



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STANDARDS

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**COVID-19 Sector-Specific Safety Rules for Large Capacity Venues  
permitted to Open to the Public in Phase IV of the Commonwealth's Re-Opening Plan**

Updated and Effective as of May 10, 2021  
to reflect allowance for operation at 25 percent capacity

COVID-19 Order No. 66 permits the re-opening to the public of "large capacity venues" used for sports and entertainment. The Order defines a large capacity venue as any indoor or outdoor stadium, arena, ballpark, or similar facility used for spectator sports, entertainment, or similar performances that has a capacity of 5,000 persons or more as specified in a certificate of occupancy or other, equivalent authorization.

This document is issued to establish sector-specific COVID-19 safety rules for the operation of large capacity venues as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of Order No. 66. These sector-specific rules may be updated from time to time at the direction of the Governor in order to clarify the application of certain COVID-19 safety rules to the context of large capacity venues generally. The public health data for disease prevention that inform these rules can and does change frequently. Operators of large capacity venues are responsible for adhering to all local, State, and Federal requirements and for staying abreast of any updates to these rules.

Similar facilities with capacities of fewer than 5,000 persons must follow sector-specific rules issued by DLS that are applicable to the specific activity or set of activities conducted at the facility.

**All large capacity venues are required to operate according to the following rules, which collectively constitute sector-specific COVID-19 safety rules for large capacity venues as provided in sections 2 and 3 of Order No. 66.**

- a. *COVID-19 Safety Plans*: The facility-specific COVID-19 safety plan filed by the facility operator for review by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and including any revisions ordered by DPH following its review or in response to a finding that actual operations have resulted in unsafe conditions.
- b. *Overall Capacity Limitations*: Large capacity venues may operate at 25 percent of permitted capacity as specified in a certificate of occupancy or other, equivalent

authorization. Occupancy counts must include all spectators and attendees but may exclude workers and staff employed by the venue.

- c. *Application of Activity-Specific Safety Measures:* As a general matter, in addition to the provisions of the operator's facility-specific COVID-19 safety plan, an operator is responsible for complying with sector-specific rules applicable to all activities conducted at the facility. Specialized on-site amenities and services may only open and operate when those amenities or services would otherwise be authorized to operate under the Commonwealth's Phased Reopening Plan and then must adhere to all sector-specific safety protocols, available on the Reopening Plan website, applicable to the amenity or service.

Relevant standards for operators of large capacity venues include:

- Food service:
  - For counter service or for passed or in-seat service to spectators must follow relevant provisions of Indoor and Outdoor Events rules
  - For seated table service must follow Restaurant rules
- Alcohol sales:
  - For counter service or passed or in-seat service to spectators must follow relevant provisions of Indoor and Outdoor Events rules (drink service may be provided by servers and alcoholic beverages do not have to be accompanied by food orders)
  - For seated table service must follow Restaurant rules
- Gift shops: must follow the latest Retail rules
- Musical and other performances: must follow the latest Theater and Performance Venue rules specifying required distancing between performers and between performers and attendees and restricting certain forms of indoor performances
- Private events: must follow the latest Indoor and Outdoor Event rules