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Town Manager

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**Town Manager’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
December 31, 2020**

Wishing you and your family a very happy New Year.

Watertown has a total of 1351 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 1162 community members have recovered from the virus. Nineteen Town employees have had confirmed cases. Watertown has recorded twenty-eight COVID-19 fatalities. Our thoughts go out to the families as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

Watertown COVID-19 Case age Distribution¹

19 and Under	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over	Unknown/no age recorded	Total
112	248	267	184	173	180	186	1	1351

Free COVID-19 Testing for Watertown Residents – Additional Slots

The Town of Watertown is offering, by appointment only, one - free COVID-19 Test for Watertown residents. Testing is free, does not require a medical referral and you do not need to have COVID-19 symptoms to get tested. Pre-registration is required to receive a test (pre-registration details below) and we ask that you only sign up for one test to allow other residents access to testing.

Testing will be held inside the Commander’s Mansion 440 Talcott Avenue on the following dates and times:

- Tuesday January 5, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Wednesday January 6, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- Tuesday January 12, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Wednesday January 13, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- Tuesday January 19, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Wednesday January 20, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- Tuesday January 26, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Wednesday January 27, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

In order to obtain an appointment a Watertown resident must pre-register by clicking on the following link:
<https://proemscovidtesting.as.me/watertown>

¹ There is a difference between the Commonwealth’s reported numbers and what the Watertown Board of Health can confirm through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN).

This is not a drive up test. Watertown residents who have an appointment will enter into the Commander's Mansion and with the assistance of Pro Ambulance employees will conduct a self-administering nasal swab (PCR test).

Test results: As a reminder, a negative test does not mean you cannot spread COVID-19, or get infected with COVID-19, at a later date. Residents should continue to practice physical distancing and hygiene, regardless of a negative test result.

For questions about testing results, please email: COVID@proems.com

The above dates and times are the only dates and times available for Watertown residents through this program.

There are several additional ways that Watertown residents can get tested for COVID-19:

The state's "Stop the Spread" testing sites are open to all Massachusetts residents, and testing is free of charge. The sites are located in several nearby communities (Framingham, Marlborough, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Winthrop). Many of these sites are walk-up or drive-through and do not require appointments. Details about each site are provided at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread#eligibility->

Contact Your Health Care Provider

If you think you may have COVID-19, call your health care provider and tell them about your symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms may include fever, sore throat, loss of sense of smell, cough, difficulty breathing, body aches, or chills. Your health care provider will help you decide whether testing is appropriate. If your provider thinks you should be tested and cannot do the test on-site, they will make the referral to a testing site near you. Here is a current list of COVID-19 testing sites in Massachusetts:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>

Use the State's Free Online Telehealth Service

The state is partnering with Doctor on Demand to offer free telehealth visits to Massachusetts residents who want to get a quick assessment of symptoms and/or do not have health insurance. Through this service, you'll be evaluated online and connected to testing if needed. To access this free service, go to: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/check-your-symptoms-for-covid-19-online>

Call the State's 24-Hour Hotline

If you do not have internet access or do not feel comfortable using websites, you can call 2-1-1, a 24-hour state-supported telephone hotline. Hotline staff can provide guidance on testing.

RESOURCES

- [Massachusetts COVID-19 testing page](#) (Mass.gov)
- [COVID-19 Test Site Locator tool](#)

MEMA COVID-19 Command Center Situation Report

Yesterday, the Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#), including community-specific COVID-19 case and testing data. The report also includes risk categories for each city and town based on the average daily incident rate over the past 14 days.

Health Department

The Health Department has a portal for COVID-19 Information: COVID-19 Resource Center where all COVID-19 related information will be posted: <https://www.ci.watertown.ma.us/978/Coronavirus>

Watertown Public Schools (WPS)

Due to our desire to kick-start our new year off well, we will be focusing on testing students and staff who may have traveled or spent extended time with people outside of their immediate household prior to the return to in-person learning. In order to accomplish this, we will start the year in our **remote learning model**, *Monday, January 4 through Wednesday, January 6*, with a return to in-person learning on Thursday, January 7.

