

**STATE OF TEXAS**

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**COUNTY OF GALVESTON**

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**ORDER TO STAY AT HOME**

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020 Galveston County Judge Mark Henry signed a Declaration of a Local Disaster for the County of Galveston, Texas Related to COVID-19 pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus is contagious and spreads through person-to-person contact, especially in group settings; and

WHEREAS, Governor Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order on Thursday, March 19, 2020 issuing orders for Texans to adhere to certain control measures and mitigation strategies:

WHEREAS, the Texas Commissioner of State Health Services declared a Public Health Disaster for the entire State of Texas on Thursday, March 19, 2020 and outlines certain control measures and mitigation strategies;

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020 the Commissioners Court of Galveston County voted unanimously to continue the State of Local Disaster related to COVID-19 until April 22, 2020, and further extensions are possible; and

WHEREAS, the Local Health Authority in Galveston County has recommended the imposition of an order that Galveston County residents stay at home unless traveling within the community is essential

**BE IT THEREFORE ORDERED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE OF GALVESTON COUNTY:**

1. Effective as of 11:59 p.m. on March 24, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020:

All individuals currently living within Galveston County are ordered to remain at their place of residence. For the purposes of this Order, residences include hotels, motels, shared rentals, and similar facilities. To the extent individuals are using shared or outdoor spaces, they must at all times as reasonably as possible maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person when they are outside their residence. All persons may leave their residences only for Essential Activities, or to provide or perform Essential Governmental Functions, or to operate Essential Businesses, all as defined in Section 2.

- (a) All businesses operating within Galveston County, except Essential Businesses as defined in below in Section 2, are required to cease all activities at facilities located within the County. For clarity, businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences (i.e. working from home). To the greatest extent possible, all Essential Businesses shall comply with the Social Distancing Guidelines attached, including maintaining six foot social distancing for both employees and the general public.
- (b) All public or private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit are prohibited, except as otherwise provided herein. Nothing in this Order prohibits the gathering of members of a household or living unit.
- (c) Restaurants with or without drive-in or drive-through services and microbreweries, micro-distilleries, or wineries may only provide take out, delivery, or drive-through services as allowed by law.
- (d) Religious and worship services may only be provided by video and teleconference. Religious institutions must limit in-person staff to ten (10) people or less when preparing for or conducting video or teleconference services, and all individuals must follow the Social Distancing Guidelines including the six foot social distancing.
- (e) All elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures are prohibited anywhere in Galveston County. Hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, dental offices, and other medical facilities are directed to identify procedures that are deemed "elective" by assessing which procedures can be postponed or cancelled based on patient risk considering the emergency need for redirection of resources to COVID-19 response.

2. Definitions:

- a. For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their residence only to perform any of the following "Essential Activities":
  - i. To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (for example, obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies need to work from home).
  - ii. To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others (for example, food, pet supply, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences).
  - iii. To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with social distancing requirements of six feet (for example, walking, biking, hiking, or running).

- iv. To perform work providing essential products and services supporting an Essential Business or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Order.
  - v. To care for a family member or pet in another household.
  - vi. To exercise a fundamental Constitutional rights.
- b. For purposes of this Order, “Essential Businesses” means:
- i. **Essential Healthcare Operations.** Healthcare operations, including hospitals, clinics, dentists, pharmacies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, mental health providers, substance abuse service providers, blood banks, medical research, laboratory services, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. Home-based and residential-based care for seniors, adults, or children are also considered healthcare operations. Healthcare operations also includes veterinary care and all health and welfare services provided to animals. This exemption shall be viewed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare. Healthcare operations do not include fitness and exercise gyms and similar facilities. Healthcare operations do not include elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures as established in accordance with Subsection 1(f) of this Order.
  - ii. **Essential Government Functions.** All services provided by local governments needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government agencies to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public. Further, nothing in this order shall prohibit any individual from performing or accessing “Essential Government Functions.” All Essential Government Functions shall be performed in compliance with social distancing requirements of six feet, to the extent possible.
  - iii. **Essential Critical Infrastructure.** Work necessary to the operations and maintenance of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors as identified by the National Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) including public works construction, residential and commercial construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services), financial institutions, defense and national security-related operations, essential manufacturing operations provided that they carry out those

services or that work in compliance with social distancing requirements of six feet, to the extent possible. Essential Businesses providing essential infrastructure should implement screening precautions to protect employees and all activity shall be performed in compliance with social distancing guidelines attached.

- iv. **Essential Retail.** Food service providers, including grocery stores, warehouse stores, big-box stores, bodegas, liquor stores, gas stations and convenience stores, farmers' markets that sell food products and household staples. Food cultivation, including farming, fishing, and livestock. Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free services to students or members of the public on a pick-up and take-away basis only. The restriction of delivery or carry out does not apply to cafes and restaurants located within hospital and medical facilities. Laundromats, dry cleaners, and laundry service providers. Gas stations, auto-supply, auto and bicycle repair, hardware stores, and related facilities. Businesses that supply products needed for people to work from home.
- v. **Providers of Basic Necessities to Economically Disadvantaged Populations.** Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals.
- vi. **Essential Services Necessary to Maintain Essential Operations of Residences or Other Essential Businesses.** Trash and recycling collection, processing and disposal, mail and shipping services, building cleaning, maintenance and security, warehouse/distribution and fulfillment, storage for essential businesses, funeral homes, crematoriums and cemeteries. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operations of residences and Essential Businesses. Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with support or supplies needed to operate.
- vii. **News Media.** Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services.

viii. **Childcare Services.** Childcare facilities providing services that enable employees exempted in this Order to work as permitted.

