

WASHINGTON COUNTY, TEXAS

A DECLARATION PROVIDING FOR CONTINUING THE COUNTY JUDGE DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER, AS AMENDED BY THE COMMISSIONER'S COURT, DUE TO A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATED TO THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been recognized globally as a contagious respiratory virus; and

WHEREAS, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 continues to spread and to pose an increasing, imminent threat of disaster throughout Texas; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that person-to-person contact heightens the risk of COVID-19 transmission; and

WHEREAS, the President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America, as promulgated by President Donald J. Trump and the CDC on March 16th, 2020, call upon Americans to slow the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people, using drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options at restaurants and bars, and avoiding visitation at nursing homes, among other steps; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of State Health Services has now determined that, as of March 19th, 2020, COVID-19 represents a public health disaster within the meaning of Chapter 81 of the Texas Health and Safety Code; and

WHEREAS, said state of disaster requires that certain emergency protective measures be taken pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 relating to Emergency Management and Public Health, pursuant to Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code.

WHEREAS, the Washington County Judge issued a declaration of a local state of disaster on March 19, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Commissioner's Court desires to continue the March 19, 2020 declaration of a local state of disaster, said declaration being amended to read as provided herein below;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Commissioner's Court of Washington County, Texas:

- SECTION 1.** That a local state of disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for the Washington County, Texas, pursuant to Section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
- SECTION 2.** That pursuant to Section 418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code the state of disaster for public health emergency shall continue until 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2020, from the date of this declaration, as approved by the Washington County Commissioner's Court.
- SECTION 3.** That pursuant to Section 418.108(c) of the Texas Government Code this declaration of a local state of disaster for public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk.
- SECTION 4.** That pursuant to Section 418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the Washington County, Texas, emergency management plan, and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under the declaration.
- SECTION 5.** In accordance with guidance from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner Dr. John Hellerstedt and Texas Government Code section 418.108(g), and to achieve the goals established by the President to reduce the spread of COVID-19, every person in Washington County shall, except where necessary to provide or obtain essential services, minimize social gatherings and minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household.
- SECTION 6.** "Essential services" shall consist of everything listed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in its Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce, Version 2.0, plus religious services conducted in churches, congregations, and houses of worship. Other essential services may be added to this list with the approval of the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). TDEM shall maintain an online list of essential services, as specified in this executive order and in any approved additions. Requests for additions should be directed to TDEM at EssentialServices@tdem.texas.gov or by visiting www.tdem.texas.gov/essentialservices.
- SECTION 7.** In providing or obtaining essential services, and in accordance with Texas Government Code section 418.108(g), people and businesses should follow the Guidelines from the President and the CDC by practicing good hygiene, environmental cleanliness, and sanitation, implementing social distancing,

and working from home if possible. In particular, all services should be provided through remote telework from home unless they are essential services that cannot be provided through remote telework. If religious services cannot be conducted from home or through remote services, they should be conducted consistent with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC by practicing good hygiene, environmental cleanliness, and sanitation, and by implementing social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

SECTION 8. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, and Texas Government Code section 418.108(g), people shall avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms, massage establishments, tattoo studios, piercing studios, or cosmetology salons; provided, however, that the use of drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options for food and drinks is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of this declaration.

SECTION 9. This declaration does not prohibit people from accessing essential services or engaging in essential daily activities, such as going to the grocery store or gas station, providing or obtaining other essential services, visiting parks, hunting or fishing, or engaging in physical activity like jogging or bicycling, so long as the necessary precautions are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and to minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household. However, public playgrounds and associated equipment (i.e. exercise equipment, etc.) shall be closed.

SECTION 10. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, and Texas Government Code section 418.108(g), people shall not visit nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, or long-term care facilities, unless to provide critical assistance as determined through guidance from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

SECTION 11. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, and Texas Government Code section 418.108(g), schools shall remain temporarily closed to in-person classroom attendance and shall not recommence before May 4, 2020.

SECTION 12. This declaration shall provide notice that Washington County, Texas, will continue providing essential services; however, all services, excluding emergency responders, will be offered by appointment only. All County-operated offices, buildings and workplaces are subject to limited physical access by the public, and the County will inform the public of any preferred communication methods and appointment-setting practices for the various County offices, departments and workplaces. The public is strongly

encouraged to make all non-emergency requests for service from the County utilizing telecommunication devices or electronic mail (e-mail).

SECTION 13. In accordance with Texas Government Code 418.173, a person who knowingly or intentionally violates this declaration commits an offense, punishable by a fine up to \$1,000.00 or confinement in jail for a term that does not exceed 180 days.

SECTION 14. This Declaration, continuing said County Judge declaration, as amended, shall take effect immediately upon the approval of the Commissioner's Court of Washington County, Texas, and remain in effect and in full force until 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2020, subject to being extended, modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded by the Commissioner's Court of Washington County, Texas.

DECLARED and APPROVED this the 2nd day of April 2020.



John Durrenberger, County Judge



Don Koester, Commissioner Pct. 1



Kirk Hanath, Commissioner Pct. 3



Candice Bullock, Commissioner Pct. 2



Joy Fuchs, Commissioner Pct. 4