In addition to our protocols for social distancing, PPE, handwashing, and staying home when sick, student testing is one of the safety measures that has allowed us to remain open. To date, we have processed **3698** staff tests, with **5** positives, and **317** pools of up to **10** students in each pool with only **3** positive pools. The indication from these tests is that less than .15% of our students and staff that are part of our testing program have tested positive. We have learned of COVID positives outside of our testing program, but even so, our rate of COVID-19 in our schools is significantly lower than the town's average.

If you have already signed up for testing through our pooled testing program, we ask, encourage, and invite you to bring your children in for testing on Monday, January 4 or Tuesday, January 5 to ensure a safe reopening for in-person learning on January 7. If you haven't already signed up for pooled testing, all of the necessary information can be found at this [link](#).

Students in Grade K-8: We will be holding COVID-19 pooled testing on Monday, January 4 for our Cohort A students, and Tuesday, January 5 for our Cohort B students. All testing will take place at Watertown High School from 12-6 pm, with testing for students whose last names begin with A-L from 12-3 and M-Z from 3-6. More details to follow closer to the return.

Students at Watertown High School: We will be holding COVID-19 pooled testing on Monday, January 4 for students with last names beginning in A through Ke and Tuesday, January 5 for students with last names beginning with Kf-Z. All testing will take place at Watertown High School from 12-6 pm. More information about testing for high school students will be sent by Principal Giacobozzi.

Please note that according to the Massachusetts Travel Order, in order to return to school in person, your family must quarantine for 10 days if you travel outside of the state to high-risk states (all states with the exception of Hawaii are considered high risk) unless your child(ren) has a negative PCR test. Participating in our pooled PCR testing meets that requirement. More guidance about the travel restrictions can be found [here](#). This order applies to day trips out of state as well.

Town Hall is open to the public by appointment and drop-off transactions only.

All payments may be placed in the silver box next to the Library book drop-off labeled "Payments Drop-off" located on Thaxter Street. You may also drop-off transactions in person in the Philip Pane Hearing Room, Saltonstall Park side of Town Hall. Members of the public must wear a face covering while in the building and is asked to maintain physical separation from employees and other visitors of at least six feet.

Many departments offer residents and businesses the ability to conduct transactions by phone, online or by mail. Individuals should check with their intended departments to see if there are options for service.

[Visit the Department directory for phone numbers.](#)

This includes the following Town Offices:

- Town Manager, TownMgr@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6465
- Health Department, Health@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6446
- Senior Center, SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6490
- Recreation Office, Recreation@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6494
- DPW Administrative, DPW1@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 617-972-6420
- Inspectional Services, buildinginspector@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6480
- Treasurer/Collector, Treas&Collectors@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6450
- Assessor, Assessor@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6410
- Town Clerk/Vital Records, TownClerks@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6486
- Veterans Services, PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov, (617) 972-6416

All Departments are open 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday – Friday. The Building Inspectors’ Offices are open at 7:30 AM.

Watertown Free Public Library

The Watertown Free Public Library is open for browsing. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 10 AM to 7 PM, Friday from 10 AM to 5 PM and Saturday from 9 AM to 12 PM. Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 10 AM is reserved for patrons 65+ and with high risk health conditions. Every person entering the building must wear a face covering and staff will monitor capacity. In addition, every patron will be asked to sign in with their contact information as required by the State of Massachusetts for contact tracing purposes. That information will be kept confidential and only turned over upon request from the state or local health department. The information will be destroyed after 14 days. For more information on what to expect when returning to the library, please follow this link:

<https://www.watertownlib.org/514/COVID-19-Library-Updates>

Same Day Pickup is now available for in stock items. Call 617-972-6431 to speak with a librarian and get your books today!

Curbside service continues and has been expanded. For more information visit

<https://www.watertownlib.org/537/Curbside-Pickup>

The Red Leaf Café is now closed through at least the end of the year. The book sale is still open for purchases during library open hours.

