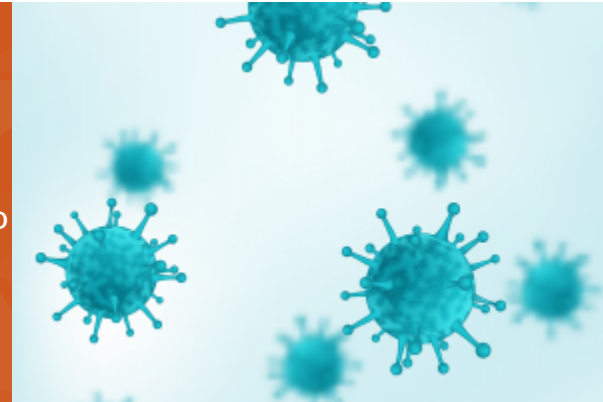


COVID-19 Alert: Step 1 of Phase IV

Massachusetts Advances to Step 1 Of Phase IV – Replaces Travel Order With Travel Advisory: What Employers Need To Know Now

By: Matthew L. Mitchell
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On March 22, 2021, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker implemented “**Step 1 of Phase IV**” of the Commonwealth’s phased economic re-opening plan – authorizing several previously closed business sectors, such as performance venues and exhibition halls, to recommence limited operations. The transition to Step 1, Phase 4 is triggered by the recent decrease in COVID-19 infection and hospitalization rates, and the recent increase in public access to vaccines, across the Commonwealth.

Coincident with the implementation of the Step 1, Phase 4 plan, the Commonwealth has issued revised COVID-19 standards that apply to employee safety, including adjustments to worksite social distancing and hygiene standards, and a scaling-back of travel restrictions.

The key features of these new regulations, that affect Massachusetts employers, are summarized below:

REVISED OFFICE AND LAB SPACE SAFETY REGULATIONS

On March 22, 2021, Massachusetts issued new COVID-19 safety protocols applicable to **office** and **laboratory** worksites. These new protocols adjust, but do not fundamentally alter, the worksite safety standards that have been in place since May 2020.

Embedded in the new protocols are, however, new rules that relax previous standards – *such as new rules that increase the number of employees who are permitted to work together at worksites*; and new rules designed to address reported public complacency around COVID-19 safety – such as new, more detailed standards related to screening of employees for COVID-19 symptoms.

The new protocols, that apply generally to worksites, include the following:

Adjusted Social Distancing Standards:

- Workers and visitors must wear face coverings at all times, except where unsafe due to medical condition or disability or except when in their own individual workspace and alone.
- Face coverings are required in all common areas and in meeting rooms, even when 6 feet of distance can be maintained.
- Each office must monitor customer and worker entries and exits and limit occupancy at all times to the greater of the following:
 - 50% of the building’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder.
 - Buildings for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow 10 persons per

1,000 square feet of accessible space.

- In any case, no enclosed space within the facility may exceed occupancy of 10 persons per 1,000 square feet.
- Businesses and other organizations may exceed this maximum occupancy level based on a demonstrated need for relief based on public health or public safety considerations or where strict compliance may interfere with the continued delivery of critical services.
- Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals unless this creates a safety hazard due to the nature of the work or the configuration of the workspace:
 - Close or reconfigured worker common spaces and high-density areas where workers are likely to congregate to allow 6 feet of physical distancing. Employers are encouraged to close break rooms or limit their use. Work-stations should be redesigned to ensure physical distancing (e.g., separate tables, use distance markers to assure spacing).
 - Cafeterias must practice physical distancing and appropriate hygiene measures and may allow indoor and /or outdoor seating according to Restaurant guidance.
 - Physical partitions separating workstations must be installed for areas that cannot be spaced out. Physical partitions must be at least 6 feet in height.
 - Establish directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic if possible, to minimize contact. Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies.
 - Limit visitors where feasible, and avoid congregation in common areas (e.g., lobbies).
 - Mark rooms and hallways to indicate 6 feet separation.
- Designate assigned working areas (e.g., floor, building) to individuals where possible to limit movement throughout the facility and limit contact between workers.
- Stagger work schedules and improve ventilation for enclosed spaces where possible (e.g., open doors and windows).
- Limit meeting sizes, ensure 6 feet of social distancing, and encourage remote participation.
- Stagger lunch and break times, regulating maximum number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Minimize the use of confined spaces (e.g., elevators, control rooms, vehicles) by more than one individual at a time; all workers in such spaces at the same time are required to wear face coverings.

Adjusted Staffing and Operations Standards:

- Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:
 - Social distancing, hand-washing, proper use of face coverings
 - Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks
 - Importance of not coming to work if ill
 - When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
 - Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus
- Facilities must screen workers at each shift by ensuring the following:

- Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic.
- Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official.
- Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home.
- Adjust workplace hours and shifts (leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points.
- Maintain a log of workers and customers to support contact tracing (name, date, time, contact information) if needed.
- Employers are encouraged to have workers continue to telework if feasible; external meetings should be remote to reduce density in the office.
- Employers should establish adjusted workplace hours and shifts for workers (if working in-person, leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points.
- Limit visitors and service providers on site; shipping and deliveries should be completed in designated areas.
- Workers must stay home if feeling ill.
- Workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home or arrange an alternate work assignment.
- Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer.
- Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace employer for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer must immediately notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located. Employers must assist the LBOH with contact tracing efforts, including advising likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH Post notice to workers and customers of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s [Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace](#).
- Offices should maintain operating hours that allow for on-going off-hour sanitation and cleaning.
- Allow water fountains to be used as refill stations only, provided that social distancing can be maintained. Workers should bring their own water bottles.
- Additional on-site amenities and services may only open and operate when those amenities or services would otherwise be authorized to operate under the Commonwealth’s Phased Reopening Plan and then must adhere to all sector-specific safety protocols, available on

the Reopening Plan website, applicable to the amenity or service.

NEW TRAVEL ADVISORY

In connection with the transition to Step 1, Phase IV, Massachusetts has rolled-back the strict, travel restrictions that have been mandated since July 2020. Effective Monday, March 22, 2021, all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are now *advised* to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival.

Travelers in the following categories are exempt from this quarantine advisory:

- Travelers who have received a negative COVID-19 result on a test administered not more than 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. Travelers may also test out of the quarantine advisory after arrival in Massachusetts, as long as they quarantine until receiving a negative test result.
- Anyone who is entering Massachusetts for fewer than 24 hours.
- Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after being out of the State for fewer than 24 hours.
- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as [specified by](#) the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) during required commuting to or from work and while at work.
- Travelers who are fully vaccinated (i.e. who have received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR who have received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 14 days or more ago) and who do not have symptoms.

All travelers are encouraged to consult and follow the [CDC's guidelines and requirements for travel](#).

Morse is focused on assisting our clients through these unprecedented and challenging times. Please feel free to reach out to your Morse contact, or to speak with **Matt Mitchell** directly, should you have any questions.

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