



## Relocation Guide to Boston, MA Japanese Expat Edition

[www.iorworld.com](http://www.iorworld.com)

*IOR makes every effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide is as current as possible. If you notice errors, or information which is no longer accurate, please contact us immediately so that we may correct the issue.*

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## WELCOME AND OVERVIEW



Photo courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#)

What began as a homesteading community eventually evolved into a center for social and political change. Boston has since become the economic and cultural hub of New England. As the region's hub, Boston is home to over 617,000 residents, many institutions of higher education, some of the world's finest inpatient hospitals, and numerous cultural and professional sports organizations. Boston-based jobs, primarily within the finance, health care, educational, and service areas, numbered nearly 660,000 in 2002. Millions of people visit Boston to take in its historic neighborhoods, attend cultural festivals, attend historical reenactments, or sporting events, and conduct business.

Boston prides itself on being one of the most livable cities in America. Along with its fantastic opportunity for career growth and its rich history, Boston has twenty-one diverse neighborhoods that offer more than 600,000 residents the opportunity to taste, touch, and experience things from all over the world. Each of Boston's citizens benefit from living in Boston by having exceptional medical facilities, vibrant neighborhood, and a solid network of parks, community centers, community members and libraries.

Along with its rich community, Boston is a technologically advanced city. It has piloted a new bench recharge station, or "Soofa", which is a solar-powered outdoor phone charging station. The high-tech benches will be deployed in green spaces all over Boston. It will allow citizens to sit, charge their phone, and enjoy nature, all while being environmentally conscious! The city is serious about being sustainable and that is shown in this advancement. The Soofa is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Boston phenomenal environmentally friendly advancements.

### City of Boston Overview

- [Official Website of the City of Boston](#)
- [Mayor of the City of Boston](#)
- Population: 617,594
- Land Area: 48 square miles (124 km<sup>2</sup>)
- [Boston Parks and Recreation Department](#)
- [Boston Public Library](#)
- [Boston Maps](#)
- [Weather Today in Boston](#)

### History

- [Timeline of Boston History](#)
- [Museums of Boston](#)
- [Top Boston Museums](#)

### Recommended Reading (available in print and on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)):

- [The Die-Hard Sports Fans Guide to Boston: A Spectators Handbook](#) by Christopher Klein
- [Short History of Boston \(Short Histories\)](#) by Robert J. Allison
- [The Paradise of All These Parts: A Natural History of Boston](#) by John Hanson Mitchell
- [Discovering the Boston Harbor Islands: A Guide to the City's Hidden Shores](#) by Christopher Klein
- [Gaining Ground: A History of Land Making in Boston](#) by Nancy S. Seasholes

### What to See, Sightseeing Tours, Value Packages and Passes, Tourist Information

- [Boston Visitors Center](#)
- [Freedom Trail](#)
- [Boston City Pass](#)
- [Boston's Best Sightseeing tours](#)

### Where to Find Arts & Entertainment

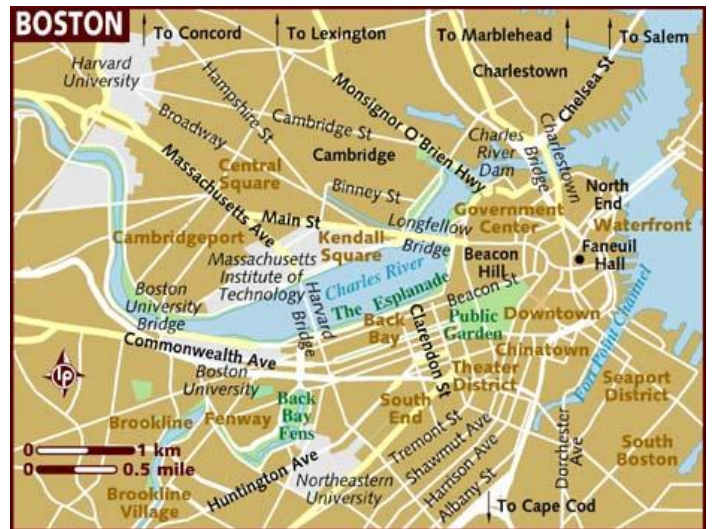
- [Boston Herald](#)
- [The Boston Globe](#)
- [East Boston Times](#)

## City Seal

The City Seal motto, to wit: Sicut patribus sit Deus nobis: and that the inscription be as follows: - 'Bostonia condita, A.D. 1630. Civitatis regimine donata, A.D. 1822.'" The motto is taken from Kings viii, 557: GOD be with us as he was with our fathers." For more information, click [here](#).

## Neighborhoods

While many cities are defined by their skylines, Boston is distinguished by its vibrant neighborhoods. Indeed, Boston's strength, diversity and vitality are all rooted in her neighborhoods, where neighborhood pride and cultures from all over the world are cherished and celebrated. Although each neighborhood has its own personality and distinct appeal, all of the neighborhoods demonstrate Boston's changing face, as this historic capital has become a magnet for all of the world's citizens. These new immigrants have joined native Bostonians and transplants from across the country to make Boston the world-class city it is today. For more information on Boston Neighborhoods, click [here](#).



Source: [www.CityofBoston.gov](http://www.CityofBoston.gov)

## Native Sons & Daughters

Throughout Bay State history, there have been a plethora of men and women who have left lasting legacies and paved the way for innovators of today. Browse a list of some notable native "movers and shakers" of the past and present. For more information on Boston's Native Sons & Daughters, click [here](#).

## Boston Firsts

A city full of wonder, Boston has played an innovative and central role in American history for over 300 years. Our city has made significant advances in everything from science and engineering to culture and society. For more information on Boston First, click [here](#).

## Facts & Trivia

Did you know the Ted Williams Tunnel is the deepest tunnel in North America? Learn about Boston facts and figures related to people, history, places, and more. For more information on Facts and trivia, click [here](#).

Source: [www.CityofBoston.gov](http://www.CityofBoston.gov)



## Cambridge

Cambridge is a city in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, situated directly north of Boston, across the Charles River. It was named in honor of the University of Cambridge in England, an important center of the Puritan theology embraced by the town's founders. Cambridge is home to two of the world's most prominent universities, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. According to the 2010 United States Census, the city's population was 105,162.



The border between Cambridge and the neighboring city of Somerville passes through densely populated neighborhoods which are connected by the MBTA Red Line. Some of the main squares, Inman, Porter, and to a lesser extent, Harvard, are very close to the city line, as are Somerville's Union and Davis Squares.

Cambridge has been called the "City of Squares" by some, as most of its commercial districts are major street intersections known as squares. Each of the squares acts as a neighborhood center. These include:

- **Central Square**, formed by the junction of Massachusetts Avenue, Prospect Street, and Western Avenue, is well known for its wide variety of ethnic restaurants. As recently as the late 1990s it was rather run-down; it underwent a controversial gentrification in recent years (in conjunction with the development of the nearby University Park at MIT), and continues to grow more expensive. It is served by the Central Station stop on the MBTA Red Line subway. **Lafayette Square**, formed by the junction of Massachusetts Avenue, Columbia Street, Sidney Street, and Main Street, is considered part of the Central Square area. Cambridgeport is south of Central Square along Magazine Street and Brookline Street.
- **Harvard Square**, formed by the junction of Massachusetts Avenue, Brattle Street, and JFK Street. This is the primary site of Harvard University, and is a major Cambridge shopping area. It is served by a Red Line station. Harvard Square was originally the northwestern terminus of the Red Line and a major transfer point to streetcars that also operated in a short tunnel—which is still a major bus terminal, although the area under the Square was reconfigured dramatically in the 1980s when the Red Line was extended. The Harvard Square area includes **Brattle Square** and **Eliot Square**. A short distance away from the square lays the Cambridge Common, while the neighborhood north of Harvard and east of Massachusetts Avenue is known as Agassiz in honor of the famed scientist Louis Agassiz.

