



# DENTON COUNTY

Executive Order AE-20-03-18  
March 18, 2020

## DISASTER DECLARATION AND EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE DENTON COUNTY JUDGE Andy Eads

**WHEREAS**, beginning in December 2019, a novel coronavirus, now designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19, has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization; and

**WHEREAS**, symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe illness and cause further complications including death; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 virus mainly spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

**WHEREAS**, Denton County is taking extraordinary measures to prevent the spread of this potentially devastating disease in our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Denton County Department of Emergency Services and the Denton County Department of Public Health has established emergency protective measures, mitigation procedures and emergency response plans for this type of health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, this International Health Emergency has created a serious health emergency requiring the issuance of a Disaster Declaration and the implementation of the Denton County Emergency Operations Plan, the Denton County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan, and associated Emergency Policies; and

**WHEREAS**, Denton County Commissioners Court approved court order 20-0201 and is amended by this executive order and 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 Texas Government Code Chapter 418; and

**WHEREAS**, Denton County has five confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date, one of which is linked to community spread of the virus, and four are travel related; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, this Disaster Declaration and the following Executive Order shall take effect at 11:59 a.m. on March 19, 2020:

Summary: The virus that causes 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is easily transmitted through person to person contact, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to protect the ability of public and private health care providers to handle the influx of new patients and safeguard public health and safety. Because of the risk of the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect the most vulnerable members of the community, this Order prohibits community gatherings, as defined by Section 3 herein, of 50 persons or more anywhere in Denton County beginning at 11:59 a.m. on March 19, 2020, and continuing through 11:00 a.m. on March 25, 2020. Additionally, this Order prohibits social gatherings, as defined by Section 3 herein, of 10 persons or more anywhere in Denton County beginning at 11:59 a.m. on March 19, 2020, and continuing through 11:00 a.m. on March 25, 2020. For gatherings of less than 10 persons,

the Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Public Health Department strongly recommends following the social distancing protocols attached to this Order. Additionally, the Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Public Health Department urges in the strongest terms possible all high-risk individuals, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cancel, reschedule, or not attend any event.

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE  
SECTION 418.108, DENTON COUNTY JUDGE ANDY EADS ORDERS:**

1. Effective of 11:59 a.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2020, and continuing until 11:00 a.m. on March 25, 2020:
  - (a) Public or private Recreational Gatherings and Community Gatherings (as defined in Section 3 below) are prohibited anywhere in Denton County
  - (b) 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,
  - (c) Bars, lounges, taverns, private clubs, arcades, and gyms shall close.
2. In addition, the Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Department of Health and Human Services ("Denton County Public Health Department") strongly urge high-risk individuals to cancel, reschedule, and not attend all gatherings until further notice. These recommendations are based on the social distancing practices attached to this Order as well as the "Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission" issued by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"). The Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Public Health Department urge people to not attend non-essential gatherings during the duration of this Order in order to help slow down the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
3. Definitions:
  - a. For purposes of this Order, a "Community Gathering" is any indoor or outdoor event or convening, subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, that brings together or is likely to bring together fifty (50) or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space, such as an auditorium, theatre, stadium (indoor or outdoor), arena or event center, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria, or any other confined indoor or confined outdoor space. An outdoor "Community Gathering" under this Order is limited to events in confined outdoor spaces, which means an outdoor space that (i) is enclosed by a fence, physical barrier, or other structure and (ii) where people are present and they are within six feet of one another for extended periods. For clarity, community gatherings include, but are not limited to, weddings, religious services, funerals, and other gatherings.
  - b. For the purposes of the Order, a "Recreational Gathering" is any indoor or outdoor event or convening that is primarily social or recreational in nature, subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, that brings together or is likely to bring together ten (10) or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space. For clarity, social gatherings include, but are not limited to, parties, backyard barbecues, social events, sporting events, and other gatherings. Private facilities, such as county clubs, may still operate their outdoor facilities, such as golf or tennis courts, but must limit indoor activities, such as their card rooms and similar amenities to 10 people or less per room.
  - c. This Order does not prohibit gatherings of people in multiple, separate enclosed spaces in a single building such as school classrooms, child care facilities, residential buildings, or hotels, so long as 50 people are not present in any single space at the same time and as long as best sterilization practices are adopted. This Order also does not prohibit the use of enclosed spaces where 50 or more people may be present at different times during the day, so long as 50 or more people are not present in the space at the same time. For example, residential buildings may continue to operate their common facilities, such as laundry facilities, so long as 50 or more people are not present at the same time. For any gathering covered by this subsection, the Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Public Health Department strongly encourage compliance with the attached Recommendations, including social distancing, providing hand sanitizer and tissues, and increasing cleaning of commonly

and frequently touched services.

