor Baker regarding the four-phase approach to reopening.** 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 Governor Baker regarding the four-phase approach to reopening. 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, (617) 972-6465
- Health Department, Health@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6446
- Senior Center, SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6490
- Recreation Office, Recreation@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6494
- DPW Administrative, DPWI@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 617-972-6420
- Inspectional Services, buildinginspector@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6480
- Treasurer/Collector, Treas&Collectors@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6450
- Assessor, Assessor@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6410
- Town Clerk/Vital Records, TownClerks@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6486
- Veterans Services, 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) (10) <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29389/Statements10>

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 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!