- **Inman Square**, at the junction of Cambridge and Hampshire streets in Mid-Cambridge. Inman Square is home to many diverse restaurants, bars, music venues and boutiques. The funky street scene still holds some urban flair, but was dressed up recently with Victorian streetlights, benches and bus stops. A new community park was installed and is a favorite place to enjoy some takeout food from the nearby restaurants and ice cream parlor.
- **Kendall Square**, formed by the junction of Broadway, Main Street, and Third Street, is also known as **Technology Square**, a name shared with an office and laboratory building cluster in the neighborhood. Just over the Longfellow Bridge from Boston, at the eastern end of the MIT campus, it is served by the Kendall/MIT station on the MBTA Red Line subway. Most of Cambridge's large office towers are located here, giving the area somewhat of an office park feel. A flourishing biotech industry has grown up around this area. The "One Kendall Square" complex is nearby, but—confusingly—not actually in Kendall Square. Also, the "Cambridge Center" office complex is located here, and not at the actual center of Cambridge.
- **Lechmere Square**, at the junction of Cambridge and First streets, adjacent to the CambridgeSide Galleria shopping mall. Perhaps best known as the northern terminus of the MBTA Green Line subway, at Lechmere Station.
- **Porter Square**, about a mile north on Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square, is formed by the junction of Massachusetts and Somerville Avenues, and includes part of the city of Somerville. It is served by the Porter Square Station, a complex housing a Red Line stop and a Fitchburg Line commuter rail stop. Lesley University's University Hall and Porter campus are located at Porter Square.



**EMERGENCY**

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY  
DIAL 911  
FOR FIRE, POLICE & AMBULANCE**

**\*\*Note for non-English speakers:** If the person calling 911 is unable to speak English, they can tell the operator what language they speak. The 911 Operator will have an interpreter on the line within one minute to assist with the translation.

**They will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**If you accidentally call 911, please do not hang up.** The police will automatically be dispatched to your home to make sure there are no problems. Explain to the Operator the call was an accident.

[POISON CONTROL](#) 1-800-222-1222 [ANIMAL POISON CONTROL](#) 1-888-426-4435

**Other Important Numbers:**

CLOSEST CONSULATE OFFICE \_\_\_\_\_  
PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN \_\_\_\_\_  
WORK PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

[Find your Consulate in Boston](#)  
[Primary Care Physician](#)



## HOSPITALS

Boston's medical facilities are among the best in the world. Many are teaching hospitals, and most have more than one location.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

[www.bidmc.org](http://www.bidmc.org)

Dana Farber Cancer Institute

[www.dana-farber.org](http://www.dana-farber.org)

Boston Medical Center

[www.bmc.org](http://www.bmc.org)

Mass General Hospital

[www.massgeneral.org](http://www.massgeneral.org)

Brigham and Women's Hospital

[www.brighamsandwomens.org](http://www.brighamsandwomens.org)

Shriner's Hospital for Children

[www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org](http://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org)

Children's Hospital

[www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org)

Tufts Medical Center

[www.Tuftsmedicalcenter.org](http://www.Tuftsmedicalcenter.org)

### Hospitals in the Cambridge area:

Mount Auburn Hospital

<http://www.mountauburnhospital.org/>

Cambridge Health Alliance

<http://www.challiance.org/Main/Home.aspx>

A lease is an agreement that outlines the obligations of the owner and the tenants of a house or apartment. It is a legally binding document, so it is important for you to know the exact terms of the lease agreement before you sign it. Please do not sign a lease without reviewing it with your IOR DS Consultant.

### Types of rental properties

- **Apartment**  
An apartment is rented from a company or individual that owns the property. Apartment buildings are usually multistory with people over, under and beside each other with common hallways or walk ways. Apartments are often rented from a company or individual in the form of an individual lease with no bearing on the other tenants of the building (besides noise complaints, property damage, etc.)
- **Studio Apartments**  
A studio apartment is basically a one room apartment with sleeping, dining and kitchen all in one room plus a full bathroom. A “convertible” or “alcove” studio may have a nook or area which can be sectioned off separately for sleeping.
- **Condominium**  
A condo is a communally owned estate and the owners share the ownership of the common areas such as grounds and hallways. Condominiums may be apartment style buildings or town house type buildings, but condo owners do not usually own the land. Condo owners are required to pay monthly common maintenance charges, although these might be reflected in your rental rate (it is important to clarify this with your landlord).
- **Townhouse**  
A Townhouse is a kind of structure where the individual properties are flush against each other with tiny front and back “yards” and shared walls between them. Almost always they are multistory single family. Usually townhouse owners own the property under their townhouse.
- **Single Family Houses**  
Single-family houses are free-standing rental properties that are habited by one person or a family. As you do not share this rental space with any other tenants, single-family homes offer the most amount of privacy. Homes also often come with a parking spot and/or garage space, but may require that you handle certain maintenance items (i.e. your lawn, minor repairs, etc.)

## Rental Agents

In most situations, your IOR consultant will partner with a local realtor to have access to the most current and extensive property listings as well as the realtor's expertise in preparing and negotiating leases. This agent receives a commission for their assistance, in most US locations this commission is paid by the Landlord, not the tenant. Your IOR DS Consultant will discuss this with you.

## Renter's Rights

Tenants who lease or rent property are protected against discrimination by [The Fair Housing Act](#). If you think your rights have been violated, you may write a letter or telephone the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office nearest you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file as soon as possible.

While you can generally expect the same service from landlords, it's important to know your state's laws. Each state and most major cities have their own tenant rights, laws and protections. Here are [Massachusetts's](#).

You can also visit the [HUD website here for a full guide to renters' rights by states](#).

If your rental property ever suffers any defects that make your place uninhabitable, your landlord has a duty to fix it. While some apartments let you make online requests for repairs, as well as provide a phone number for "emergencies," always make sure you document your request in writing. The landlord will then have a certain amount of time to make those repairs.

## Privacy

You have the right to privacy. While the landlord owns the property, they can't access it in anytime they want. All states have laws stating renters have a right to privacy while renting. Pretty much the only time the landlord can come into your rental without permission or notice is when they're responding to an emergency that threatens injury or property damage.

Any other time the landlord wants to enter your apartment, they need to have your permission and in most cases give you 24-hours' notice before entering.

## What to expect from the landlord:

In most states, you are legally entitled to:

- Safe structural elements including floors, walls, roofs, and secure doors and windows
- Privacy as described above
- All electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems function.
- Working hot and cold water
- Exterminating infestations of rodents and other insects
- Access to trash receptacles
- Landlords cannot discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.
- Water, electricity, and gas bills are up to you to pay. **Your IOR consultant will assist you with this process.**
- Apartment buildings sometimes come with laundry and dryer machines in the basement.

## Utilities and Appliances

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you or provide information on connecting your utilities. It is possible some will be included in your rent, but typically most are not.

If you are moving from Europe to North America, you might be surprised at the relatively large size of the kitchen appliances in your accommodation, especially the refrigerator! It may also surprise some expats that properties are rented **with** appliances. In the US it is standard for properties to include a refrigerator, stove, and oven. Properties may also include a dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer depending on the location, size, and price point.

**\*\*Note that you will need a social security number in order to register and pay for utilities\*\***

## Recycling

Ask your IOR DSC about the recycling arrangements and requirements. While domestic waste disposals are common in North America, recycling bins are not always present even if such services exist.

## The process

### Review your housing budget with your DSC

Your DSC can help you understand what kind of property you can afford. You also need to take into account that you may be responsible for some of the utility costs of your rental.

### Know what you want

What are you looking for in a property? Do you want a studio or a single bedroom? Maybe you want to rent a single family home? Do you need the property to come with appliances, including washer and dryer? Do want it to be close to school or your work? Do you want it to be within walking distance of retail, like groceries or coffee shops? Are you looking for a child friendly area?

Keep in mind that outside of the city center in major cities, there is not much public transportation and most locals drive everywhere.

### Identify potential apartments

IOR offers home finding services to aid you with this process. Your consultant may work with a local broker who will help to organize appointments and visit properties. They will also assist in the rental application and the leasing process.