3. Any manufacturer who retools so that a substantial part of their business is for the purpose of manufacturing and producing ventilators may apply for an “essential business” exemption under this Order.
4. Grocery stores, supermarkets, warehouse stores, hospitals, and medical facilities are experiencing high levels of demand for a large number of products, requiring more deliveries from manufacturers and distribution centers to serve their customers. A number of Texas cities and local associations have implemented restrictions on delivery hours to stores to mitigate truck noise and traffic. Due to the need to deliver products as quickly and efficiently as possible during this critical timeframe, this Order hereby suspends all delivery hour restrictions for transport to or from any entity involved in the selling or distribution of food products, medicine, or medical supplies in Galveston County for the next 60 days.
5. If someone in a household has tested positive for coronavirus, the household is ordered to isolate at home for 14 days until or unless otherwise directed by the Local Health Authority. Members of the household cannot go to work, school, or any other community function.
6. Nursing homes, retirement, and long-term care facilities are instructed by this order to prohibit non-essential visitors from accessing their facilities unless to provide critical assistance or for end-of-life visitation.
7. Tolls are waived at the San Luis Pass toll booth during the duration of this Disaster.
8. This Order shall be effective until 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020, or until it is either rescinded, superseded, or amended pursuant to applicable law.
9. The County of Galveston must promptly provide copies of this Order by posting copies for public viewing in the same manner as publicly posted Commissioners Court agendas. In addition, the owner, manager, or operator of any facility that is likely to be impacted by this Order is strongly encouraged to post a copy of this Order onsite and to provide a copy to any member of the public asking for a copy. If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Order or any application of it to any person, structure, gathering, or circumstance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, then such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of this Order.

## **Social Distancing Recommendations**

### **1) Vulnerable Populations: Limit Outings**

- Vulnerable populations include people who are:
  - 60 years old and older.
  - People with certain health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and weakened immune systems.
- For vulnerable populations, don't go to gatherings unless it is essential. Stay home. Avoid people who are sick.

### **2) Workplace and Businesses: Minimize Exposure**

- Suspend nonessential employee travel.
- Ensure employees practice social distancing and do not work within six feet of one another.
- Urge essential employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits.
- Do not require a doctor's note for employees who are sick.
- Maximize telecommuting options.
- Persons who need to be at work to provide essential services of great benefit to the community must take steps in their workplace to minimize risk.

### **3) Cancel Non-essential Events**

- Cancel non-essential events.
- Do not attend any events or gatherings if sick.
- For events that aren't cancelled, we recommend:
  - Having hand washing capabilities, hand sanitizers and tissues available.
  - Frequently cleaning high touch surface areas like counter tops and hand rails.
  - Finding ways to implement social distancing..

### **4) Schools: Safety First**

- Do not have your child attend school if sick.
- If you have a child with chronic health conditions, consult the child's doctor about school attendance.
- Schools should equip all classrooms with hand sanitizers and tissues.
- Recommend rescheduling or cancelling events that are not essential.
- Explore remote teaching and online options to continue learning.
- Schools should develop a plan for citywide school closures, and families should prepare for further closures.

### **5) Transit: Cleaning and Protection**

- Increase cleaning of vehicles and high touch surface areas.
- Provide hand washing/hand sanitizers and tissues in stations and on vehicles.

## **6) Health Care Settings: Avoid as possible, protect the vulnerable**

- Long-term care facilities should have a COVID-19 plan in accordance with CDC or state guidelines.
- Long-term care facilities should restrict all visitation except for certain compassionate care situations, such as end of life situations.
- The general public should avoid going to medical settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities, even if you are not ill.
- If you are ill, call your health care provider ahead of time, and you may be able to be served by phone.
- Do not visit emergency rooms unless it is essential.
- Follow guidance and directions of all facilities.

## **7) Everyone: Do your part**

The best way for all Galveston County residents to reduce their risk of getting sick, as with seasonal colds or the flu, still applies to prevent COVID-19:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Try alternatives to shaking hands, like an elbow bump or wave.
- If you have recently returned from a country, state or region with ongoing COVID-19 infections, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials and CDC guidance.
- There is no recommendation to wear masks at this time to prevent yourself from getting sick.

You can also prepare for the disruption caused by an outbreak. Preparedness actions include:

- Prepare to work from home if that is possible for your job, and your employer.
- Make sure you have a supply of all essential medications for your family.
- Prepare a child care plan if you or a caregiver are sick.
- Make arrangements about how your family will manage school closures.
- Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.
- Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others.  
Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.