

Town of Acton

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

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Town of Acton Provides Updated Information about Coronavirus

No Confirmed or Suspected Cases in Acton

ACTON -- Town Manager John Mangiaratti and Health Director Sheryl Ball wish to provide the community with updated information on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as federal and state health officials continue to monitor the spread of the virus internationally.

At this time, there are no confirmed or presumptive cases of the virus in Acton.

Town officials are closely following guidance from the DPH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding the virus and steps communities can take to prevent COVID-19. Acton Town leadership and members of the Town's public health, nursing, fire/EMS, police, dispatch communications, library, public works and facilities, human resources, IT and transportation departments as well as the senior center met

today to discuss the town's plans to respond to the virus. Additionally, representatives of Acton Boxborough Regional School District and of the Town of Boxborough's leadership and police, fire and public health departments were in attendance.

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, an extensive cleaning regiment has been implemented in all public buildings in Acton, and the Town has developed plans for outreach to community organizations and the public for education on best practices. Additional screening protocols have also been added to public safety dispatch procedures to improve safety for first responders.

The Governor declared a State of Emergency in Massachusetts due to COVID-19 today, formally activating the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. As of Tuesday at 4 p.m., the total number of confirmed or presumptive positive cases of COVID-19, the illness associated with the novel coronavirus, has risen to 92 in Massachusetts according to the Department of Public Health.

However, the risk of COVID-19 to the general public in Massachusetts remains low, according to DPH.

Representatives of the Towns of Acton and Boxborough, as well as Acton Boxborough Regional School District, will continue to meet regularly to monitor the situation, plan and coordinate resources as needed for the community.

The Acton Health Department additionally attended the Acton, Boxborough, Harvard, Littleton Early Childhood Council's quarterly meeting today to answer questions about the virus and provide information on prevention and response to the virus.

Today's State of Emergency declaration includes remote working accommodations for executive branch employees of the state government. The Town of Acton is reviewing the governor's recommendations. The Town government remains open and operational and fully able to serve the citizens and business community in Acton.

State public health officials are urging seniors and those with preexisting health conditions to avoid large gatherings, including sporting events, concerts and conferences.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has determined that it will not count absenteeism from early March onward, and that school districts will not have to

extend the school year beyond its planned end dates as a result of the coronavirus.

Acton Boxborough Regional School District will provide specific information for the district community regarding the latest update from DESE on the district's website, www.abschools.org.

If anyone displays [symptoms of COVID-19](#), including a fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should not come to work or school and they are advised to contact their primary care physician. According to the [CDC](#), symptoms of the virus appear 2-14 days of exposure.

The COVID-19 situation is very fluid, and new information and guidelines are being updated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a regular basis. The CDC offers the following [guidance for how COVID-19 spreads](#). The virus is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

According to the CDC, the virus is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another, within about six feet, when an individual with the virus coughs or sneezes.

The DPH recommends that residents continue with good hygiene practices including:

- Practice good hand hygiene! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds including under your fingernails. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content) can be used when soap and water are not available.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with a tissue and discard it immediately. Cough into the sleeve over your elbow instead of your hand. Wash your hands often when coughing and sneezing.
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

If residents are concerned they may have the virus and are experiencing symptoms,

the Town of Acton wishes to share the following information from the CDC:

- Stay home. Avoid public areas and transportation, and monitor your symptoms
- Stay away from other people and limit contact with pets and animals.
- Call ahead before visiting your healthcare provider and inform them if you believe you may have contracted COVID-19.
- If you are sick, wear a face mask when around others.
 - The CDC does not advise those who are not sick to wear a face mask unless they are caring for a sick individual.
- Notify your public health department if you are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring.

For more information, [click here](#).

The Town of Acton additionally wishes to remind residents that, while there is a lot of concern surrounding the spread of COVID-19, the virus does not discriminate and it is important to be wary of social stigma in connection with the illness. For more information about stigma and resilience in connection to COVID-19 from the CDC, [click here](#).

For more information, visit the DPH website by [clicking here](#) and the CDC's website by [clicking here](#).

Additional updates will be released if additional relevant information becomes available from the Town of Acton.

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Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like the flu and COVID-19:



Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based gel.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.



Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.



Stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with others.



Think ahead about how to take care of yourself and your loved ones if the virus starts spreading in the community. Visit [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus) for a preparedness checklist.

For more, visit: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus

 Massachusetts Department of Public Health

3/2/2020

(Image courtesy Massachusetts Department of Public Health)

A message from the Town of Acton

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