## Common Abbreviations and Acronyms used in rental housing listings

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
<b>24-hr mtn</b>	24-hour emergency maintenance
<b>AC or A/C</b>	Air conditioning
<b>Appls</b>	Appliances

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
<b>LA</b>	Living area
<b>LR</b>	Living room
<b>MBR</b>	Master bedroom

<b>Apt</b>	Apartment
<b>BA</b>	Bathroom
<b>BR</b>	Bedroom
<b>Bsmt</b>	Basement
<b>CAC</b>	Central air conditioning
<b>DA</b>	Dining area
<b>Det</b>	Detached
<b>Dk</b>	Deck
<b>DR</b>	Dining room
<b>Dw (D/w)</b>	Dishwasher
<b>Eff</b>	Efficiency
<b>EiK</b>	Eat-in kitchen
<b>Fin bsmt</b>	Finished basement
<b>FDR</b>	Formal dining room
<b>FHA</b>	Fair Housing Act
<b>FMR</b>	Fair market rent
<b>FP</b>	Floorplan
<b>Gar</b>	Garage
<b>H/A</b>	Handicapped accessible
<b>H/W</b>	Hardwood floors
<b>Hi ceil</b>	High ceilings
<b>HVAC</b>	Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning

<b>MBTH</b>	Master bathroom
<b>Neg</b>	Negotiable
<b>Ofc</b>	Office
<b>OSP</b>	Off-street parking
<b>Pkg</b>	Parking
<b>PM</b>	Property manager (management)
<b>Pvt</b>	Private
<b>Pwdr rm</b>	Powder room (1/2 bath)
<b>RE</b>	Real estate
<b>Renov</b>	Renovated
<b>Rf</b>	Roof
<b>Rm</b>	Room
<b>SF</b>	Single-family
<b>SFA</b>	Single-family attached
<b>SFD</b>	Single-family detached
<b>Sp, PI (S/p)</b>	Swimming pool
<b>Sq. ft</b>	Square feet
<b>Th (T/H)</b>	Townhouse
<b>Vw (vu)</b>	View
<b>W/A</b>	Wheelchair accessible
<b>W/W</b>	Wall-to-wall carpeting

### Visit

Make this process as efficient as possible by visiting as many potential properties as you can in one or two days. Try to go sometime during the week if possible. Your IOR DS consultant will work with you to set an appropriate schedule and to ensure that the properties you visit meet your needs as closely as possible.

### **What to do once you're there**

As you look at the rental unit, be sure to ask a lot of questions. While you should keep small concerns to yourself about the unit while looking at it, feel free to ask the landlord or apartment manager any questions you might have that will help in your decision. Here are some possible questions you may consider asking:

- What's the monthly rent?
- Are any utilities included with the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When is rent due? Do you have auto-pay?
- What's the make-up of the other tenants? Are they mainly younger students? Married couples with families? Older folks?
- What's the parking situation like? Do you pay for a parking spot?
- Do you take care of small maintenance issues or am I responsible for some of the repairs in the property?
- Am I able to re-paint the walls or make other modifications?

Again, be friendly and polite when you ask these questions.

### **The Application**

The next step in the leasing process for an apartment is to submit a rental application for the location you want. The manager or landlord will be able to give you the application as well as anything else that they may need to have filled out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist with this process. For a single family home there will likely be a rental application.

You will need your passport, Social Security number, Visa, and proof of employment. Some landlords may charge you an application fee which could be between \$20 to \$400 dollars, depending on the landlord. This could be a combination of an application fee and move-in fee.

Once you've done this, it can take up to a few days to hear back from the property manager. Once your application has been approved the lease approval process will begin with IOR and likely your employer.

### **Signing the lease**

DO NOT SIGN THE LEASE until your IOR consultant has reviewed it in full and given their approval.

The lease is a binding contract, so it is very important to pay attention as a leasing agent goes over it with you. It is perfectly normal for you to take your time and read all the fine print for yourself. If you are working with an IOR consultant, make sure to talk with them and receive approval before signing. You will also be given a copy of the lease to take with you and keep for your records, but it is very important to know everything included in your lease from the start.

Some things to look for in a lease:

- Term of the lease and any important dates such as when the rent is due



- Extra fees for parking spaces or storage, garbage collection, and pets
- Information regarding utility providers and whether you or the landlord is responsible for those bills.
- Notification requirements in case of renewal
- Requirements/responsibilities of the tenants to do routine repairs such as lawn maintenance, cleaning or notification of repairs
- Clauses that allow the landlord to change the terms of the lease after it is signed
- Restrictions that would prevent you from living normally or comfortably in the home

Sometimes landlords will ask for a security deposit before you sign the lease. This is normal, but you shouldn't pay in cash. Make sure all payments are made out as a check or money order just in case.

### **What to expect from the lease**

Most leases in the United States include the following or a variation thereof:

- Your employer requires that all leases include a Break Clause in the case that you are transferred for work or personal needs.
- Contracts will often be for periods of a year or more.
- Minimum stay. Typically three fourths of your lease contract time. If you choose to move out before this date, you will lose your security deposit. If you move out afterwards, you are still required to give a specified number of days' notice.
- Security Deposit. Landlords will expect you to leave them with a deposit (usually about one to two month's rent) that they will hold for the duration of your lease. You will receive your security deposit back at the end of the lease provided you don't break any specific clauses in your lease, such as moving out without proper notice, not paying rent, causing damages to the property, etc.
- Landlords should not be given unchecked access to your apartment. If you there isn't anything in your lease about landlord's rights to enter the leased premises, suggest the following clause:

*Entry by the Landlord. Landlord or his agent will not enter Tenant's home except to deal with an emergency; to make necessary or agreed repairs; to supply necessary or agreed services; or to show the unit to potential purchasers, tenants, or repair persons. Unless there is an emergency, Landlord will give Tenant at least 24 hours' written notice of the date, time, and purpose of the intended entry and will schedule entries during normal business hours, Monday–Friday.*

Most landlords will be hard-pressed to say no to such a reasonable clause. If the landlord refuses, it's a sure sign that he won't be reasonable in other respects, too. Continue on in your housing search.

### **Moving In**

On your selected move-in date, after the lease has been signed, and deposits have been paid...you should be given your keys and more than likely a move-in form to fill out. Your IOR Consultant will assist you with an initial walk through of your apartment. Look for dings in the walls, cracked windows, or

other irregularities and report them on this form. This will indicate that these things were there before you moved in and you will not be held responsible for them at the end of the lease term.

### **Get Renter's Insurance**

Renter's insurance covers any loss to your personal property due to robbery or accidents. It also covers any damage you might cause to other tenant's property. For example, let's say your washing machine springs a leak and water seeps through the floor and ruins your neighbor's antique dresser. Renter's insurance would cover that.

Renter's insurance will cost approximately about \$15-125 a month, less if you tack it onto another policy (like auto) you have with an insurance company. A few popular options are [Allstate](#) and [StateFarm](#).

When relocating internationally, your children's education is of great concern. IOR eases this concern by exposing you to the various school options available for your child and helping you to work within the framework of options to find the best solution for your family.

### **I. Overview and Philosophy of the United States Educational System**

In most U.S. locations you will have the choice of sending your children to either a public or private school. A public school must accept your child for enrollment if you live within its designated district. A private school may have a general curriculum similar to that of public schools, but may or may not accept your child depending on availability of space, your child's prior academic history, language ability in English, or the result of entrance exams. Private schools charge a fee, which can be quite high. If you are considering private school, be sure you have a clear understanding of your employer's policy regarding reimbursement. In the U.S. approximately 85% of the children attend public schools for ages 5 to 13, and approximately 93% of the children attend public school at the high school level. Many, though not all, private schools are parochial, or religiously affiliated schools.

A third option called 'charter school' is sometimes available. Charter Schools are similar to public schools in that they are free, non-religious, publicly funded, and are held to state and federal academic standards. Each charter school is governed by its own local school community, which often includes parents and teachers - rather than a district. This freedom allows teachers to be more innovative, and communities to shape their local school. Charter schools can set their own hours and adjust their curriculum to fit their student needs, and give teachers the opportunity to experiment with next-generation teaching models including technology and the virtual classroom. Charter schools typically admit students by random lottery and do not restrict enrollment based on location, academic achievement, or other factors private schools may consider.

