Joint Guidance & Best Practices

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve in Massachusetts on an almost daily basis. Back in early March of 2020, the joint guidance was that agencies should suspend the in-person fingerprinting requirement for new Licenses to Carry (LTCs) and Firearms Identification Cards (FIDs) for a limited time in order to limit the spread of the virus while the appropriate protocols could be developed to protect law enforcement personnel. This was meant to be only a temporary delay, and since that time, protocols regarding the donning and use of PPE have been developed which should provide personnel with the appropriate level of protection to complete the fingerprinting process.

As a result, many agencies have resumed fingerprinting and processing new applications. However, other agencies may have not resumed processing those applications, or are

1 This guidance represents a collaboration between Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services, and the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association.
now considering suspending the processing of those applications in light of intelligence suggesting that there will be another “surge” of the virus in the coming weeks.

This Joint Guidance and Best Practices document is being provided to all municipal law enforcement agencies in order to address concerns related to the continued processing of LTCs and FIDs:

- All applicants should be directed to mail in their new or renewal applications, or provide a central drop-off location at the station.

- Applicants should be advised to include a check for the application fee along with the application, and that no processing will be initiated without the appropriate fee included.

- Applications are available on the FRB website here: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-firearms-license.

- After a complete application has been received (along with the application fee), if fingerprints and/or interviews are required, agencies should schedule a time to conduct the in-person interview and complete the fingerprinting process. An appointment notice may be mailed or emailed to the applicant detailing the process and advising them of the agency’s COVID-19 procedure requirements. The appointment notice used by DCJIS is attached and may be reformatted for use by agencies. Agencies may also consider using a platform, such as Zoom, to conduct interviews via teleconference.

- Agencies may consider following a process similar to that utilized by the FRB when applicants show up for their scheduled appointment:
  
  o Upon arrival, applicants proceed through security.
  
  o A team member will take the applicant’s temperature and then provide the applicant with a copy of the COVID-19 screening questions. The COVID-19 Health Screening Questionnaire used by DCJIS is attached and may be reformatted for use by agencies.
  
  o If the applicant’s temperature is below 100 degrees and the individual answers “no” to all the screening questions, then the applicant will be escorted to the room designated for fingerprinting.
  
  o The applicant is required to wash his/her hands, and then their fingerprints are taken on a live scan device. This process takes around five minutes, depending on the quality of the fingerprints.
  
  o Once completed, the team member will move behind a computer workstation which has been configured for social distancing from the
applicant with a plexiglass barrier. During this part of the process, there is a short interview and the applicant’s photograph is taken. Alternatively, a photograph of the applicant may be uploaded into MIRCS.

- The entire process takes approximately 15 minutes.

**Agencies may consider other options in completing the fingerprinting process. For instances, some agencies have:**

- completed the fingerprinting process in areas like garages, sallyports, and carports, in order to increase the airflow and distance between the applicant and employee.

- directed applicants to fingerprint themselves, while being given verbal instructions by the employee from a safe distance.

- made arrangements with surrounding agencies with either greater personnel or resources to complete the fingerprinting process. Note: a request must be sent to the State Police Identification Section to configure the live scan machine for additional departments. See sample attached.

- When agencies complete the fingerprinting process, they should ensure that the personnel assigned be provided with adequate PPE, and be instructed to change their gloves and sanitize any equipment between each applicant that they, or the applicant, come into contact with during the process.

- If after consultation with municipal counsel, an agency decides to temporarily suspend the fingerprinting process, the agency should still accept and process applications. However, applications should not be submitted for printing to the FRB until the fingerprints have been processed.

- Note that for licensees who apply for a renewal prior to the expiration of their license (and who get a receipt acknowledging so), their license will remain valid until the agency approves or denies it. For licensees who apply for renewal after the expiration of their LTC, c.140, sec.131(i) states that for the purposes of c.269, sec.10 an LTC shall be deemed valid for a period not to exceed 90 days beyond the expiration date unless the LTC is revoked. This provision applies only to LTC and not FID Cards.
Dear Applicant,

The Firearms Records Bureau (FRB) has received your completed license to carry or permit application.

Your interview appointment has been scheduled for: [INSERT DATE AND TIME]

Please contact the FRB to confirm your appointment at (617) 660-4782 or frb@mass.gov. Appointments are scheduled on the earliest possible date. If you cannot appear on the given date/time, you may request a new appointment date; however, changing your appointment date will result in a significant delay in the processing of your license. Failure to appear at your appointment without notice may result in a denial of your license application.

