

Good evening. On behalf of the Select Board and the Board of Health, this is Fire Chief Charlie Doody with a public health update. As of December 11, 2020, the number of confirmed COVID cases in Canton is 614 with 107 probable cases. The town's status remains yellow with a 1.46% positivity rate. The average daily incidence rate is 11 cases per 100,000 people. The number of deaths is now 57. Canton is experiencing an increasing number of positive cases across all age groups over the last 14 days. Further details about Canton's status can be found on the COVID page on the Town of Canton's website.

<https://www.town.canton.ma.us/139/Board-of-Health>

Governor Baker has announced that effective Sunday December 13th, all communities in Massachusetts will return to Step 1 of Phase 3 of the Commonwealth's reopening plan. Capacity limits will be reduced to 40% statewide for most businesses and the limit for outdoor gatherings will be reduced from 100 persons to 50 persons. The rollback is in response to the increase in new COVID 19 infections and hospitalizations since the Thanksgiving holiday. You can see full details of the rollback by visiting the COVID page on the mass.gov website.

<https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-statewide-rollback-to-phase-three-step-one-additional>

In response to the increased number of cases in Canton, all municipal offices will be moving to a "by-appointment only" service model beginning at 8:00 a.m. on December 21, 2020.

This model will remain in effect until such time as the positivity rate reflects a sustained downward trend as it did over the summer months. Contact information for each department can be found on the town of Canton website.

<https://www.town.canton.ma.us/27/Government>

In addition, on December 21st, the library will be temporarily suspending in person services. The library will continue to provide curbside book and materials pick up as well as curbside printing and faxing services. Virtual programming and daily story times will also continue. Please check the library website for more information and for expanded curbside pickup hours.

<http://library.canton.ma.us/>

Clearly the dramatic increase in positive cases is a result of both the Thanksgiving holiday and the fact that the cold weather is forcing us to gather inside more often. With Hanukkah upon us and Christmas quickly approaching, if you are planning to host a holiday celebration, keep it small. Limit in-person holiday gatherings to only people you live with or limit your gathering to a small group of individuals with whom you are regularly in contact with and take extra precautions to protect those around you who may be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as older adults or those with underlying medical conditions

The spread of the Coronavirus is now reaching levels that we have not seen since the beginning of the pandemic. Although effective vaccines are almost ready for widespread distribution, we must continue to follow public health protocols in order to get to the finish line. Wear a mask, keep your gatherings small, maintain social distance and wash your hands often.

Happy Hanukkah. Thank you for listening and stay well.