



TOWN OF WESTPORT
WESTPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 02790

OFFICE OF BOARD OF HEALTH
856 MAIN ROAD

Tel: (508) 636-1015
Fax: (508) 636-1016
Health@Westport-MA.gov
westport-ma.com

Matthew J. Armendo
Director

Westport Board of Health COVID-19 Update
October 23, 2020

Case Update:

Total number of state confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents as of Thursday, October 22nd is **164, up 12 from last Wednesday. That has put Westport into the “red” or higher risk category for the first time.** If the town stays in the red category for 3 consecutive weeks, we would have to go back to Step 1 of Phase 3. The state risk map is updated based on the [state's weekly community COVID report](#). The rolling 14 day incidence rate has jumped from 6.9 to 9.0/100,000. There have been 147 recoveries, and no new hospitalizations or deaths to report fortunately.

NOTE: The DPH weekly report has been moved to Thursday evenings, so the BOH update is now being published on Fridays.

Statewide there have been **143,927 confirmed cases** and **9,589 confirmed deaths** as of October 22nd.

While we don't know of any clusters in Westport, the Department of Public Health is prioritizing follow up tracing in cases involving ice hockey, places of worship and small social/family gatherings to better understand the risk factors for higher rates of transmission in these settings. I would also urge Westport residents to cooperate with our town nurse and the state contact tracing staff if you should get a call – it will help the entire community.

I know I sound like a broken record, but we really need everyone to keep up with maintaining social distancing, wearing (and washing re-usable) face coverings, and washing or sanitizing hands frequently. COVID-19 has been far more deadly than the annual flu and we are going into a double whammy season, so please get your flu shot.

Testing Data:

7038 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents up through October 22nd. There were **23 positive tests** out of 941 done in the last 14 days for a rate of **2.44%**. The statewide 14-day average is trending up again to 1.24% positive.

Extended through January 15th: The state's **Stop the Spread** free testing initiative in certain communities has been extended. The sites in these communities are open to all. To find a site visit www.mass.gov/stophthespread.

Other COVID-related news:

COVID-19 Eviction Diversion: The state has launched a new website with information on resources available to help residents impacted by COVID-19 to cover rent and mortgage payments at <http://www.mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp>. Residents can also call 2-1-1, which features a language line and trained staff.

ABCC Advisory: The Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission issued an advisory on October 13, 2020 reminding hotels, restaurants and other licensees that their **indoor events/gatherings are limited to 25 people in a single enclosed space. Licensee employees working at an indoor event do not count towards the capacity.** All premises must maintain 6 feet of physical distance from every other participant in the gathering except where individuals are members of the same household.

Statewide gatherings order is modified, effective October 5:

- The limit for indoor gatherings remains at a maximum of 25 people.
- Outdoor gatherings in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 50 people.
- Outdoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings will have a limit of 100
 - Also requires 1 week advance notice to the Board of Health if attendance is expected to exceed 50.

Travel Order: The list of higher and lower risk states changes often so make sure to check the status before any travel. The state has updated the criteria for risk level and as of 10/17 the following states are considered low risk: **CA, WA, HI, DC, NY, NJ and the New England states, except RI.** Rhode Island remains on the restricted list. Detailed travel order instructions and the travel risk map can be found [here](#). In summary, all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, must:

1. Complete the online Massachusetts Travel Form prior to arrival, unless they are visiting from a lower-risk state.
2. Quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72-hours prior to arrival in Massachusetts.

COVID-19 Community Impact Survey (CCIS) is an online survey to collect data on the social, economic, and health needs and inequities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Open to anyone over age 14: <http://www.mass.gov/COVIDsurvey>.

Halloween Guidance: The BOH is strongly encouraging residents to avoid indoor Halloween activities and parties. Trick or treating is still allowed, but we recommend:

- Place candy on a platter instead of a bowl, preferably outside in a grab and go format.
- Consider leaving hand sanitizer by any treats.
- Wear a face mask or face covering.
- A costume mask is not a substitute for a face mask or face covering. To protect yourself and others, ensure you are wearing a protective face mask or covering instead of or in addition to a costume mask.
- Maintain six feet distance from anyone outside your own household.

The state has issued Halloween safety tips, while reminding residents that gathering limits and all other COVID-19 rules apply: <https://www.mass.gov/news/state-public-health-officials-offer-tips-for-a-safe-and-healthy-halloween>

Town COVID Updates:

- **The Westport Food Pantry is at the Westport Grange, 931 Main Rd and is now partnering with the nonprofit Friends of the Westport Council on Aging (FWCOA).** The next food pantry pick-up is scheduled for Monday, October 26th from 9 am to noon at the Grange. Donation guidelines have been updated with monetary donations now going to the FWCOA, Attn. Food Pantry, PO Box 4228, Westport, MA

02790. Food and grocery gift card donations are accepted on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings at the Grange.

- **Early voting at Town Hall:** COVID -19 safety protocols are in place for those who wish to vote in person in the basement of Town Hall.
- **Schools** - The Westport Community Schools [website](#) has the latest on what is happening locally. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has begun issuing weekly updates on positive COVID-19 cases in schools every Thursday: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/#weekly-report> You can also find FAQs for families with information from the state at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/backtoschool/>
- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public, but service by phone, mail, outdoor dropbox, or online is recommended. Face masks are required for in person visits.

Other BOH announcements:

- **Flu season:** Flu vaccines are available from the Town Nurse by appointment only. We no longer have any high dose (for over 65) vaccine in our supply. Please call 508-636-1030 if you would like to make an appointment.
- **Public Hearing on proposed Septic System Water Resource Protection Regulation:** Scheduled for October 29th at 7 pm. Links to the slides and video of the October 7th information session are posted on the [BOH website](#).
- **Drought Advisory:** Despite the recent rains, we are still way below normal rainfall levels for the year. Continue to limit discretionary use of water.

Stay safe everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation.
Matthew J. Armendo, Director