- d. This Order does not apply to the following facilities, so long as employees and visitors are generally not within six feet of one another for extended periods:
  - i. (critical infrastructure, including airport facilities and operations, bus stations, transit, and transit facilities;
  - ii. government buildings providing essential services;
  - iii. schools or institutes of higher learning;
  - iv. office buildings, manufacturing facilities, and warehouses so long as employers take all steps reasonably possible to implement social distancing protocols;
  - v. grocery stores and pharmacies; and
  - vi. hospitals and medical offices and facilities, including cafes and restaurants located within these facilities.

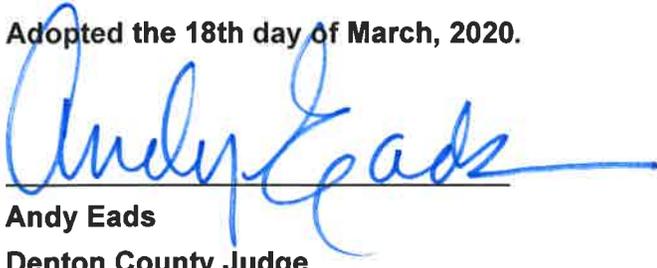
For purposes of this Order, "grocery stores" includes warehouse stores, big-box stores, bodegas, gas stations, and farmers' markets that sell food products and household staples.

In the settings described in Section (3)(d), the Office of the Denton County Judge and the Denton County Denton County Public Health Department strongly encourage compliance with the attached Recommendations, including social distancing, providing hand sanitizer and tissues, and increasing cleaning of commonly and frequently touched services.

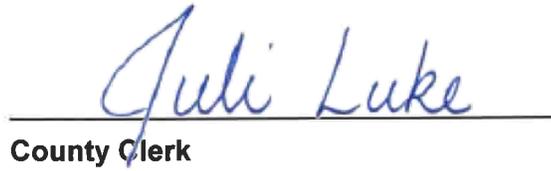
4. Our community's critical infrastructure, which includes communications, emergency services, energy, transportation systems, and water and wastewater systems, are instructed by this order to continue operating and encouraged to implement screening precautions to protect employees.
5. Grocery stores, 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 time frame, 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 Denton County for the next 60 days.
6. Due to this national public health emergency, President Trump has asked for landlords to not proceed with eviction processes at this time. The Office of the Denton County Judge asks landlords take this into serious consideration during these times of uncertainty.
7. If someone in a household has tested positive for coronavirus, the remaining household members are also ordered to isolate at home for a period of 14 days. Members of the household cannot go to work, school, or any other community function.
8. Nursing homes, retirement, short-term, 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.
9. Public and private schools and institutions of higher education are instructed by this order to update their Multi-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan as defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) 37.108 at least 72 hours before students return to a classroom settings.
10. This Order shall be effective until 11:00 a.m. on March 25, 2020, or until it is either rescinded, superseded, or amended pursuant to applicable law.
11. The County of Denton must promptly provide copies of this Order by posting on the Denton County website. 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. 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 law, then such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of this Order.

**The purpose if this order is for emergency protective measures, mitigation procedures and response plans to this public health emergency;**

**Adopted the 18th day of March, 2020.**



**Andy Eads  
Denton County Judge**



**County Clerk**

**March 18, 2020**

**Date Filed and Attested: Denton County**

## **Public Health 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. If you can telecommute, you should. Avoid people who are sick.

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

- Suspend nonessential employee travel.
- Minimize the number of employees working within six feet of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences.
- Urge 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.
- Consider use of telecommuting options.
- Some people need to be at work to provide essential services of great benefit to the community. They can 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 create physical space to minimize close contact as much as possible.

### **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 school closures, and families should prepare for potential 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 Denton 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.

## **8) Daycare Guidelines:**

Effective immediately, all current child care providers will implement the following guidance, consistent with new requirements in accordance with state law, federal guidance, and Gov. Greg Abbott's recent disaster declaration:

- Prohibit any person except the following from accessing an operation: operation staff; persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to children; children enrolled at the operation; and parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the operation.
- Require pickup and drop-off of children outside of the operation, unless it is determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation.
- Before allowing entry into the operation, screen all individuals listed above, including taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at the operation each day, and deny entry to any person who meets any of the following criteria:
  1. A temperature of 100.4°F or above;
  2. Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and low-grade fever;
  3. In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed

diagnosis of COVID-19; is under investigation for COVID-19; or is ill with a respiratory illness; or

4. In the previous 14 days has travelled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/travelers/index.html>.
- Ensure that each child is provided individual meals and snacks. Do not serve family style meals.

You can also prepare for the possible 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 a school closure.
- 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.