

Baker provides guidance for re-opening restaurants and lodging in Massachusetts

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration provided an update on the Reopening Massachusetts plan and preparations for Phase II. The Administration will determine the start of Phase II on June 6th.

On Monday, Governor Charlie Baker will issue an executive order with a detailed list of sectors that fall into each phase. The order will allow Phase II businesses to bring back employees in preparation for re-opening. Through this order, professional sports teams can begin practicing at their facilities in compliance with the health and safety rules that all the leagues are developing. Facilities remain closed to the public.

Restaurant and Lodging Guidance: The Administration today issued workplace safety standards for restaurants and lodging. These workplace specific safety standards are organized around four distinct categories covering Social Distancing, Hygiene Protocols, Staffing and Operations and Cleaning and Disinfecting.

Restaurants: Outdoor dining will begin at the start of Phase II. Indoor dining will begin later within Phase II, subject to public health data. Even when indoor seating is permitted, use of outdoor space will be encouraged for all restaurants.

Social distancing guidance includes spacing tables six feet apart with a maximum party size of six people. The use of bars, except for spaced table seating, will not be permitted. For hygiene protocols, utensils and menus should be kept clean through single use or with strict sanitation guidelines, reservations or call ahead seating is recommended and

contactless payment, mobile ordering or text on arrival for seating will also be encouraged.

Restaurants will be expected to follow cleaning and disinfecting guidelines, in accordance with CDC guidance. This includes closing an establishment temporarily if there is a case of COVID-19 in an establishment.

Lodging: Hotels, motels and other lodging businesses will be allowed to expand their operations in Phase II. Lodging safety standards apply to all forms of lodging including hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, short term residential rentals including Airbnb and VRBO.

Event spaces, like ballrooms and meeting rooms, will remain closed. On-site restaurants, pools, gyms, spas, golf courses and other amenities at lodging sites may operate only as these categories are authorized to operate in accordance with the phased re-opening plan. Lodging operators also must inform guests of the Commonwealth's policy urging travelers to self-quarantine for 14 days when arriving from out-of-state.

On May 18th, the Baker-Polito Administration released Reopening Massachusetts, the Reopening Advisory Board's report, which details a four-phased strategy to responsibly reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19.