

Town of Duxbury, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND TOWN MANAGER



March 27, 2020

Dear Duxbury Residents,

The Town of Duxbury now has five (5) positive cases of COVID-19. **This remains a crucial time in infection control. Maintaining social distancing, limiting exposure to others, avoiding crowded places and vigilant handwashing are vital steps in slowing the spread of this disease.**

This unprecedented crisis is without doubt a stressful and taxing situation on everyone and our need to seek outlets for modified outdoor activities is important. We know that many of our residents are going outdoors and enjoying the various natural resources we have to offer such as recreational fields, numerous walking trails and of course, Duxbury Beach.

Before anyone decides to head out and access these places, we are urging that common sense be used and to **PLEASE TAKE THIS HEALTH PANDEMIC SERIOUSLY. PHYSICAL DISTANCING IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL - REMEMBER THAT EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE COULD SAVE A LIFE OR RISK ONE.**

As expected, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of people using Duxbury's numerous trails, walking along roads and visiting Duxbury Beach. A note to both pedestrians and motorists alike – always remember - our roads are our sidewalks – pay attention to your surroundings and be mindful of each other while either walking or driving. While on the trails, again it is imperative that social distancing with a separation of at least 6' feet between individuals be maintained. If you arrive at an area and are greeted with a large number of cars in the parking lot or parked along the road, think twice about visiting that area at that time and consider opting for another area with fewer vehicles and less pedestrian congestion.

With regard to Duxbury Beach, in his recent message to our residents, Duxbury Police Chief McDonald stated:

We are paying special attention to all activities on our beaches. We ask beachgoers to respect the physical beach, all regulations/laws, and the personnel stationed there. These individuals are a valuable part of our team and are there to enforce the applicable laws/regulations, protecting the beach and you. Pay attention to the applicable regulations/laws and all closing times; we want everyone to enjoy this beautiful resource, but insist that it be done in a respectful manner. *(The entire text of Chief McDonald's message can be found below.)*

Further, the owners of Duxbury Beach, the Duxbury Beach Reservation, have provided the Town with the following rules, which the Town strongly supports:

Duxbury Beach Reservation is concerned for the health and safety of Duxbury Beach patrons and Reservation staff required to be on the beach. We understand the desire of everyone to enjoy the beach in these unusual times and we want nothing more than to keep Duxbury Beach open. However, we can only do that if visitors comply with the important new orders of the Governor regarding social distancing and group gatherings.

Even in this early spring weather, increased visitors coming to the beach and walking along our pathways, roadways and through our parking lots are making social distancing difficult. We are also concerned that leaving the beach open is encouraging friends to meet up and gather. Groups gathering on the beach and in the parking lots and friends meeting up together is not consistent with social distancing practices and the Governor's orders. Also, visitors not adhering to established beach closing times is putting undue pressure on our Police Department.

In dealing with the COVID-19 virus, scientists acknowledge that social distancing is the only current way of dealing with a disease that spreads even before the carrier knows he or she is infected. Social distancing is the way to "flatten the curve" and slow the spread, giving the health care industry the chance to treat those who are in need of care. In efforts to keep Duxbury Beach open, we are enacting the following rules to be implemented immediately:

- Visitors should park vehicles in available parking lots (not on the roadway) and only in every other space (leaving an empty space between each car)
- Stickered vehicles should park in designated, available areas on the beach with a minimum of 15' feet separation from the car on either side
- Only two vehicles are allowed per pullout on the back road
- We ask visitors to stay in small groups, limited to members of their own household
- Practice social distancing of at least six feet (6') between individuals
- In an effort to ensure we have ample parking spaces available, the paved lot at Blakeman's will be opened for parking, but only in every other available space
- Adherence to all rules, including rules relating to leashing of dogs and rules with respect to closing times of the beach and parking lots, and to all directions of the police and Reservation staff, is required

With everyone's support and cooperation, we will be able to keep Duxbury Beach open so folks have space to get out during these trying times. If these rules are not adhered to, however, Duxbury Beach will have no option but to close.

As we have noted previously, many recent visitors to our beach have not been keeping their distance from others and have not been adhering to beach rules. Please be aware that the beach is staffed by our public safety officials for your protection and the protection of the beach. Please make sure that you are familiar with the beach rules and **make note of all closing times** prior to going to the beach.

