TO: All Massachusetts Chiefs of Police  
   Police Commissioner, City of Boston

FROM: William D. McKinney, Director  
   Department of Labor Standards

DATE: September 21, 2015

RE: Permits for Holiday Openings – Approved  
   Columbus Day (before 12:00 PM) - October 12, 2015  
   Veterans Day (before 1:00 PM) - November 11, 2015

The Department of Labor Standards must approve all local permits for retail stores and businesses to open on certain holidays, including Columbus Day before 12:00 PM and Veterans Day before 1:00 PM. Any business may open on Columbus Day after 12:00 PM or on Veterans Day after 1:00 PM without a permit. Permits must be approved by the Department on a uniform basis statewide. See Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 136, §§ 6(50), 7, 13, 15.

In accordance with M.G.L. chapter 136, §§ 13 and 15, and provided the Department of Labor Standards has given statewide approval, the police chief in each city and town in the Commonwealth has the discretion to issue a permit for businesses located in that municipality to open for business prior to 12:00 PM on Columbus Day or 1:00 PM on Veterans Day. Police chiefs are not required to grant permits for earlier opening for these holidays. In granting permits, chiefs may impose reasonable terms and conditions appropriate to the nature of the business and the good of the community, at their discretion.

The Department of Labor Standards hereby approves, on a statewide basis, all permits issued by local police chiefs for openings by establishments prior to 12:00 PM on Columbus Day, October 12, 2015, and prior to 1:00 PM on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015.

Pursuant to Chapter 136, § 13, any retail establishment which operates on Columbus Day or the Veterans Day holiday must compensate employees who work on the holiday with time and one-half pay, and “such work shall be voluntary and refusal to work… shall not be grounds for discrimination, dismissal, discharge, reduction in hours, or any other penalty.”

For further information please view the Blue Laws guidance page on our website at www.mass.gov/dols/bluelaws or contact the Department of Labor Standards at (617) 626-6952.