Most Americans, regardless of their level of education and income, send their children to public schools. Because each town or community typically has its own school system funded by local municipal taxes and state revenues, residents in an area with a higher tax base can usually be assured of quality public education. IOR is very conscientious about placing assignees and their families in areas with good public school systems.

Private schools do not receive state revenue, although they may be entitled to assistance with transporting students and providing for special needs such as speech therapy and assistance of the learning disabled. Private schools are funded through tuition paid by the student's parents. Typically, there are additional fees for books, uniforms, and school supplies, and the parents are usually solicited for additional charitable donations. There may also be book or activity fees at public schools.

The public education system in the U.S. is administered by local and state government, rather than by the federal government. Each state has a board of education which sets policy for all school districts and standards which all students must achieve. In addition, each local district has a board of education which sets local policy and curriculum within the parameters set forth by the state.

School districts can provide specialized programs and services for children with special needs. The general philosophy of education in the United States is to educate the entire diverse, ethnically mixed population with equal educational opportunity for all, while serving the educational needs of the individual student.

If you choose public education for your child, the particular school your child attends is determined by the school district boundaries containing your residential address. The school may or may not be within walking distance to your home. Generally, if the distance to the school is greater than one mile, the school district provides bus transportation to and from school. For those children who do not live far enough away from the school for bus service but are too far to walk comfortably, parents may have the option of paying for bus transportation, or they may choose to drive their children to and from school. Very often parents form 'car pools', sharing the responsibility of driving groups of children.

Generally private schools do not have residential boundaries for their students' families. In most cases, parents rely on car pools to ease the burden of transporting their students to and from school. In selecting your home, consider the driving distance and time to and from the private school.

Ultimately, the school your children attend is determined by your residential address, so it is a good idea to include visits to potential schools and properties in your pre-trip visit. Your pre-trip visit will consist of selected sample houses in a variety of communities, along with information, or perhaps visits, to the appropriate schools. However, there may be a limited selection of homes available within each community. It is possible you may find a school you like, but there may not be any available housing options within that school's enrollment radius. We will show you housing in school districts with proven academic standards, but be aware there are cases when certain schools are unavailable due to housing concerns.

If you are considering a private school, you may wish to visit it as well as a public school to compare. It would be advisable, however, to first determine if the private school has space available for your child. Additionally, you will want to know the amount of tuition and fees for the school, as that may be a factor in your decision.

## **II. Academic Standards**

### **A. Curriculum:**

The overriding objective of elementary and secondary education, public or private, is to prepare students for higher learning and future employment. Each school district or private school will have a unique curriculum which meets the above overriding goals.

#### Elementary School:

The elementary years (kindergarten through fifth grade) focus on fundamental academic skills, language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics in addition to introduction to technology, art, music, physical education, and sometimes foreign languages. Students' personal development is energized through emphasizing strong work habits which provide a positive feeling toward learning.

#### Middle School:

Middle School helps children in early adolescence (sixth through eighth grade) transition from elementary to high school and from childhood into young adulthood. The structure of the school day includes contact with several teachers who specialize in their subject matter; students usually move from one classroom to another. Curricular content focuses on expansion of skills in math, science, reading, writing and social studies. Further exploration of foreign languages, practical and fine arts, music, health, physical education and computer literacy are also provided. Middle school students are able to enhance their formal education by participation in school sponsored adult supervised competitive athletics and a variety of clubs and special interest groups.

#### High School:

The premise of elementary and middle schools is to prepare students for the academic, social, and physical challenges of high school. All high schools maintain defined academic requirements for graduation, however great flexibility of classes is usually available within this framework. Most schools provide more challenging academic courses entitled honors or advanced placement which award college credit to successful students. High school extracurricular and athletic activities are more competitive than those found at lower levels and often provide talented students with opportunities continue this activity in college or university.

### **B. Grading Systems/Assessment of Child Progress**

Schools typically report students' progress to parents with written report cards, which may be either mailed or carried home by the student. Many schools also set one or two days aside each semester for parent/teacher conferences. These conferences are an opportunity for parents to meet with their children's teachers and hear the teacher's evaluations of their student's

performance in school. At the elementary school level, where children usually have one primary teacher, a teacher conference may last from fifteen minutes to an hour in length. At the middle school and high school levels, you may meet with your child's teachers for a period of five or ten minutes. If you need additional time with the teacher, you may schedule a follow-up visit allowing time for a more complete discussion. It is a good idea to participate fully in teacher conferences. Your children's teachers may be able to provide valuable insight regarding your children's academic and social adjustments. Should there be concerns, they may be able to assist you with helpful suggestions of additional resources to contact.

### **C. Standardized Testing**

Challenged to prepare students for higher learning and future employment, all school districts and private schools utilize standardized testing to measure student progress over time and compare themselves to national standards. Such tests are prepared by national groups of parents and educators as well as business and academic leaders. Tests vary from state to state, but typically students in prescribed grade levels (for example, grades 3, 6, 8 and 10) are tested in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing science and social science. Colleges and universities use the ACT and SAT tests to measure incoming student abilities; the results of these tests are nearly as important as high school grades when students apply for entrance into US colleges and universities.

## **III. Definition of School Groupings**

### **A. Pre-School or Nursery School**

In the U.S., 3, 4 and some 5 year olds have the opportunity to attend a pre-school under a private system. These schools can be located in a local school, a church, or an independent free standing building. Pre-school is not publicly funded and is fee-based. Typically children are grouped by age. Most of the schools are play-based, although different philosophies of formal education can be found. Typically, 3 year olds attend 2 half days a week and 4 year olds may attend 3 half days a week. Some preschools also serve as day care centers for families in which both parents work. Typically reading is not taught in pre-school, although a few programs can be found which include reading fundamentals. Concentration of learning is on small and gross motor skills, and basic academic readiness skills. Some pre-schools offer a full-day Kindergarten option for those parents who work. The public school kindergarten programs are typically only half day programs with no before or after school care. If a Kindergarten program is offered it follows the state curriculum guidelines, and teaches pre-reading and math skills.

### **B. Elementary School**

Elementary school provides education for children ages 5 to 11, Kindergarten and Grades 1,2,3,4 &5. While kindergarten at age 5 is not required, most families send their children to kindergarten. Elementary school is the beginning of publicly funded school. In the U.S. children



are grouped by age and advanced in school by age. There are usually opportunities within the grade for different levels of learning, with opportunities for advanced learners and remedial learners. The public elementary school is usually neighborhood based and the source of playmates for your child. In the U.S., pre-reading skills are introduced in kindergarten (age 5) along with early math skills. Formal reading begins in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade (age 6). Studies have shown that while children learn to read at different ages, the difference between early and late readers is not a predictor of reading skills by about the age of 8 or 9 years old. In addition to reading and math, elementary school also has a broad base of writing, science, social studies, art, music, computer, personal development and physical education. Only in a few schools will a 2<sup>nd</sup> language be introduced at the elementary level. English as a Second Language (ESL) is offered starting at the elementary level in the public school. Parents are allowed to visit the schools, and there are many opportunities for parents to volunteer their skills, particularly at the elementary school. Parents may approach teachers and administrators with suggestions and concerns with their child. Usually the personnel are willing to consider changes if they feel it would be in the best interests of the child. With a child coming to a new country and sometimes starting a new language, feel free to talk to the school if you think something could be done to ease your child's adjustment. The school day is from approximately 8:30a.m. to 3:00p.m. with recess (playtime break) and a lunch break at the school.

### **C. Middle School**

Middle school provides education for children ages 11 to 14, grades 6, 7 & 8. The children attend school in a different location and in the public school system several elementary schools will combine into the same middle school. A middle school is usually 2-4 times the size of the elementary school. Middle school is considered the transition between elementary school and high school and from childhood to young adulthood. Because of this philosophy, U.S. students at this age level are all introduced to the same academic curriculum. The school day is structured differently with the children changing class rooms and teacher with each subject. There are 6-8 different class periods daily. Within the grades children may be separated by academic ability in classes, particularly math and English. Often an introduction to foreign languages is offered. For those who choose, the student may have the option to complete one year of high school foreign language during middle school. If your home country requires more advanced language development at this age, you may want to consider outside supplemental language instruction. Middle school is a time when extracurricular activities such as theatre, music, sports and clubs become important activities in adolescent life.

