

COVID-19 INFORMATION

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[COVID-19 INFORMATION](#)

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PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARED, DETAILS FOR BPS, RESTRICTIONS FOR RESTAURANTS, BARS, CLUBS

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BOSTON - Sunday, March 15, 2020 - Mayor Martin J. Walsh today announced the Boston Public Health

Commission is [declaring a public health emergency](#).

[. \(https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://bphc.org/onlinenewsroom/Documents/Declaration%20of%20the%20City%20of%20Boston\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://bphc.org/onlinenewsroom/Documents/Declaration%20of%20the%20City%20of%20Boston), due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This step allows BPHC to increase the availability of staff and resources that will allow for enhanced reporting, information and resources shared among Boston's health and medical community.

The declaration is an essential step to respond to and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health and well-being of Boston's residents. This response to the COVID-19 pandemic requires an all hands on deck approach and calls for heightened coordination across BPHC's bureaus and programs, city departments and health care partners. Declared public health emergencies can aid cities in seeking additional resources and support from the state and federal government. Within the Boston Public Health Commission, the declaration allows for internal personnel and resources to be redirected towards the response effort. For more information on the City's public health crisis declaration, please [visit here](#).

[. \(https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://bphc.org/onlinenewsroom/Blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1288\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://bphc.org/onlinenewsroom/Blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1288).

"The health and safety of each and every Boston resident is our first priority. At this point, we are undoubtedly experiencing a public health emergency in the City of Boston, and it is clear that we need to activate every tool at our disposal," said Mayor Walsh. "We started to work on this public health declaration the moment we decided to close Boston Public Schools to ensure that we can activate and deploy all the public health resources and personnel necessary to meet the needs of our students, residents and anyone in our community facing challenges during this quickly changing situation."

Following the declaration of a public health emergency, Mayor Walsh also shared the following updates and announced new regulations for restaurants, bars and clubs:

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mayor Walsh and Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Brenda Cassellius today announced details on the City's planning efforts to ensure that essential services and supports for students remain available when schools close districtwide on Tuesday, March 17. Those essential services include making food available to the 72 percent of BPS students who rely on the free meals served in Boston's public schools. Beginning on Tuesday, families can pick up a variety of packaged meal options [at 47 different locations across Boston](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/food-access/map-meal-sites-boston-students), (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/food-access/map-meal-sites-boston-students>) every weekday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Additionally, the City of Boston in partnership with Project Bread, YMCA of Greater Boston, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, and other community organizations will also be providing free meals to school-aged children at various locations and times across the city.

"The Boston Public Schools is committed to meeting the needs of the community we serve, and that is especially true during times of uncertainty. With all hands on deck we are addressing this emergency head on," said BPS Superintendent Brenda Cassellius. "Nothing is more important than keeping our students, staff and families safe. We will continue to support our community by providing resources and materials for home learning, access to free meals, and timely updates on this unprecedented situation as it evolves."

"We prioritize the safety and well-being of our students, staff and families above all else," said Boston School Committee Chairperson Michael Loconto. "This period of closure is in the best interest of everyone in the community. We remain focused on keeping our youth engaged in their learning and look forward to welcoming students back to school as soon as the situation permits."

In addition, the plan addresses the continuation of student learning outside of school facilities to ensure that there is no gap in students' education. Educational resources will be set up with Google Classroom, an online platform that all students in the Boston Public Schools system use, and where students and families can find materials and work independently on activities at home. While this learning work is voluntary and will not be graded, students and families are encouraged to use the system to help prevent lost learning time that could occur during an extended time away from school.

"BPS students are incredibly resilient and we have to do whatever we can to keep ourselves, our friends and our families safe," said Boston School Committee Student Representative Evelyn Reyes. "The Boston Student Advisory Council looks forward to working with BPS to address student concerns and find creative ways to keep students involved in their school communities during this period."

The learning plan addresses the need for students to receive no-cost options for Internet and access to computers. Already, many internet service providers, including Comcast, have offered discounted or no-cost options that are available to students and families. To supplement the need for additional computers, BPS has

purchased an additional 20,000 Chromebook laptops to make sure that every student in need of a device will have access to one. Distribution sites will be set up throughout the city for students in the coming days.

*All McKinley Schools will be closed tomorrow, following the news that a member of the McKinley School community is currently being tested for COVID-19. At this time, there are no confirmed cases at the school, but BPS' top priority is to keep school communities safe and informed. All other schools, with the exception of the Eliot and McKinley schools, will be open tomorrow, **Monday, March 16** during regular school hours. All BPS buses have been cleaned and disinfected and will run on normal schedules tomorrow.

LICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS

Effective immediately, the Licensing Board for the City of Boston is requiring all restaurants (both establishments with a common victualler license and common victualler with alcoholic beverages license), bar rooms and night clubs in the city to reduce overall capacity by 50 percent, remove tables and chairs to reflect that reduced capacity, and follow the guidelines around social distancing. All licensed establishments will not be allowed to have lines outside, and hours across the board will be reduced to close at 11:00 p.m. Food drive through and delivery services may continue during an establishment's normal business hours. If any of these new regulations are violated, the licensed establishment will be shut down for 30 days. As a reminder, Governor Baker last week issued [an emergency order prohibiting most gatherings over 250 people](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-baker-issues-order-limiting-large-gatherings-in-the-commonwealth) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-baker-issues-order-limiting-large-gatherings-in-the-commonwealth>) in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19.

For any restaurant or bar room that serves food, the Board is lifting regulations to allow for take out service, which means that all restaurants and bar rooms that serve food can now provide take out service. The Board encourages the use of delivery services wherever possible. If an establishment does not currently utilize a delivery service, the [City's Office of Small Business](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development>) can help support. Any establishment looking to be connected with help may contact 311, and if any business that needs operational support can contact the [Inspectional Services Department](https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services>).

As of today, beer gardens will not be opening until the declared public health emergency is over. All of these revised regulations included above will be in effect until the Licensing Board issues a notice that they are lifted.

The Licensing Board has been working closely with licensed establishments in South Boston regarding the influx of patrons due to the St. Patrick's Day holiday and the ongoing public safety concerns regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Based on the number of patrons in the area on Saturday, March 14 and health and safety concerns, over a dozen establishments have agreed to voluntarily close today, Sunday, March 15, 2020.

To protect Bostonians and their families from the spread of the virus, residents are reminded to practice caution: wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol; avoid shaking hands; cover your coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you think you might be sick, please call your doctor or 311 to be connected to the Mayor's Health Line. Residents are also reminded to practice social distancing: keep your distance from others (six feet apart); avoid crowded places.

Residents are asked to not call 9-1-1 unless you are experiencing a medical emergency. The City and BPHC will continue to provide updated information on bphc.org and [boston.gov/coronavirus](https://www.boston.gov/coronavirus) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210416221731/https://www.boston.gov/news/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-boston>).

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