



CAMPUS COUNSEL

A legal blog written for administrators, HR professionals, in-house counsel, and deans at colleges and universities

Massachusetts Releases COVID-19 Guidelines For Commencement Ceremonies

BY BOWDITCH & DEWEY • APRIL 12, 2021

On March 22, 2021, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) issued [new COVID-19 safety standards for all in-person commencement and graduation ceremonies held in the spring and summer of 2021](#).

The standards apply to all public and private colleges, universities, and K-12 schools in Massachusetts, and are organized around four main topics: (1) capacity limits and operations; (2) social distancing; (3) hygiene protocols; and (4) cleaning and disinfecting. They apply to both indoor and outdoor ceremonies, and create minimum requirements that are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Commencement organizers and venue operators are responsible for adhering to these standards and staying abreast of any updates.

In addition to these new standards, the EOHHS revised the [Massachusetts Higher Education COVID-19 Control Plan](#) effective March 22, 2021, to include changes related to Phase 4, Step 1 of Massachusetts' reopening plan. The new Control Plan includes updates related to the rescission of the Massachusetts Travel Order and the new commencement guidelines.

CLIENT TIP

Institutions should [review the commencement ceremony safety standards](#) and complete the revised Control Plan.