

**COUNTY OF HOOD, TEXAS  
COUNTY JUDGE DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER  
DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

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

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

**WHEREAS**, Hood County, Texas, is taking extraordinary measures to prevent the spread of the potentially devastating disease in our community; 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.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE OF HOOD COUNTY, TEXAS:**

**SECTION 1.** That a local state disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for Hood 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 for a period of not more than seven (7) days from the date of this declaration, unless approved by the Commissioners Court of Hood County, Texas.

**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 Hood County, Texas, emergency management plan, and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under the declaration.

**SECTION 5.** That this declaration authorizes the County to take any actions necessary to promote health and suppress the virus, including the quarantine of persons and occupied structures, examining and regulating hospitals, regulating ingress and egress from the County, regulating ingress and egress to occupied structures, establishment of quarantine stations, emergency hospitals, and other hospitals, and insuring compliance for those who do not comply with the County's rules and directives.

**SECTION 6.** That this declaration hereby limits the size of gatherings to not more than 50 people and mandates the cancellation of all such gatherings of more than 50 people until further notice. A

“gathering” refers generally to a scheduled event or common endeavor where 50 persons are present in a confined space, room, or area.

**SECTION 7.** 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 8.** That this declaration hereby authorizes the use of all lawfully available enforcement tools.

**SECTION 9.** That this declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance and, upon approval by the Commissioners Court, shall continue in effect until terminated by the County Judge. Pursuant to this declaration, additional directives may be issued by the County Judge at any time as deemed necessary.

**SECTION 10.** 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, gym, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria, or any other confined indoor or confined outdoor space.
- b) 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.
- c) For purposes of clarity, a community gathering does not include the following so long as visitors are generally not within six feet of one another for extended periods:
  - i) spaces where 50 or more persons may be in transit or waiting for transit such as airports, bus stations or terminals; (ii) office space, schools, or residential buildings; (iii) grocery stores, shopping malls, or other retail establishments, not including restaurants with and without drive-in or drive-through services, microbreweries, micro-distilleries or wineries, bars, lounges, or taverns, and private clubs, where large numbers of people are present but it is unusual for them to be within six feet of one another for extended periods; and (iv) hospitals and medical facilities. In all such settings, the Offices of the Hood County Judge, Emergency Management, and the Local Health Authority recommend following the attached Social Distancing Recommendations. Personal hygiene measures such as hand sanitizer and tissues should be provided when possible.
  - ii) Restaurants with or without drive-in or drive-through services and microbreweries, micro-distilleries, bars, lounges, taverns, arcades, private clubs, and wineries.

**SECTION 11.** This Order does not apply to any “business operations” or “essential services”. “essential services” means services, by whomsoever rendered, and whether rendered to the Government or to any other person, the interruption of which would endanger the life, health or personal safety of the whole or part of the population;” Any conflict with this Order will be resolved by the Office of the Hood County Judge.

**SECTION 12.** If someone in a household has tested positive for coronavirus, the household is ordered to isolate at home. Members of the household cannot go to work, school, or any other community function.

**SECTION 13.** Nursing homes, retirement, and long-term care facilities are instructed to prohibit non-essential visitors from accessing their facilities unless to provide critical assistance or for end-of-life visitation.

**SECTION 14.** Additionally, the Offices of the Hood County Judge and the Local Health Authority instruct all Hood County employees to remain at home if sick and follow the instruction provided by the Hood County Human Resources Department or the Local Health Authority.

**SECTION 15.** The County of Hood must promptly provide copies of this Order by posting on the Hood 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 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 declaration.

DECLARED THIS 19TH DAY OF MARCH, 2020, AT 10:20 AM

IT IS SO ORDERED

RON MASSINGILL

HOOD COUNTY JUDGE

## **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.

### **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 Hood 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) 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.