### **D. High School**

High school provides education for children ages 14 to 18, grades 9, 10, 11 & 12. It is the final level of education before the university, community college, or trade school. The terms Freshman (9<sup>th</sup>), Sophomore (10<sup>th</sup>), Junior (11<sup>th</sup>) and Senior (12<sup>th</sup>) are also used to identify grade level. At the high school level the student has more specific choices of course work. Each

district has a set of minimum graduation requirements, which will include courses in English, math, science, social studies, physical education and a combination of foreign language, fine arts and practical arts. Within this framework the student has various choices from more remedial levels, average levels, and more advanced levels. If a student is prepared for the material, by the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student may have the opportunity to take a college level course for advanced credit in the U.S. university system. In high school competitive sports are offered along with theatre, orchestra, instrumental and vocal music and clubs. Your child will have an opportunity to meet more U.S. children by participating in a school extracurricular activity. Each school district has 1-2 high schools with 800-2500 students. A student's high school performance may determine the type of university or higher education program they pursue upon graduation. During high school national tests are given to determine the student's potential to advance to various higher education levels.

If your child anticipates returning to your home country to continue higher education within your university system, you might want to consider the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. This program is recognized internationally for entrance to universities. In contrast to the typical high school college preparatory curriculum, the IB semester consists of fewer subjects, studied in greater depth and with a bilingual proficiency. Developed in Switzerland, the curriculum was intended as a secondary education program which could be utilized and accepted worldwide. Not all US schools will offer an IB curriculum.

#### **E. Post-Secondary Education**

While most families on international assignment do not bring their older children (19 years+) for education in the U.S. we include a brief description of the US university system. Some form of post-secondary education is available to those U.S. students who seek it. Each state offers a public university system which the tuition is partly subsidized by the state for state residents. Residency of at least 1 year is necessary. Some are medium to large institutions (with undergraduate and graduate level programs). Some can be quite competitive for admission while others may not be competitive at all. Student's admission to the university is in part determined by their high school academic performance and course selection and as well as the results of a national standardized test (SAT or ACT). Post-Secondary is the educational level that students in the U.S. study subjects in great depth and select their majors and career choices. Graduate level programs on the master level, professional level, and PhD level are pursued after completing the 4 years of undergraduate studies.

### **IV. Life in Schools**

#### **A. Atmosphere**

It is valuable to visit your child's school to understand the academic and non-academic atmosphere that prevails. Administrators or counselors are happy to serve as tour guides and

should always be contacted in advance. Do not be alarmed if your visit takes place during the lunch hour if the children seem a bit rambunctious. Students in American public schools generally enjoy a great deal of personal freedom in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the halls before and after class. They are supervised by teachers or members of the school staff, but they generally are more relaxed in the lunch room and in the halls. If you are visiting on a rainy day, you may observe “indoor recess” in the gymnasium which could be noisy. Rest assured that when they are in the classroom, students do settle down and work quietly and diligently. Some classrooms are more informally arranged than others. For instance, some teachers prefer to have the children’s desks in a circle rather than in rows. Teachers will sometimes assign group projects, where several students work together and are thus not seated at their desks during a part of the classroom period. Teachers are expected, however, to have good control of their classrooms. Private school policy regarding these issues of personal freedom varies. Some private schools function as the public schools do, while others may have a more closely supervised approach. Again, it is always a good idea to visit the school so that you are comfortable with that particular school’s management style.

## **B. Parental Involvement**

In addition to participating in parent/teacher conferences, most American schools encourage parents to become involved in the volunteer activities of the school. Most schools have a “PTA” (Parent Teacher Association) or “PTO” (Parent Teacher Organization). These organizations usually work with the school administration, dealing with issues such as student safety, communication to parents, academic concerns, etc., as well as fundraising and planning special programs to enhance the school experience for the student population.

Getting involved with the PTA or PTO is a great way to become well informed about your child’s school. It also provides you with an opportunity to meet and really get to know other parents. There will probably be a choice of committees on which you could work; you do not have to commit to a leadership role. Some volunteer opportunities may involve actually working in the school, volunteering in the school library on day a week or one day a month for example. Be sure to alert the school administration that you would like to get involved, and ask for the name and phone number of the head of the parent volunteer organization at the school. Parent volunteers are usually welcomed and encouraged at all levels at all schools, both public and private.

## **C. Extracurricular Activities**

A well-rounded education requires that students learn their academic subjects as well as develop socialization skills and learn nonacademic skills. Belonging to a group can be a rewarding connection with peers and a good way to develop self-confidence. These are the reasons that schools, public and private, provide numerous extracurricular activities from which their students can choose to participate. At each level of education the opportunities and choices

increase. For example at the elementary school level, all students are introduced to art, music, drama and a variety of athletic experiences. At the middle school level students have required courses in some of the above areas but are provided opportunity to participate in after school activities of their choice. For example, competitive football, soccer, swimming, track, lacrosse, basketball etc. In addition many clubs allow students to pursue other interests, for example, computers, drama, fine arts, forensics, jazz band, photography, yearbook and student council. Almost universally, each activity or club is sponsored by adults, using specialized instruction, who demonstrate a working knowledge of the activity and a desire to teach children. An even greater variety of extracurricular experiences are available at the high school level, many of which help students identify strengths, talents and interests which may direct them to future colleges, vocations or avocations.

#### **D. Facilities**

All schools maintain facilities other than classrooms which enhance or support their educational mission.

##### Libraries and Media Centers

Libraries are universally available and are accessible to students throughout the day and often after hours. Libraries often contain a “media center” which maintains and makes available other types of educational materials including computers and software, audio and video tapes, slides, sound sequences, projectors and recorders of various types for use individually or in groups. The wide availability of computers and access to the internet has provided almost unlimited opportunities for students and teachers to obtain information that can enhance and facilitate learning.

##### Fitness Facilities/Gymnasium

Fitness facilities, or ‘gyms’ as they are typically referred to, are supplied by almost all schools in the United States. Gyms often consist of a large indoor court with various sports equipment. They are open during lunch hours and for specific hours before and after school for athletes or students who wish to exercise. Many gyms will be accompanied by a weight room and a locker room with a shower. Students are sometimes expected to use these communal showers following Physical Education classes or general use of the gym’s facilities.

## SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA

### Public Schools

- [Boston public schools](#)
- Public schools in surrounding communities each have their own educational web sites. For example, Newton's site is [www.newton.k12.ma.us/](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/)

### International Schools

- [British School of Boston](#) (Jamaica Plain)
- [German International School](#) (preschool and elementary)

### Private Schools in and Around Boston

- [Association of Independent Schools in New England](#)

**Colleges and Universities** – There are over 67 in the Greater Boston Area.

Wikipedia list: [List of Colleges and Universities in the metropolitan area of Boston](#)

Search Boston: [Boston: Directory: Education: Colleges and Universities](#)

### Requirements for Enrolling a Child in Public School in MA

- Proof of residency
- Birth certificate or passport
- School records, with descriptions of special programs, etc.
- [Proof of immunizations](#)
- Language test, administered by the school, if English is not the child's first language

## **Schools in the Cambridge Area:**

### **Public:**

Cambridge public schools ([CPS](#)):

- [Cambridgeport](#)
- [Cambridge Rindge and Latin School](#)
- [Cambridge Street Upper School](#)
- [Fletcher Maynard Academy](#)

### **Private:**

- [Cambridge Friends Schools](#)
- [North Cambridge Catholic High School](#)
- [International School](#) (French)

### **Colleges**

- [Harvard University](#)
- [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)
- [Lesley University](#)
- [Longy School of Music](#)



## BANKING

Banks and other financial institutions, such as, credit unions, and savings and loan associations offer a variety of services. These services include:

- checking and saving accounts
- credit cards
- online bill pay
- loans
- insurance
- financial planning

Banks in the United States are insured by the Federal Government for deposits up to \$250,000 per depositor per bank. The bank or credit union will display the letters FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) as proof.