Hatch Makerspace is open by appointment only. For more information visit

<https://www.watertownlib.org/576/Book-an-Appointment>. Hatch will continue to offer curbside pickup for 3D prints and laser cut original work on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 AM and 4 PM. Print and cut jobs must meet certain eligibility requirements for this service. For more information, visit [watertownlib.org/hatchpickup](https://www.watertownlib.org/hatchpickup)

Laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots are available for a 2 week loan period from the Watertown Free Public Library. For more information visit www.watertownlib.org/laptops or call 617-972-6431

Homebound Delivery If you are stuck at home due to a medical necessity, we can deliver books to you. Sign up here: [watertownlib.org/delivery](https://www.watertownlib.org/delivery)

Print from Home Don't have a printer? You can send up to 10 pages to us and pick up the next day at WFPL. Learn more: watertownlib.org/print

Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center/Food Pantry

The Watertown Senior Center **remains closed, but Senior Center staff are available to connect you to their Zoom programs and to provide other assistance.** Senior Parking Permits can be renewed over the phone by calling the Senior Center and new permits can be purchased by calling the Senior Center and making an appointment. The monthly Watertown Senior News can be found at <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/150/Activities-during-COVID-19>. The **Senior Shuttle Bus is running again** on a limited, by-appointment basis to the Stop and Shop on Watertown Street. Call the Senior Center on Fridays from 8:30 AM -1 PM to reserve your ride for the following week.

The Watertown Food Pantry continues to be open Tuesdays, 10 AM until 2 PM at 80 Mt. Auburn Street, rear. When going to the Food Pantry, please wear a mask or other face covering to protect your own self and those around you in the parking lot and at the Food Pantry. Food donations (canned goods, cold cereals, peanut butter and other shelf-stable items) are accepted at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays starting at 9:00 AM until 2 PM. For more information about the Food Pantry or any senior issues, call the Senior Center at (617) 972-6490 or send an e-mail to SeniorCenter@watertown-ma.gov.

Watertown Veterans' Services

Watertown Veterans' Services is closed to the public but is still available to assist with administering and applying for benefits. Families and Veterans may reach out to inquire about applying for benefits. Watertown Veterans' Services, in partnership with the Greater Boston Veterans' Collaborative has a detailed spreadsheet with benefits and services—including but not limited to: financial, mental health, transportation, and food resources— available to Veterans and others during this pandemic. The list is constantly being updated and interested Veterans and families should contact Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) for the most up to date list. Please contact the VSO at: PGeorge@watertown-ma.gov or (617) 972-6416 (Office) and (781) 645-9127 (Cell)

How will you find out about local emergencies?

To get Emergency Alerts from the Town of Watertown text WATERTOWNMA to 888-777. Your cell phone number will be in the system without having to establish an Everbridge account. You also have the opportunity to add your email address into the system at this time. You would then receive all emails and/or texts from the system. If you already have an Everbridge account, this is not necessary, as you will continue to receive the notifications sent by the Town.

Watertown COVID-19 Email

For general COVID-19 questions not specific to the Town of Watertown, all Massachusetts residents are encouraged to call the State's **2-1-1 Hotline** that is staffed by operators 24/7 and with translators available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cell phone or use the live chat option on the **Mass 2-1-1 website (mass211.org)**.

The Town of Watertown has a COVID-19 email to allow residents and business owners to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Watertown. Questions can also be emailed to **COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov**.

Please call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.

Calls should not be made to 9-1-1 for questions regarding COVID-19.

Please continue to take the following actions to limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay safe, stay home
- Practice social distancing – when in public spaces try to remain at least 6-feet away from others.
- Stay home if you are sick – and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth – when you cough or sneeze use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands – with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based sanitizing gel.

Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Travel Order](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [Stop the Spread](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Watertown COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

Town Manager's Coronavirus (COVID-19) (39) [Updates/Statements](#)

We are in this together

We are living in an unprecedented time where our world, our nation and our community, is faced with the threat of an international pandemic known as COVID-19.

All of our Town employees are incredibly committed to ensuring the Town can safely meet the needs of our community while we are also protecting our employees' safety. All departments have implemented vigorous social distancing and hygiene protocols. I am so grateful for all of our employees' efforts under difficult circumstances.

The members of the Honorable Town Council continue to be available to help all residents and to provide updates/information to protect the health and safety of all the residents of Watertown.

I want to thank all of the members of our community for your cooperation and efforts to date; and for your continued actions to limit the spread of COVID-19. **Additionally, please check on your neighbors who may live alone. If you have any concerns, please email us at COVID19@police.watertown-ma.gov or call the Police Department at (617) 972-6500; and we will follow up.**

Watertown is a resilient community and we are all in this together. We will continue to support each other and stay strong, Watertown Strong!