Persons who refuse to leave any part of the beach that is closed or at the requisite closing time may be subject to the revocation of their beach sticker and/or monetary fines. Policing this behavior is taking staff away from our already stressed public safety agencies. Unfortunately, if patrons cannot use the beach responsibly and adhere to rules (including observing the closing times), the Town will have no choice but close the area to the public. If people maintain their distance from others (including beach staff) and adhere to the regulations then we can all continue to enjoy this tremendous recreational resource during this difficult time.

We want to assure you that your Town services are still available, the majority of the staff members are working and we remain available to you. Understandably, due to physical distancing limitations, much of our staff is operating remotely and we will respond as soon as we can but please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Also, please be sure to visit the Town's website where you can sign up to receive any updates we provide via email and to make sure you are enrolled in the Town's automated Reverse 911 calling system.

<https://www.town.duxbury.ma.us/>

If you have a suggestion, a need, a question, or a concern, please do not hesitate to contact any member of our staff. While e-mail is generally the best way to contact a Department Head, they are also checking voice mails as well.

Finally, always feel free to contact me directly via e-mail at read@town.duxbury.ma.us or at 781-934-1100 Ext. 5400.

I certainly wish all of you good health as we navigate these uncharted waters together.

Thank you,

Rene' J. Read
Town Manager
Town of Duxbury, MA

Chief McDonald's message to Duxbury residents – March 26, 2020

Dear Duxbury Residents,

These are challenging times. As the world prepares for and responds to the coronavirus outbreak, in so many ways we are navigating uncharted waters. Information and updates are coming at us hourly. As we digest and implement these changes, one thing remains unchanged: the men and women of the Duxbury Police Department continue to be committed to the health, safety, and wellness of the members of our community.

Policing will continue despite the changes that continue to come our way. Your police officers will not withdraw; they will remain on the front lines to ensure your safety. That is our paramount directive. I am proud of the men and women of this Department and have the utmost respect for their dedication to this community.

Out of respect for their safety and health, we have temporarily adapted some of our operational practices to meet the challenges associated with this pandemic. We are taking every reasonable precaution to keep our officers healthy so that they may protect and assist our citizens. We are asking citizens in need of non-emergency assistance to refrain from physically visiting the Department; instead, please call our business line at (781) 934-5656 for further guidance. If you are experiencing an emergency, you should still call 911. In order to minimize face to face contact, we are asking you to understand that if an officer is dispatched to your home or business they will make every attempt to have you come outside if possible. Officers will also be practicing social distancing in most circumstances.

I would like to remind our residents that due to the "stay at home" order, there is increased activity on our roadways as many people are choosing to walk and bike as a relief to the monotony. I have instructed officers to continue their enforcement of all traffic laws, paying special attention to any activity that may place others in harm's way. Please pay extra attention while out driving, walking, and biking around town.

I would also like to remind our residents that due to the “stay at home” order, we will all be living in close proximity to our family members and roommates. These uncertain times may bring about moments of stress and anxiety which could lead to domestic strife. If this happens, please take a moment to think; step away and separate yourself from the situation. Emotional outbursts and actions are the number one causes of domestic situations to which the police are called. The Commonwealth has very strict laws regarding police response to domestic situations; in many circumstances, these laws do not allow for any discretion by responding officers. In other words, in most situations officers are mandated by law to make a physical arrest. Please do not allow an emotional outburst during this stressful time to facilitate your introduction to the criminal justice system. These types of actions may have far reaching, and time consuming, negative influences on your life.

Please note: we are paying special attention to all activities on our beaches. We ask beachgoers to respect the physical beach, all regulations/laws, and the personnel stationed there. These individuals are a valuable part of our team and are there to enforce the applicable laws/regulations, protecting the beach and you. Pay attention to the applicable regulations/laws and all closing times; we want everyone to enjoy this beautiful resource, but insist that it be done in a respectful manner.

Duxbury is an incredible community that has always come together in times of difficulty. Please take care of yourselves, your family, your friends and your neighbors. It is this strong sense of community that sets us apart from many others in the Commonwealth. Rest assured that in your time of need, the Duxbury Police Department stands ready and able to assist you.

Respectfully,
Stephen R. McDonald
Chief of Police