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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 14, 2021

Watertown has a total of 2,393 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 2,337 community members have recovered from the virus. Thirty-seven Town employees have had confirmed cases. Watertown has recorded forty 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
307	443	471	325	305	258	283	1	2,393

### Watertown Positivity Rates

*Continued vigilance urged to keep out numbers low.*

According to the Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) Dashboard, Watertown’s weekly COVID-19 positivity rate is 0.73%. [View the DPH dashboard.](#)

### MEMA COVID-19 Command Center Situation Report

Yesterday, the Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#), including community-specific COVID-19 case and testing data. The report also includes risk categories for each city and town based on the average daily incident rate over the past 14 days.

### Individuals aged 12-15 are now eligible for the Pfizer Vaccine

Individuals aged 12-15 who live, work, or study in Massachusetts can get vaccinated against COVID-19. Individuals aged 12-17 can only get the Pfizer vaccine. Individuals aged 18 and older can get any vaccine. The vaccine is safe and effective. You do not need an ID or insurance to get it. Preregister at [VaccineSignUp.mass.gov](#) or book an appointment on [vaxfinder.mass.gov](#).

Many local options including CVS, Stop & Shop and Walgreens. Appointments may be made at [vaxfinder.mass.gov](#).

<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).

## **Watertown Public Schools (WPS)**

Last week was Teacher Appreciation Week! Our faculty and staff received a much-deserved outpouring of gratitude for all that they have done throughout the pandemic to provide a high-quality education.

Students in the Watertown Public Schools have fully returned for in-person learning, with 10% of students remaining in a remote learning model. This week, only 1 case of COVID was found through our surveillance testing. Planning is underway for our graduation ceremony being held on Victory Field. Graduation for the Class of 2021 is on June 4. Seating is limited to two family members. However, anyone interested in congratulating our seniors can do so as they process from the high school to Victory Field. The last day of school for WPS is June 22.

All students ages 12 and up are now eligible for vaccinations. Appointments are readily available through the [mass.gov](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/) online appointment system: <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>. All families are encouraged to get their children vaccinated to protect themselves and our community during the pandemic.

We are thrilled that the USDA continues to waive school meal regulations, allowing for free school meals through the next school year!

## **Town Hall is open to the public by appointment and drop-off transactions only.**

All payments may be placed in the silver box next to the Library book drop-off labeled “Payments Drop-off” located on Thaxter Street. You may also drop-off transactions in person in the Philip Pane Hearing Room, Saltonstall Park side of Town Hall 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Members of the public must wear a face covering while in the building and is asked to maintain physical separation from employees and other visitors of at least six feet.

Many departments offer residents and businesses the ability to conduct transactions by phone, online or by mail. Individuals should check with their intended departments to see if there are options for service.

[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

**All Departments are open 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday – Friday. The Building Inspectors’ Offices are open at 7:30 AM.**

## **Watertown Free Public Library**

The Watertown Free Public Library is open for limited in-person services. As part of the library’s gradual reopening, there are now a limited number of public computers available by appointment, scan, fax, and photocopier, and local history research by appointment. Study rooms and the Watertown Savings Bank Room are open with limited capacity. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 10 AM to 9 PM,

Friday from 10 AM to 7 PM and Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 10 AM is reserved for patrons 65+ and with high-risk health conditions. Every person entering the building must wear a face covering and staff will monitor capacity. In addition, every patron will be asked to sign in with their contact information as required by the State of Massachusetts for contact tracing purposes. That information will be kept confidential and only turned over upon request from the state or local health department. The information will be destroyed after 14 days. For more information on what to expect when returning to the library, please follow this link: <https://www.watertownlib.org/514/COVID-19-Library-Updates>

Check the library website ([www.watertownlib.org](http://www.watertownlib.org)) or call the reference desk 617-972-6436 for more information.

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

The Watertown Senior Center remains closed, but Senior Center staff are available to connect you to their Zoom programs and to provide other assistance. Senior Parking Permits can be renewed over the phone by calling the Senior Center and new permits can be purchased by calling the Senior Center and making an appointment. The monthly Watertown Senior News can be found at <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/150/Activities-during-COVID-19>. Make sure to sign up on Notify Me to receive weekly updates: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/list.aspx>

The Senior Shuttle Bus is running again by-reservation only to the Stop and Shop, CVS, and Watertown Savings Bank on Watertown Street, Market Basket, Marshalls, Roche Brothers, Hannaford and Target. Call the Senior Center at (617) 972-6490 to reserve your ride for the following week.

Applications now available for the Property Tax Work-Off Program for senior or veteran homeowners to work in a Town Department in exchange for a property tax deduction. Due to COVID-19, program may be limited or modified at any time. Call (617) 972-6490 for more information. Application and qualifications can be found at: [https://ma-watertown3.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/32138/FY22-PropertyTaxFlyer\\_Application](https://ma-watertown3.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/32138/FY22-PropertyTaxFlyer_Application).

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 to protect your own self and those around you in the parking lot and at the Food Pantry. Food donations (canned goods, cold cereals, peanut butter, and other shelf-stable items) are accepted at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays starting at 8:30 AM until 2 PM. For more information about the Food Pantry or any senior issues, 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. Veterans who receive less than \$2,000 monthly and have less than \$5,000 in assets (\$9,800 if married) should consult Veterans' Services about Chapter 115 benefits. This is a financial lifeline for eligible Veterans and families, please inquire at the contact info below. Water 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. Please contact the VSO at: [PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov) or (617) 972-6416 (Office) and (781) 645-9127 (Cell).

### **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 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 a COVID-19 email to allow residents and business owners to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Watertown. Questions can also be emailed to [COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov](mailto: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.**

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

- Wear a mask
- 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.

### **Helpful Links:**

- [COVID-19 Travel Order](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](https://www.mass.gov/findfoodhelp)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](https://www.mass.gov/covid19)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Watertown COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) (57) [Updates/Statements](#)

### **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!