

Timeline for the First 24 Hours of the American Revolution

(Adapted in part from Revolutionary Boston, Lexington, and Concord, The Shots Heard 'Round the World by Joseph L. Andrews. All times are approximate.)

TUESDAY APRIL 18TH 1775

- 10:00 p.m.** General Thomas Gage orders Lt. Colonel Francis Smith to lead about 700 grenadiers and light infantry on a secret march to Concord to seize and destroy stockpiled Colonial weapons and supplies.
- 10:30 p.m.** Paul Revere and William Dawes, Jr. are dispatched from Boston by Dr. Joseph Warren to warn Sam Adams and John Hancock in Lexington. Revere has two lanterns hung in Old North Church steeple to signal British troops will take route “by sea” across Charles River to Cambridge.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 19TH 1775

- 12:00 midnight** Revere arrives at Lexington parsonage, the Hancock-Clarke House, home of Reverend Jonas Clarke, where Sam Adams and John Hancock are staying. Captain John Parker gathers Lexington militiamen on Common to wait.
- 12:30 a.m.** Dawes arrives at Hancock-Clarke House; he and Revere decide to continue on to Concord. Meet up with Dr. Samuel Prescott enroute, who is returning home to Concord, and ride together.
- 1:00-2:30 a.m.** Paul Revere captured in Lincoln by advance patrol of British officers; is walked back into Lexington where officers let him go. Returns to Hancock-Clarke House to be sure Adams and Hancock are leaving. Dawes and Prescott escape. Prescott continues ride to Concord and arrives there at approximately 2:00 a.m.
- 2:30 a.m.** Capt. Parker lets some of his men go, warning them to stay within earshot of the call-to-arms. Several retire to Buckman Tavern.
- 5:15 a.m.** A scout reports to Capt. Parker the British regular soldiers are near. Call-to-arms is rung on Lexington Common. Approximately 70 Lexington militiamen gather on Common.
- 5:30 a.m.** Major John Pitcairn’s Redcoats arrive at Lexington Common. Capt. Parker tells his men to disperse, and Pitcairn orders Colonials to lay down their arms. *A shot rings out.* British regulars fire on Colonials and kill 8 Colonial men. Around 10 wounded. Only one minor British injury. British regulars continue their march to Concord.
- 7:00 a.m.** British troops arrive in Concord. Smith sends three companies to guard North Bridge.
- 9:30 a.m.** Battle on North Bridge. First British deaths.
- 12:00 noon** British troops leave Concord and begin withdrawal back to Boston. Much bloody battling all along the way.
- 2:00 p.m.** Earl Percy’s reinforcements arrive in Lexington, approximately 1100 Redcoats. Bring two field pieces (cannon). Percy takes over William Munroe’s tavern to set up temporary field hospital to treat wounded from morning mission.
- 3:30 p.m.** Redcoat troops resume march back to Boston. Much bloody battling all along the way.
- 12:00 midnight** First British troops start arriving back to safety of Boston.