



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 18, 2020

RE: WALLER COUNTY JUDGE ISSUES DECLARATION OF
EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Hempstead, Texas - Today at 12:21 pm, Waller County Judge Trey Duhon signed a Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 virus. Judge Duhon stated, "This Declaration will provide Waller County with the authority and resources that will be critical to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Although Waller County does not have a confirmed case of COVID-19 at this moment, we anticipate that will change in the coming days. Given the threat this virus presents to our public health, we should be prepared to protect our residents in Waller County."

As part of the Declaration, Judge Duhon and the Waller County Office of Emergency Management (WCOEM) strongly urged all citizens, businesses, and restaurants to adhere to the most current recommendations promulgated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and that at this time no events be held with fifty (50) or more people, and no informal gatherings be held between individuals of ten (10) or more in a confined space. Waller County Emergency Management Coordinator Brian Cantrell stated, "The WCOEM is closely monitoring the situation minute by minute and additional orders and/or limitations could be issued if the circumstances require further restrictions to be put in place to protect the public."

Concurrent with the signing of the Declaration of Emergency, the WCOEM has issued recommendations for the public and businesses to limit potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus for employees and customers and to reduce the transmission rate. See attached Recommendations. The Recommendations are also available on the Waller County website at <https://www.co.waller.tx.us/page/EM.COVID-19>

At this point and time, Waller County is not requiring restaurants or bars to close, but Judge Duhon and the WCOEM strongly urge those businesses to take all necessary precautions to minimize the COVID-19 threat to their customers and employees by adhering to the following guidelines:

1. Reduce the number of tables in the establishment and maintain a distance of no less than 10 feet between tables and/or utilize partitions; and reduce total capacity within the restaurant to no more than 50 people at any time if space permits;

2. Regularly and frequently clean and sanitize all common surfaces (door handles, countertops, bathroom areas) and clean/sanitize tables after each use;
3. Require any employee that is not feeling well to stay home;
4. Utilize reservations/scheduling to limit the number of people in the restaurant;
5. Make delivery and takeout options available to customers and potentially re-purpose wait staff for that purpose.
6. Limit no more than four (4) people per table

Judge Duhon also stated “I encourage every Waller County citizen to heed the advice of the WCOEM, public officials, medical professionals, and state officials in relation to how you can reduce your exposure to the virus and any transmission thereof. That means following rules of good hygiene and making it your personal responsibility to maintaining social distancing at all times and in all settings, and vulnerable individuals must be extremely cautious.”

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