



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
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Case Update:

Total cumulative number of state confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents on November 18th was **363, up 58 cases from last week**. One Westport resident is currently hospitalized with COVID. The rolling 14 day incidence rate rose slightly, going up from 44.8 to **46.0/100,000**. Statewide the incidence rate is 29.4. Westport's number of cases for its population size (incidence rate) and the percentage of positive test results remain well above the state and Bristol County averages. The complete data are available from the [state's weekly community COVID report](#).

Testing Data:

9902 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents up through November 18th. There were **134 positive tests** out of 1434 done in the last 14 days for a positivity rate of **9.34%**. This is over full percentage point higher than last week and three times the state rate.

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/stophespread.

Westport continues in the "red" or higher risk category – now for five consecutive weeks. The community has reverted back to Step 1 of Phase 3 since November 9th. We will need three consecutive weeks of an incidence rate below 10/100,000 or positivity rate below 5% to be able to return to a lower risk status. In the meantime, indoor performance venues must remain closed, outdoor gatherings in public are limited to 50, and capacity at various facilities is reduced to 40%.

As I reported last week, we have had to turn all initial contact tracing over to the state Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) team because the numbers overwhelmed our ability to keep up. The CTC is also having challenges due to the high volume of cases statewide. However, when the CTC is unable to reach a person (case or contact), the Board of Health will be notified to make one last attempt to reach them. If we are unsuccessful in reaching that person (case or contact) a wellness check will be conducted. Contact tracing is a key element to breaking chains of transmission, so I urge Westport residents to cooperate with the CTC or Linda Pierce, our town nurse, if you should get a call – it will help the entire community.

Information about [quarantine](#) and [isolation](#) protocols is available on the town's COVID website: <https://www.westport-ma.com/covid-19-corona-virus-information>

I also echo the recent CDC guidance to avoid travel for Thanksgiving and keep the holiday meal limited to your own household. We are in the middle of a very serious upturn in COVID cases nationwide, including here in Massachusetts. Our health care

systems are being stressed again. So it is really important for the health of the entire community that we each do everything we can to reduce the spread of the virus. Please wear a face mask at all times in public and whenever you are with people outside your immediate household, even indoors. Keep 6 feet of distance and wash your hands often. It remains vital for our community to follow the Governor's new orders and advisories (summarized below) to protect everyone. If you know of a household in quarantine, please offer to help with groceries and other essentials so they don't have to risk exposure of others.

Other COVID-related news:

UPDATED QUARANTINE GUIDANCE (as of 11/18): The guidance to quarantine for 14 days after last close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19 is still in effect. However, those who have been exposed may now test out of quarantine after 10 days with a negative PCR test and certain other requirements. The updated quarantine guidance is on the town COVID website.

RECENT ORDERS: These took effect on Friday, Nov. 6th and are summarized below. More details are available on <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

These statewide orders include:

1. Updated "Stay at Home Advisory" to refrain from going out except for essential activities from 10 pm to 5 am.
 2. Indoor recreation, theatres, casinos etc. must close at 9:30 pm
 3. Restaurant table service must stop at 9:30 pm, though takeout is still allowed later.
 4. No alcohol/cannabis sales in any venue after 9:30 pm
 5. Gatherings are restricted: private home no more than 10, indoor gatherings at event or public venues will be limited to 25, outdoor gatherings are also restricted to 50, and in all cases gatherings must end at 9:30 pm
 6. Updated face coverings order – Everyone older than 5 must wear a face covering at all times when in a public location, whether indoors or outdoors and when carpooling with non household members.
- [**GATHERINGS: Governor's COVID-19 Order #54**](#) (effective November 6). Reduced gathering size limit at private residences: **indoors limited to 10 people and outdoors limited to 25 people**. Requires that all gatherings (regardless of size or location) disperse by 9:30 PM. Note that the limit on gatherings held in public spaces and at event venues has been further reduced in Westport due to our 'red' risk level status.

Organizers of gatherings must report known positive COVID-19 cases to the Board of Health and must cooperate with contact tracing. The gatherings order authorizes continued enforcement by local health and police departments and specifies that fines for violating the gathering order will be \$500 for each person above the limit at a particular gathering.

- [**FACE COVERINGS: Governor's COVID-19 Order #55**](#) (effective November 6). All persons must wear face-coverings in all public places, **even where they are able to maintain 6 feet of distance from others**.

- **BUSINESS EARLY CLOSING: Governor's COVID-19 Order #53** (effective November 6). **Requires the early closure of certain businesses and activities each night at 9:30 PM.** The 9:30 PM closure requirement is aligned with the [Stay At Home Advisory](#) and together the two new initiatives are designed to further limit activities that could lead to COVID-19 transmission.
- **STAY AT HOME ADVISORY** (<https://www.mass.gov/news/stay-at-home-advisory>)

In order to comply with this advisory, **between the hours of 10pm and 5am, you must:**

- **Only leave home to go to work or school, or for essential needs** such as seeking emergency medical care, going to the grocery store or pharmacy, picking up take-out food, or receiving deliveries. If you do leave home, practice social distancing by staying 6 feet away from others and wearing a face covering.
- **Not have gatherings in your home with anybody outside of your household.**
- Comply with all Governor's Orders, including orders requiring face coverings, limiting gatherings, and mandating early closure of businesses.
- Practice social distancing and avoid touching surfaces frequently touched by others if you go outside to get fresh air.
- Use remote modes of communication like phone or video chat instead of visiting friends or family.

Updated Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Guidance: Latest guidance can be found [HERE](#). Also, the New England states plus New Jersey will suspend interstate youth hockey competitions for public and private schools effective Saturday, November 14, 2020 through at minimum December 31, 2020.

Travel Order: As of November 21, Maine and New Hampshire will be removed from the low risk state list. That leaves only Vermont and Hawaii as low risk states. 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 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.

Town COVID Updates:

- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY as of NOV. 16th**. Service by phone, mail, outdoor drop box, or online is recommended. Face masks are required for in-person appointments.
- **Thanksgiving:** The Board of Health wishes everyone a safe and healthy Thanksgiving. Keep it small and local. To view the full Thanksgiving guidance, please visit the Board of Health [website](#).

- **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 will be coordinated with a veteran's food pickup as well and is scheduled for Monday, November 23rd from 9 am to noon at the Grange. This week will feature turkeys and all the fixings. Monetary donations can be sent 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 (except Thanksgiving) at the Grange.
- **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/>

Other BOH announcements:

- **Transfer Station schedule for Thanksgiving week:** Half day on Monday; closed Thanksgiving Day and Friday.
- **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 to make an appointment. Thursday evening appointments are also available.

Stay safe everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Matthew J. Armendo, Director