

Dear Employers,

As we find ourselves at the beginning of the holiday season, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your commitment to our community, your employees, and your customers. We have asked a lot of our employers this year and the response has been overwhelming. Our collective ability to adapt and implement safety protocols in the face of COVID-19 has been remarkable. Main Street retailers and restaurants have been particularly resilient despite a challenging environment. Thank you for your continued support and adherence to safety measures as the cold weather arrives.

We find ourselves in the anticipated second surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. From a public health perspective, we must remain vigilant, while also showing compassion. With community spread and transmission risk on the rise, it is critical that employers continue to protect and support your employees and customers. This means reminding your workers about their **obligation to report potential exposure to the virus or a positive test and their need to quarantine or isolate in accordance with Department of Public Health guidelines. We are asking all employers to continue to accommodate employees who need to isolate or quarantine.**

If you have an employee that tests positive for the coronavirus, **you are required to report this to and cooperate with your local board of health.** Furthermore, the participation of your employees in the [COVID-19 Community Tracing program](#) is essential. The ability of contact tracers to act quickly and stop the spread depends on prompt disclosure. By supporting employees during quarantine or isolation and cooperating with contact tracers, you can continue to do your part to flatten the curve in Massachusetts. The business community has met the challenge posed by COVID-19 in so many ways. We are grateful for your continued efforts and partnership.

Employers can follow the below steps to help prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19:

1. Review the Department of Public Health's [information and guidance](#) for persons in quarantine or isolation, and share it with your employees.
2. Remind all employees to report instances of possible exposure and to immediately quarantine until either they receive a negative test or they self-isolate for 14 days, in accordance with the DPH guidance.
3. Ensure employees who have faced possible exposure **do not feel pressured to report to the workplace**, whether or not they are exhibiting symptoms. **Reassuring employees of their job security will help prevent virus transmission between coworkers.**
4. Monitor use of break rooms and warn employees of risks associated with car pooling. These settings have both been identified as hot spots for COVID-19 infections. Information about car pooling can be found [here](#).

Most workers in Massachusetts have the right to earn and use up to 40 hours of job-protected sick time per year to take care of themselves and certain family members. Workers must earn at least one hour of earned sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Additional information on sick time requirements can be found on the Attorney General's Office [website](#).

I want to express my gratitude for your partnership, engagement, and commitment to public health during this pandemic. As we take the fight to the virus, I know all of us will do our best to protect our communities and flatten the curve.

Kind Regards,



Mike Kennealy
Secretary of Housing and Economic Development