### Checking and Savings Accounts

To open a checking or savings account you will need the following information:

- Two forms of picture identification including but not limited to your passport, driver's license, or work ID.
- Social security number. If you have not yet received your social security number, the bank can open an account with a W8 Temporary Tax ID form (available at the bank). You will need to call the bank with your social security number once it arrives in the mail.
- Local mailing address. You may use your office address as your mailing address, but be prepared to call your bank branch as soon as you have your permanent address.
- Letter of Employment
- Cash for the initial deposit can range from ~\$25-\$150 dollars

### Checks

More businesses and banks are offering online or automatic bill paying options. However, you may still need to pay some bills by mail. **NEVER SEND CASH!** You will want to order at least the minimum quantity of checks. This will cost a set fee that the bank will charge you. The checks will be pre-printed with your name, address, telephone number and account number and will be mailed to your home.

### ATM or Debit Card

The most popular way of obtaining cash is by using an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) card, also referred to as a debit card. ATM's are located in most all banks, malls, airports, grocery stores, and in many other public places. You will be given a PIN (Personal Identification Number) for using your card. It is important that you memorize this number and not keep written record of it with your card in order to protect your account. Most ATM's will take all cards, but many banks will charge a service fee for using another banks ATM. Through the ATM you may deposit, transfer, and withdraw funds. There will usually

be a limit to the amount of money you can withdraw in any 24-hour period.

### **Credit Cards**

For many international transferees, the lack of a US credit history can be a challenge. In most cases, you will not be approved for a US credit card initially. One suggestion to assist in building your US credit history is to open a **secured credit card**. With approval from the bank, you can put a certain amount of money in a savings account that will remain in the account. The secured credit card would have a credit limit equal to the amount deposited in the savings account. You will need to use your secured credit card and make the minimum monthly payments; you may also pay in full the amount due. After 9 months or so, if the bank sees that you have a good payment record, they may approve you for a regular credit card.

### **Security**

Always pay attention to the other people around you at an ATM. Do not use the machine if you are suspicious of someone's behavior. It is safer to find another ATM or to come back later. Do not put your PIN number in with anyone close enough to see it.

Credit card theft is another increasing problem. In order to protect your card from being abused, never give your credit card or credit card number to a service provider you have not called. Another precaution is to destroy or shred copies of receipts and bills. Criminals will not hesitate to dig through the trash to find a copy of your credit card number.

### **Major US Banks**

Below is a list of links to some of the larger US banks. Not every bank is represented in all US locations, in some cases you may find that the local bank is a better option for you than some of the larger banks. Your IOR DS Consultant can help you in selecting a bank by sharing the various options available locally as well as the products they offer to support expatriates.

[Bank of America](#)

[TD Bank](#)

[Citibank](#)

[CHASE](#)

[Wells Fargo](#)

[HSBC](#)

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation in MA is the responsibility of the **Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA)**, which includes buses, subways (called the "T"), commuter rail, commuter boats, and express buses. Schedules and maps are available at [the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority website](#)

Explanations for the use and purchase of the Charlie Card can be found [here](#).

Amtrak is the national railroad system. For train information see [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com). Trains run from Portland, Maine (the Downeaster) to Boston. The Acela Express as well as the non-express Amtrak connects Boston to Providence, New Haven, Ct., New York, NY, Philadelphia, PA, and Washington DC. The Northeast Regional goes as far south as Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the Lake Shore limited goes to Chicago. Connections to other parts of the United States can be made at most major cities.

### Rental Cars

#### [U-Save Boston Car & Truck Rental](#)

Contact: 1.617.903.4431

Hours: Monday-Friday 7AM to 7PM

Saturday and Sunday 7AM to 5PM

#### [Airport Limos Axis Coach, LLC](#)

Contact: MA: 617-340-3403

NH: 603-434-1757

Email Address: [info@axiscoachusa.com](mailto:info@axiscoachusa.com)

### Airports

- [Logan Airport](#): Located in East Boston, minutes from downtown.
- [Manchester Airport](#): Located in Manchester, NH, about an hour drive north of the city
- [T.F. Green Airport](#) Located in Providence, RI, also an hour drive southwest of Boston

### Getting to the Airport

Taxis are more expensive than in many other cities. Fortunately, the airport is very near the city so the fare is not extremely expensive, if your driver is honest. It would be about \$25 for fares to Boston. The Blue Line of the T has a stop at the airport, where buses loop continually among the terminals.

### Shuttle Service to the Airport:

Airporter: Contact: +1 781-899-6161 Toll free: +1 877-899-616

Email: [reservations@theairporter.com](mailto:reservations@theairporter.com)

### **Social Security and Tax ID Information**

#### **Social Security Procedures**

[United States Social Security Administration](#)

1-800-772-1213

Upon arrival in the United States, employees holding work visas will be required to apply, in person, for a Social Security number. The Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) can be used by anyone who has never been issued a card, needs a replacement card or has changed his or her name. Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you with this process and can answer any questions you might have.

#### **THIS SERVICE IS FREE.**

To get an original number and card, you'll need to complete an Application for a Social Security Card ([Form SS-5](#)), and show the following documents IN PERSON at the local social security office.

- Passport
- [I-94](#)
- Work Visa
- Any other documents received by US Immigration

If all of your information is confirmed, your Social Security card will arrive in the mail in approximately 2-4 weeks. Several days after you have successfully completed the application process, you may take your identification with your receipt, back to the Social Security office to inquire about your Social Security number before you receive your card.

#### **L-2 Visa Employment Opportunity Law Changes**

The L-2 visa allows the dependent spouse and minor, unmarried children of qualified L-1 visa holders to enter into the U.S.

Changes took place on July 27, 2006 that apply to spouses of L-1 Visa holders in the US on an L2 Visa. Prior to that date, spouses on L-2 Visas were not permitted to obtain a social security card and were denied the right to be employed in the US. The law change now permits L-2 Visa holders (spouses only, not dependent children) to work on a full-time basis in the U.S. with proper employment authorization from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The L-2 Visa holder must apply for a social security card in addition to applying for an Employment Authorization Document before they can begin employment.

## **Social Security Numbers**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued guidelines, which permit E-1, E-2, and L-2 spouses to obtain Social Security Numbers without having to first obtain Employment

Authorization Documents (EADs) from the CIS. They must show proof that their spouse is in E-1, E-2 or L-1 status, and present an original marriage certificate, in the native language. However, before they are authorized to work, they must obtain an EAD. [The new SSA guidelines are online here.](#)

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): L-2 Visa holders can apply for this document utilizing USCIS Form 1-765, Application for Employment Authorization. They must provide the following forms of identification: valid passport, 1-94 Arrival-Departure Document, Marriage Certificate from home country, two identical, and color photographs taken within 30 days of application. Currently, the process from application to EAD issue takes 3 to 4 months. The L2 Visa holder may also engage in full-time study in the US. A dependent child still may not apply for an EAD card except in cases of severe hardship. Local offices are open Monday thru Friday 9am to 4pm.

**\*\*Notice\*\*** Social Security offices are closed on all US Federal holidays.

## **Obtaining a Driver's License/State ID Card**

Massachusetts state law requires anyone who is a legal resident of MA, i.e., has signed a lease or bought a house, to have a MA driving license. There is no grace period. However, a Social Security card is required as one of the documents necessary to obtain a license. As a result, most international transferees will have to wait until their card arrives to begin the process. Mexico, Canada, Puerto Rico and Germany are the only countries whose licenses can be transferred to a MA license without taking the learner's permit and driving tests.

## **Passing Your Learner's Permit Exam**

In order to get a MA driver's license, you must first get a learner's permit. To do this you must take a written test (multiple choice test on a computer or an actual written one in your native language\*), have an eye exam at the Registry and pay the fee. You don't need an appointment to take this test.

