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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Transition to Step II of Phase III for Lower Risk Communities Effective October 5th

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that effective Monday, October 5th, lower risk communities will be permitted to move into Step II of Phase III of the Commonwealth’s reopening plan. All other communities will remain in Phase III, Step I. Governor Charlie Baker also issued a revised gatherings order. Industry specific guidance and protocols for a range of Phase I, II, and III businesses will also be updated.

Phase III, Step II:

On May 18, the Baker-Polito Administration released a four-phased plan to reopen the economy based on sustained improvements in public health data.

Last month, the Administration began releasing data on the average daily COVID cases per 100,000 residents, average percent positivity, and total case counts, for all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns.

Lower risk communities are defined as cities and towns that have not been a “red” community in any of the last three weekly Department of Public Health (DPH) weekly reports.

Effective October 5, a limited number of sectors will be eligible to reopen, with restrictions, in Step II of Phase III for lower risk communities only:

- Indoor performance venues will be permitted to open with 50% capacity with a maximum of 250 people.
- Outdoor performance venue capacity will increase to 50% with a max of 250 people.
- For arcades and indoor and outdoor recreation businesses, additional Step II activities like trampolines, obstacle courses, roller rinks and laser tag will also be permitted to open and capacity will increase to 50%.
- Fitting rooms will be permitted to open in all types of retail stores.
- Gyms, museums, libraries and driving and flight schools will also be permitted to increase their capacity to 50%.

Revised Gatherings Order:

- The limit for indoor gatherings remains at a maximum of 25 people for all communities.
- Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 50 people for all communities.
- Outdoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings will have a limit of 50 people in Step I communities, and a limit of 100 people in lower risk, Step II communities.

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