

Massachusetts to Advance COVID-19 Reopening Plan; Boston to Delay Reopening

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February 26, 2021

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Governor Charlie Baker has [announced](#) that Massachusetts would advance to Step 2 of Phase III of the state's [reopening plan](#) on March 1, 2021, relaxing restrictions on most indoor gatherings.

The City of Boston will move to Phase III, Step 2 as well, with [some exceptions](#).

In addition, Governor Baker announced a plan to transition to Step 1 of Phase IV on March 22, provided that public health metrics continue to improve.

Phase III, Step 2

The change to Phase III, Step 2 of the reopening plan is based on a decline in key public health data, such as new cases and hospitalizations.

As of March 1, 2021, all cities and towns in Massachusetts will be under the following, loosened restrictions:

- Indoor performance venues such as concert halls, theaters, and other indoor performance spaces will be allowed to reopen at 50% of capacity, with no more than 500 persons (does not apply in Boston until March 22)
- Indoor recreational activities with greater potential for contact (such as laser tag, roller skating, trampolines, and obstacle courses) will be allowed to reopen at 50% of capacity (does not apply in Boston until March 22)
- Capacity limits across all sectors with capacity limits will be raised to 50% (excluding employees)
- Restaurants will no longer have a percent capacity limit and may host musical performances. However, live musical performances in Boston restaurants will not be allowed until March 22. All restaurants still must comply with six-foot social distancing, limits of six people per table, and 90-minute table limits.

Gathering Changes and Phase IV Start

Governor Baker announced that if public health metrics continue to improve, effective March 22, all communities in Massachusetts will move into Step 1 of Phase IV of the state's reopening plan.

Effective on the planned advancement to Step 1 of Phase IV, the following industries will be permitted to operate at a strict 12%-capacity limit after submitting a plan to the Department of Public Health:

- Indoor and outdoor stadiums
- Arenas
- Ballparks

Likewise, effective on March 22, gathering limits for event venues and public settings

will increase to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 25 people, with indoor house gatherings remaining at 10 people.

Additionally, dance floors will be permitted only at weddings and other events, and overnight summer camps will be allowed to operate this coming summer. Exhibition and convention halls also may begin to operate, following gathering limits and event protocols. Other Phase IV sectors must continue to remain closed.

If public health metrics continue to improve, these capacity limits and gathering limits may be loosened even further.

Jackson Lewis attorneys are closely monitoring updates and changes to legal requirements and guidance and are available to help employers weed through the complexities involved with [state-specific or multistate-compliant plans](#).

If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to the Jackson Lewis attorney with whom you regularly work, or any member of our [COVID-19 team](#).

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