There are 4 tests and you will not know which one you are getting. The information is found in the Drivers' Manual, available for \$5 from your local Registry of Motor Vehicles or online, [here](#).

Make sure you have with you your social security card, your passport, visa, I94, and at least one proof of residency, like your signed lease, a recent bank statement or utility bill, a recently cancelled check. You will need it in hard copy, which presents a bit of a challenge these days with online banking! I recommend taking two proofs of residency.

A list of RMV locations and times can be found [here](#).

After you pass the learner's test, you will be able to make an appointment for the actual driving test. You will need to have a car with a center handbrake and a licensed Massachusetts driver as your sponsor.

## **Seat Belts**

**Massachusetts law requires every person in a passenger motor vehicle (including vans and small trucks under 18,000 lbs.) to wear a safety belt or sit in a child passenger restraint.**

- Any driver who is not wearing a safety belt can be fined \$25. Any passenger 16 years old or older who is not wearing a safety belt can be fined \$25.
- A driver can also be fined \$25 for each passenger age 12, 13, 14, or 15 who is not wearing a safety belt.

For more information review, Chapter 3: Safety First of [the Massachusetts Driver's Manual](#).

## **MA Child Car Seat Laws**

### ***Child Passenger Restraints***

Infants and small children must sit in federally approved child passenger restraints until they:

1. Are at least eight years old
- or**
2. At least fifty-seven inches tall

Children at least eight years old or at least fifty-seven inches tall must wear safety belts. The safety belts must be used correctly. You can be fined \$25 for breaking this law. The child restraint must have a sticker that says it meets the necessary standards (U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213 or the standards in 49 C.F.R. 571.213). The restraint must be permanently attached to a motor vehicle or attached by a safety belt or an attachment system.

Never put a back-facing child safety seat in the front passenger seat if your vehicle has an air bag for that seat.

If you're in the market for one, you can [shop online for a child car seat](#) at any time.

For more information review, [Chapter 3: Safety First](#) of the Massachusetts Driver's Manual.

## **Cell Phones and Texting**

- All drivers younger than 18 are banned from all cell phone usage.
- All drivers, regardless of age or license status, are banned from texting while behind the wheel.

## **Helmets**

### **Motorcycle Riders**

All motorcycle riders, regardless of age, must wear a helmet that meets the minimum safety standards as defined by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

The same rules apply to moped and motorized scooter riders.

### **ATV Riders**

The [Massachusetts Recreation Vehicle Safety Laws](#) clearly state that all recreational vehicle riders must wear approved helmets.

### **Bicycle Riders**

Bicycle riders who are 16 years old or younger must wear helmets when they are riding on bicycle paths, public ways, and public right-of-ways.

[Chapter 85: Section 11B](#) of the General Laws of Massachusetts further outlines other bicycle-related laws.

## **Headlights**

You must use your headlights:

- A half an hour after sunset and a half an hour before sunrise.
- When adverse weather conditions make it difficult to see, including rain, snow, and fog.
- When you can't clearly see other people and vehicles in front of you.

Too, you're allowed to use your headlights to flash other drivers who aren't using theirs when they should be. For more tips on using your headlights in MA, check out [Chapter 3: Safety First](#) of the [Massachusetts Driver's Manual](#).

## **Unattended Motor Vehicles**

When you leave your motor vehicle unattended for any period of time, it's safest to:

- Turn off the engine.
- Lock the ignition.
- Set the brakes.
- Remove the key.

You may also be interested in [Chapter 90: Section 16A](#) of the General Laws of Massachusetts, which covers when and for how long you're allowed to leave your vehicle's motor running when it's stationary.

## LIVING AND SHOPPING

Metropolitan Boston covers a large geographical area; there are many shopping areas and malls, which have many of the same stores.

### **Malls**

#### **Boston**

- [Copley Place](#)
- [The Shops at the Prudential](#)
- [Faneuil Hall Marketplace](#)

#### **Cambridge**

- [CambridgeSide Galleria](#)

#### **West of Boston**

- [The Mall](#) at Chestnut Hill
- [The Natick Mall](#)
- [Watertown Mall](#) and [Arsenal Mall](#), Watertown

#### **North of Boston**

- [Burlington Mall](#)
- [Liberty Tree Mall](#), Danvers
- [Meadow Glen Mall](#), Medford
- [Northshore Mall](#), Peabody
- [The Mall at Rockingham Park](#), Salem, NH

#### **South of Boston**

- [Cape Cod Mall](#), Hyannis
- [South Shore Plaza](#), Braintree

Short descriptions of these malls may be found at [here](#).

#### **Outlet Malls**

- [Wrentham Village Premium outlets](#), 45 minutes south of Boston
- [Bourne Outlet Center](#), Sagamore, 1 hour south at the beginning of the Cape
- [Tower Outlet Mall](#), Fall River – one hour south

#### **Grocery Store Chain stores**

- [Shaws](#)
- [Star Market](#)
- [Stop and Shop](#) (offers Peapod delivery service)



- [Whole Foods](#)
- [Market Basket](#)
- [Hannaford](#)

**Drug store Chains Stores:**

- [CVS](#)
- [Walgreen's](#)

**Household Furnishings chain stores**

- [Target](#)
- [Crate and Barrel](#)
- [Bed, Bath and Beyond](#)
- [Jordan's Furniture](#)
- [Bernie and Phyl's Furniture](#)
- [Sears](#)

**Department Stores – Clothing, Household Furnishings, Etc.**

- [Macy's](#)
- [Lord and Taylor](#)
- [Bloomingdales](#)
- [Niemen Marcus](#)
- [Nordstrom](#)

This is just the tip of the shopping iceberg. Your IOR consultant can orient you to the options in your neighborhood.

**Sight Seeing:**

- [Walk the Boston Freedom Trail](#): a 2.5-mile, brick-lined route that leads you to 16 historically significant sites — each one an authentic treasure. Explore museums and meetinghouses, churches, and burying grounds. Learn about the brave people who shaped our nation. Discover the rich history of the American Revolution, as it began in Boston, where every step tells a story. For more information, click [here](#).



- [Faneuil Hall Marketplace](#): In the heart of downtown Boston, and along the Freedom Trail, is Faneuil Hall Marketplace. The original Faneuil Hall dates back to 1742 and the festival marketplace now encompasses the North Market, Quincy Market and South Market buildings.



- [Boston Opera House](#): The Boston Opera House is the home to ballet performance and other concerts.

- [Boston Public Garden](#): Boston Public Garden is located along Charles Street, and is the nation’s oldest botanical garden. Swan boats have returned to the garden each spring since 1877.

[USS Constitution Museum](#): As the memory and educational voice of *USS Constitution*, the USS Constitution Museum preserves, displays, and interprets artifacts and archival material related to the Ship and her crew through interactive exhibitions, compelling programs, and engaging outreach initiatives. The Museum was incorporated in 1972 as a private, non-profit and non-government funded interpretive complement to *USS Constitution*, an active-duty US Navy vessel and the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world. This allowed the Navy to clear *Constitution’s* decks of display cases so that visitors could see the Ship as a sailing vessel, rather than as a floating museum, and for artifacts to be cared for in proper environmental



- [Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum](#): A once in a life time opportunity to relive and interact with the historic night in the Boston Harbor on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1773, when American colonist took matters into their own hands and revolted against British rule.
- [Boston Museum of Science](#): The Museum's mission is to play a leading role in transforming the nation's relationship with science and technology. This role becomes ever more important as science and technology shape and reshape our lives and world.
- [Boston's Children's Museum](#): A place for kids to visit and interact. A great place to bring your child for a fun, educational trip. The museum includes staged events that promise a fun-filled experience!

Source: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/visitors/thingstodo.asp>

#### **Sports Clubs**

- [Beacon Hill Athletic Clubs](#)
- [Boston Athletic Club](#)
- [Boston Fitness for Women](#)
- [Boston Sports Clubs](#)

#### **Running Clubs**

- [Community Running Association](#)
- [Greater Boston Track Club](#)

#### **Sailing Clubs**

- [Boston Sailing Center](#), contact at: [info@bostonsailingcenter.com](mailto:info@bostonsailingcenter.com)
- [Community Boating](#)

#### **Rock Climbing:**

- [The Boston Rock-climbers Meet-up Group](#)
- [Boston Rock Gym](#)
- [Dedham Health and Athletic Club](#)
- [Dick's Sporting Goods](#)
- [Exxcel](#): Indoor rock climbing for kids.

