

Encore Boston Harbor casino to open July 12 under Phase 3 coronavirus plan

Written by Administrator
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The die has been cast: The Encore Boston Harbor casino plans to open back up on Sunday, July 12, the company announced Thursday.

The announcement came a few hours after Gov. Charlie Baker announced that Phase 3 of his four-phase coronavirus reopening plan will start Monday. During this step, casinos, movie theaters and gyms can start back up following closures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But Encore will have far from a full house, as the casino has said it will have many of its slot machines turned off, and it will enforce social distancing.

“Every effort has been made to preserve Encore’s luxury experience and provide guests with the peace of mind needed to enjoy a fun and relaxing return,” the casino said in a statement announcing the game-on move.

The opening is pending the approval of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.

Encore, at \$2.3 billion, was the most expensive private construction project in the history of the state, opening last June before closing March 15 as the pandemic spread.

Its top brass in May outlined a range of steps for an eventual coronavirus-era reopening, including thermal cameras taking the temperature of everyone going in and out, and all staff and visitors being required to wear a mask. They said the casino will sanitize all machines every hour and will use “disinfectant guns” that blast an electrified mist of cleaning products.

The casino is installing plexiglass between gamblers at blackjack tables, and restaurants will not be using printed menus as guests instead use their smartphones to order food.

Other table games like poker, craps and roulette remain suspended until further notice.

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Massachusetts' coronavirus trends have remained positive now more than two months after the state and Boston-area peak. But cases nationally have begun to spike, driven mostly by large outbreaks in the southeast and southwest.

Encore, a huge golden building on the banks of the Mystic River, which is owned by casino giant Wynn resorts. The casino said it will open its hotel side "in a limited capacity."

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