



Carbett “Trey” J. Duhon III
Waller County Judge

TO: Media Release

FROM: Trey Duhon, Waller County Judge
Waller County Office of Emergency Management

DATE: March 25, 2020

RE: WALLER COUNTY EXTENDS DECLARATION AND COUNTY
JUDGE ISSUES ORDER IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Hempstead, Texas - This morning in Waller County Commissioners Court, the Court unanimously voted to extend the Emergency Declaration issued last Wednesday by Waller County Judge Trey Duhon. In addition, the Court discussed and also unanimously agreed with an Order that Judge Duhon has issued in response to the ongoing situation with COVID-19 in Waller County.

Judge Duhon stated, “There is no doubt that this is a public health emergency, but at each and every step, we must always carefully balance the restrictions we put in place with a person's ability to earn a living and provide for their family.” Judge Duhon added, “I firmly believe that Waller County citizens have generally complied with all of the recommendations and guidelines we have promulgated along with the CDC and Gov. Abbott’s Executive Orders, and in many cases, people, businesses and churches have gone above and beyond those guidelines. I think that what has been done so far will have a tremendous impact on the spread of the virus. We must constantly assess and re-assess the situation minute by minute with our first priority being public health & safety, while also keeping in mind that people have families that must be fed. Bills that have to be paid.”

Based on that premise, at 11:45 am this morning, Judge Duhon signed an Order which takes effect at 11:59 PM this evening for Waller County, which requires:

- All Waller County residents to maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person when they are outside their residence.
- All businesses in Waller County to comply with the Social Distancing Guidelines as well, including maintaining six foot social distancing for both employees and the general public to the greatest extent possible, and to monitor the health and well-being of their employees on a daily basis and take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Businesses are also strongly urged to maximize telecommuting and suspend or discourage nonessential employee travel.
- All social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people are prohibited.

- Religious institutions were strongly urged to provide religious and worship services by video and/or teleconference, but are permitted to conduct worship services outdoors as long as at least six feet distance is maintained between individuals and/or family units.
- Restaurants with or without drive-in or drive-through services and bars, microbreweries, micro-distilleries, or wineries may only provide take out, delivery, or drive-through services as allowed by law.
- In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC and Governor Abbott's Executive Order, people shall avoid visiting gyms and massage parlors.
- Non-essential visitors are prohibited from visiting Nursing homes, retirement, and long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance or for an end-of-life event, as allowed by the facility.
- If anyone in a household tests positive for coronavirus, the household is ordered to isolate at home for 14 days until or unless otherwise directed by the Local Health Authority.
- Schools shall remain temporarily closed.
- People shall avoid public playground equipment.

The Order further provided guidance to businesses and churches on social distancing guidelines when conducting non-social gatherings, meetings and/or worship services, and lastly, the Judge's Order strongly encouraged Waller County residents to remain in their residences as much as possible and limit trips outside their residences to work and trips for essential items only, and that any residents that are AT RISK should to the greatest extent feasible, remain at home at all times.

The Judge also stated, "Overall I believe that this Order establishes a framework in which we can all be successful - in not only fighting the virus, but in keeping people employed. And to be clear, this Order is based on all of the information available to me at this time and can still be subject to change at any moment. The Waller County Office of Emergency Management will continue to monitor this situation minute-by-minute and day-by-day." As of the time of the Order, Waller County still did not have a confirmed case of COVID-19.

For additional information related to this press release, contact Waller County Emergency Coordinator Brian Cantrell 979.826.7785