Please note the following:

1) To complete the application process you must appear in person on the date/time listed above at the following:

   Massachusetts Department of
   Criminal Justice Information Services
   Firearms Records Bureau
   200 Arlington Street
   Chelsea, MA 02150

2) Please note the following COVID-19 procedure requirements:

   • You must wear a mask or face covering at all time.
   • Your temperature will be taken prior to interview, and must read less than 100 degrees.
   • If you are visibly ill (coughing, running nose, fever, sweats, etc.), you will be denied access and rescheduled for a later date.
   • You will be asked a series of COVID-19 screening questions; you will be denied entry and rescheduled for a later date if you answer “yes” to any of the questions.
   • You will be required to use hand sanitizer or wash with their hands with soap and water before entering the interview room.

3) You must bring a government issued, photo identification card. Without identification, you will not be allowed into the building and will need to reschedule your appointment.

4) You cannot bring firearms or knives of any kind into the building.
5) You will be required to pass through a security checkpoint to gain access to the building. This security checkpoint utilizes a metal detector and an X-ray machine. Please notify security personnel if you have an implanted automatic defibrillator as an alternative method of screening will be required.

6) Please arrive 15 minutes prior to appointment so that you can be processed through security.

Free parking is available in the MITC Building A parking lot, please call into building security upon arrival.
DCJIS COVID-19 HEALTH SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: ____________________________________________

DATE: __________________________________________

PURPOSE OF VISIT: _________________________________________

Prior to being provided access to the DCJIS workplace, all visitors must complete the questions in this questionnaire and will have their temperature recorded. Visitors that refuse to complete the questionnaire, refuse to allow for their temperature to be taken, refuse to wear a mask, have a temperature reading of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or respond “yes” to the questions below will not be allowed to enter the DCJIS workplace and will need to reschedule their appointment for a later time.

Health questions:

(1) Have you, a family member, or someone you live with tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days? YES  NO

(2) Are you currently experiencing, or have experienced within the last 3 days symptoms of COVID-19? YES  NO

(3) Have you or a family member been advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider within the last 14 days? YES  NO

(4) Are you awaiting COVID-19 test results, live with, or been in contact with someone that is? YES  NO

DCJIS STAFF NOTE IN THE SECTION BELOW THE RECORDED TEMPERATURE FOR THE VISITOR.

RECORDED TEMPERATURE: _______________________

2 Symptoms of COVID-19 may include a fever, a severe cough, shortness of breath, chills, severe muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or extreme fatigue.
DCJIS HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ENTERING THE DCJIS WORKPLACE

TO: DCJIS Staff

FROM: Jamison R. Gagnon, Commissioner  
Michaela Dunne, Deputy Commissioner  
Agapi Koulouris, General Counsel

RE: Health and Safety Protocols for Members of the Public Entering the DCJIS Workplace

DATE: September 8, 2020

To promote the health and safety of all staff and visitors to the DCJIS during the COVID-19 Pandemic, DCJIS is implementing the protocols outlined below effective on the date of said memorandum. DCJIS will provide training to employees on the use of the infrared thermometer.

Please contact your manager with any questions.

1. All visitors to the DCJIS workplace, including but not limited to applicants for non-resident firearms licenses, must contact a DCJIS staff member prior to their visit to schedule an appointment.

2. Visitors to the DCJIS workplace will check in with the MITC Security Desk. Upon arrival to the building, the MITC Security staff will contact the DCJIS Staff member.

3. DCJIS Staff will utilize the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided by the DCJIS, including but not limited to any of the following: masks, gloves, goggles, face shields, and hand sanitizer. DCJIS staff may also provide PPE to the visitor. DCJIS Staff will greet the visitor in the MITC lobby area and provide the visitor with the attached questionnaire regarding symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19.

4. The visitor will complete the questionnaire and return it to the DCJIS staff member.

5. If the visitor responds, “No” to all questions, then a DCJIS staff member will take the temperature of the visitor using the DCJIS issued handheld infrared thermometer, to take the individual’s body temperature. If a visitor’s temperature reads 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the visitor may wait in the lobby for 10 minutes and be retested.

6. Visitors that answer “Yes” to any of the questions, present with a body temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, refuse to wear a mask, or refuse to complete the
questionnaire or temperature check, will be denied access to the DCJIS workplace and will need to reschedule their appointment for a later time.

7. The completed questionnaire(s) will be saved electronically on a daily basis by the staff member that escorted the visitor to the DCJIS workplace. The folder is located in O/Health screening questionnaires. Once electronically saved, the paper copy will be shredded.
SAMPLE COURTESY BOOKING SAMPLE LETTER

TO: Lieutenant Christine M. Dorian #2555, Commander Identification Section

FROM: John Doe

SUBJECT: Request to perform “Courtesy Bookings”

I am requesting that the following surrounding cities/towns be added to our livescan database for courtesy bookings: Town of Acton, Town of Concord, Town of Wayland, City of Marlborough and The Concord State Police Barracks.

Thank you,

Your Agency Chief or Designee