#### **Yoga**

- [Back Bay Yoga Studio](#)
- [Boston Body Pilates & Yoga Center](#)
- [Inner Space/ Yoga in the Village](#)  
[bkcspirit@aol.com](mailto:bkcspirit@aol.com)
- [Karma Yoga](#), Contact at:  
[connect@karmayogastudios.com](mailto:connect@karmayogastudios.com)
- [Pathways to Wellness](#) Contact at:  
[tconnell@pathwaysboston.org](mailto:tconnell@pathwaysboston.org)
- [Snow Lion Yoga](#)
- [Yoga for Every Body](#)

#### **Tennis Clubs**

- [Badminton & Tennis Club](#),
- [Boston Athletic Club](#)
- [Boston Tennis and Racquet Club](#)

#### **Golf Clubs**

- [City Golf Boston](#)
- [Franklin Park Golf Course](#)
- [Fresh Pond Golf Course](#)
- [List of local public golf courses](#)

## EXPAT RESOURCES

[Boston Young Professionals Association](#): Social events for young professionals. It has regular networking events, parties, and other outings.

[Meetup: Interest groups](#): A great way to meet people that share your interests in your area.

[International Women's Group](#): A social group open to all women in the Boston area.

[Onein3 Boston](#): ONEin3 Boston serves the one-third of Boston's population that is between the ages of 20 and 34. The program connects Boston's young adults with resources related to home buying, business development, professional networking, and civic engagement. There are also social events you can attend.

[Single Volunteers of Boston](#): An active group that gets together to work on volunteer projects.

[Social Boston Sports](#): Their mission statement: Social Boston Sports strives to provide an open and welcoming community that engages in fun social activities, adventurous trips away from the city, and friendly athletics leagues for young professionals to connect in the Boston area. We aim for all of our activities to be valuable, fresh, and memorable experiences that will contribute to a satisfying personal life for our members.

[Boston Uncorked](#): A wine tasting club.

[Appalachian Mountain Club](#): Lots of interesting lectures, day hikes, weekend trips, etc.

[Boston Ski & Sports Club](#): BSSC's Outdoor Adventures and Social Events are the perfect combination to keep you active, having fun and meeting the quality people you desire. Most activities are a one-day adventure or an evening escapade. These carefully planned events and activities are designed for the socially active who want to meet new people at engaging venues or thrill seeking activities.



## **JAPANESE GROUPS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

- [Japanese Association of Greater Boston](#)
- [Japanese Language School](#)

### **Japan Society of Boston**

420 Pond St  
Boston, MA 02130  
617-522-0740

- [Japanese Language and Culture Meet-ups](#)
- [Japan Festival in Boston](#)
- [Harvard University Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies Calendar of Events](#)
- [Showa Boston Institute for Language and Culture Calendar of Events](#)

### **Japanese Grocery Stores**

The Shops at Porter Square  
1815 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
Porter Square

#### **Ebisuya Market**

65 Riverside Ave  
Medford, MA 02155  
(781) 391-0012  
M-F 10:00am-8:00pm, Sat 9:00am-8:00pm, Sun 11:30am-6:30p

#### **Reliable Market**

45 Union Square  
Somerville, MA 02143  
(617) 623-9620  
M-F 9:30am-9:00pm, Sat 9:00am-9:00pm, Sun 10:00am-7:00pm

#### **Cherry Mart**

349B Newbury St  
Boston, MA 02115  
(617) 267-0205

## U.S. IDIOMS

Idioms are words, phrases, or expressions that are not taken literally- they have meaning beyond a literal translation of the words. Idioms are generally used in casual, familiar conversation but can also come up in certain business settings. Here are some examples of commonly used American English idioms:

**better off** - in a more fortunate position

**Big deal!** - So what? That doesn't really matter.

**(to) blow things out of proportion** - to exaggerate; to make more of something than one should

**(to) call it a night** - to stop an activity for the rest of the night

**dime a dozen** - so plentiful as to be nothing special; common

**(to) do the trick** - to achieve the desired results

**(to) give someone the cold shoulder** - to be cold to someone on purpose; to snub someone

**(to) get the ball rolling** - to get started

**(to) go back to the drawing board** - to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning

**happy camper [slang]** - a happy person; a satisfied participant

**(to) have a heart of gold** - to be very kind and giving

**(to be) head over heels in love** - very much in love

**(to) hit the nail on the head** - to be right

**(to) learn the ropes** - to learn the basics

**(to) lose one's touch** - to no longer be able to do something well

**made of money** - very rich

**needless to say** - obviously

**piece of cake** - very easy

**(to) pitch in** - to help

**(to) pull an all-nighter** - to stay up all night to do work

**rule of thumb** - a useful principle

**(as) sharp as a tack** - very intelligent

**(to) sit tight** - to wait patiently

**(to) stab someone in the back** - to betray someone

**(to) tell someone off** - to scold; to tell someone in strong words what one really thinks

**When pigs fly! [slang]** - never

**(to) twist someone's arm** - to persuade someone; to convince someone

**(to be) up in the air** - not yet determined; uncertain

Many common American idioms come from sports, here are some examples:

**strike out-** to fail or to do poorly at something (*baseball*)

**(to) call the shots-** to make the decisions; to be in charge (*basketball*)

**ballpark-** a guess or an estimate (*baseball*)

**down and out-** lacking money or prospects; penniless or destitute (*boxing*)

**down to the wire-** to the very end or last minute (*horse racing*)

**drop the ball-** to make an error, to miss an opportunity (*football, baseball, rugby*)

**hands down-** with great ease; unconditionally; often (and originally) in the phrase “to win hands down” (*horse racing*)

**(to) have someone in your corner-** to have the support or help of someone (*boxing*)

**(to) hit it out of the park; home run-** to be wildly successful, to do a great job (*baseball*)



To learn even more idioms, visit the following links:

- [Everyday American English Idioms](#) - with example sentences.
- [Useful Idioms for Lower-Intermediate to Advanced Students \(Teacher's Resource\)](#)
- [Idiom Site A-Z](#)
- [Sports Idioms](#)
- [English Language Learning: American English Idioms](#)



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be confusing as there are national (federal) holidays, bank holidays, state holidays. Verify those in your area with Human Resources at your place of business, especially before planning vacations or weekend get-aways!

### [Federal Holidays listed through 2020](#)

The following are federal holidays in the United States and need to be treated as such by employers:

- New Year's Day            January 1\*
- Memorial Day            Last Monday in May
- Independence Day        July 4\*
- Labor Day                First Monday in September
- Columbus Day            Second Monday in October
- Veterans' Day            November 11\*
- Thanksgiving Day        Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day            December 25\*

\*If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the day following is observed as the legal holiday

## BOSTON HOLIDAYS

- Dec.31/Jan. 1 - First Night Celebrate the New Year with parades, performances, ice sculptures. Major celebration in Boston, but repeated on lesser scales in other communities.
- Mid February - Chinese New Year Fireworks in Chinatown.
- March 17 - St. Patrick's Day/Evacuation Day Public holiday in Boston to commemorate the day the British left Boston. Sunday after St. Patrick's Day St. Patrick's Day parade in South Boston.
- Early April - Opening Day for the Boston Red Sox, Fenway Park (unofficial holiday)
- Third Sunday in April - Patriot's Day. The beginning of the American Revolution. Re-enactment of battles at Lexington, MA. Boston Marathon. Schools and government closed.
- First Sunday in May - Walk For Hunger. Twenty mile walk to raise money for local food pantries.
- June 15 - Bunker Hill Day. Local holiday. No closings.
- July 4 - All week celebrations with Harborfest, Chowderfest, culminating in fireworks and a concert on the Esplanade.