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The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Approves Detailed Health and Safety Requirements for Casino Reopening

Today, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) voted unanimously 5-0 to approve detailed guidelines, outlining the minimum requirements for the reopening of the state's two resort-casinos and single slots facility. During a [remote public meeting](#), the five gaming commissioners adopted health and safety rules that Encore Boston Harbor, MGM Springfield and Plainridge Park Casino must meet in anticipation of the resumption of casino operations, scheduled for Phase 3 of the Commonwealth's phased-in reopening plan.

The minimum requirements adopted by the Commission address key areas, including Cleaning and Sanitization, Social Distancing, Guest Screening, Occupancy Limits, and Reporting Measures, among others. Each licensee will be required to submit a detailed plan at least 7 days in advance of reopening. The licensee plans must identify the steps and measures taken to achieve compliance with the guidance and protocols issued by the CDC, the Department of Public Health, the Board of Health in the host community, the Baker-Polito Administration, and the guidelines adopted by the Commission.

MGC Chair **Cathy Judd-Stein** said, "The MGC is working to ensure a safe and sustainable reopening, issuing guidelines today that will no doubt shift to reflect the changing public health data over time. We are confident that our three licensees will work in good faith to implement and enforce these measures. We also know that the success of a reopening will require the casino patrons' cooperative efforts, thoughtful awareness, and empathy for one another and the greater community."

The guidelines require the casino properties to sanitize routinely and in compliance with CDC guidelines. Guests will be screened upon entry and required to wear face masks, which will be provided if needed. Employees will also be subject to screening procedures including temperature checks and will be required to wear face masks.

The Commission agreed that all three casinos will promote social distancing of slots play by either maintaining a minimum of 6' distance between operating slot positions or by installing plexiglass dividers not less than 6' high between operating slot positions.

For table games at Encore and MGM, licensees will install plexiglass dividers at Blackjack-style tables no less than 5'10" tall separating dealer from player positions and between player positions. There will be no more than 3 player positions at each Blackjack-style table, with chairs for unavailable positions removed. The Commission also ruled that there will be no poker, craps or roulette until further notice.



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Each licensee will be required to limit occupancy based on its number of gaming positions available multiplied by 3 plus gaming area employees of the licensee and the MGC and capacity of open amenities (utilizing the occupancy limits set by the Governor's guidelines for each amenity).

Lastly, the required minimum health and safety standards put forth in this guide are subject to adjustment or modification based on evolving information and/or mandates from the state.

View the complete list of minimum required health and safety standards [here](#).

Background

On March 14, 2020, the MGC temporarily suspended operations of its three licensees due to the unprecedented public health risks associated with the Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles D. Baker's declaration of a State of Emergency and the issuance of related orders and advisories. To guide the economic reopening of the Commonwealth, Governor Baker later convened a Reopening Advisory Board and determined that industries would re-introduce their services over the course of four phases in accordance with certain industry sector-specific standards. The Baker-Polito Administration set the reopening of casinos for Phase 3. The state has announced that Phase 3 will not begin before July 6, 2020 with the precise date to be dependent on public health data.

The Commission held three open meetings (on [Thursday, June 11, 2020](#); [Wednesday, June 17, 2020](#); and [Tuesday, June 23, 2020](#)) to discuss minimum requirements for the initial reopening of casinos. Each of these open meetings included extensive input from the MGC executive staff, the Investigations and Enforcement Bureau, and the Commission's three licensees.

About MassGaming

The mission of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in November 2011. In creating that process, the Commission will strive to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory systems engender the confidence of the public and participants, and that they provide the greatest possible economic development benefits and revenues to the people of the Commonwealth, reduce to the maximum extent possible the potentially negative or unintended consequences of the new legislation, and allow an appropriate return on investment for gaming providers that assures the operation of casino-resorts of the highest quality. For more information on MGC, please visit MassGaming.com or connect and share on Twitter ([@MassGamingComm](https://twitter.com/MassGamingComm)) or Facebook www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm.

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