



Bell County Disaster Declaration

Directive #3

Stay Home Stay Safe

DATE AMENDED ORDER & DIRECTIVE ISSUED: March 23, 2020

WHEREAS, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 418.108, Bell County Judge David Blackburn issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency on March 18, 2020, due to a novel coronavirus now designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Judge Blackburn issued Directive #2 in furtherance of his authority to protect the safety and welfare of the public by slowing the spread of the virus; and,

WHEREAS, the on-going evaluation of circumstances related to the virus and the updated recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the Texas Department of State Health Services and Bell County Public Health District warrant the March 20, 2020 Order of County Judge David Blackburn be modified;

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, President Trump acknowledged the gravity of the COVID-19 pandemic, releasing strict new guidelines to limit people's interactions, including that Americans should avoid groups of more than 10 people;

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, the Bell County Commissioners Court approved Judge Blackburn's Disaster Declaration for Bell County issued an Order of Continuance of Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency that affirmed the activation of the Bell County Emergency Management Plan and extends until such time as the County Judge and/or the Commissioners Court determines such is no longer required.

THEREFORE, the March 20, 2020, Directive #2, of County Judge David Blackburn is hereby rescinded and the following Directive #3 is ORDERED:

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 requires all individuals anywhere in Bell County to shelter in place – that is, stay at home - except for certain essential activities and work to provide essential business and government services or perform essential public infrastructure construction, including housing. This Order takes effect at 11:59 p.m. on March 23, 2020 and will continue through 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020, subject to the limited exceptions and under the terms and conditions more particularly set forth below. This Directive may be extended if circumstances warrant such.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 418.108, BELL COUNTY JUDGE DAVID BLACKBURN ORDERS:

1. Effective as of 11:59 p.m. on March 23, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020:
 - (a) All individuals currently living within Bell County are hereby ordered to shelter at their place of residence. For the purposes of this Order, residences include hotels, motels, shared rentals, and similar facilities. To the extent individuals are using shared or outdoor spaces, they must at all times as reasonably as possible maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person when they are outside their residence. All person may leave their residences only for Essential Activities, or to provide or perform Essential Governmental Functions, or to operate Essential Businesses, all as further defined in this Directive.
 - (b) All businesses operating within Bell County, except Essential Businesses as defined in below in Section 2, are required to cease all activities at facilities located within the County. For clarity, businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences (i.e. working from home). To the greatest extent possible, all Essential Businesses shall comply with the Social Distancing Guidelines attached, including maintaining six foot social distancing for both employees and the general public.
 - (c) All public or private gatherings of 10 or more people occurring outside a single household or living unit are prohibited, except as otherwise provided herein. Nothing in this Order prohibits the gathering of members of a household or living unit.
 - (d) 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.
 - (e) Religious and worship services may only be provided by video and teleconference. Religious institutions must limit in-person staff to ten (10) people or less when preparing for or conducting video or teleconference services, and all individuals must follow the Social Distancing Guidelines including the six foot social distancing.
 - (f) All elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures are prohibited anywhere in Bell County. Hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, dental offices and other medical facilities are directed to identify procedures that are deemed “elective” by assessing which procedures can be postponed or cancelled based on patient risk considering the emergency need for redirection of resources to COVID-19 response.
2. Definitions:
 - (a) For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their residence only to perform any of the following “Essential Activities”:

- i. To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (for example, obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies need to work from home).
 - ii. To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others (for example, food, pet supply, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences).
 - iii. To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with social distancing requirements of six feet (for example, walking, biking, hiking or running).
 - iv. To perform work providing essential products and services at an Essential Business or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Order.
 - v. To care for a family member or pet in another household.
- (b) For purposes of this Order, “Essential Businesses” means:
- i. **Essential Healthcare Operations.** Healthcare operations, including hospitals, clinics, dentist, pharmacies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, mental health providers, substance abuse service providers, blood banks, medical research, laboratory services, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. Home-based and residential-based care for seniors, adults, or children are also considered healthcare operations. Healthcare operations also includes veterinary care and all health and welfare services provided to animals. This exemption shall be viewed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare. Healthcare operations do not include fitness and exercise gyms and similar facilities. Healthcare operations do not include elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures as established in accordance with Subsection 1(g) of this Order.
 - ii. **Essential Government Functions.** All services provided by political subdivisions of the State needed to ensure the continuing operation of those agencies to provide for the health, safety, education, and welfare of the public. Further, nothing in this order shall prohibit any individual from performing or accessing “Essential Government Functions.” All Essential Government Functions shall be performed in compliance with social distancing requirements of six feet, to the extent possible.
 - iii. **Essential Critical Infrastructure & Activities.** Work that is necessary to the operations and maintenance of the critical infrastructure sectors as identified by the National Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), Memorandum dated March 19, 2020 (attached to this Directive) including public works construction, residential and commercial construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services), financial institutions, defense and national security-related operations, essential manufacturing operations provided that they carry out those services or that work in compliance with social distancing requirements of six feet, to the extent possible. Essential Businesses providing essential infrastructure should implement screening precautions to protect employees and all activity shall be performed in compliance with social distancing guidelines attached.
 - iv. **Essential Retail.** Food service providers, including grocery stores, warehouse stores, big-box stores, bodegas, liquor stores, gas stations and convenience stores, farmers’

markets that sell food products and household staples. Food cultivation, including farming, fishing, and livestock. Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free services to students or members of the public on a pick-up and take-away basis only. The restriction of delivery or carry out does not apply to cafes and restaurants located within hospital and medical facilities. Laundromats, dry cleaners, and laundry service providers. Gas stations, automobile sales, auto-supply, auto and bicycle repair, hardware stores, construction supply stores, and related facilities. Businesses that supply products needed for people to work from home.

- v. **Providers of Basic Necessities to Economically Disadvantaged Populations.** Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals.
 - vi. **Essential Services Necessary to Maintain Essential Operations of Residences or Other Essential Businesses.** Trash and recycling collections, processing and disposal, mail and shipping services, building cleaning and maintenance, warehouse/distribution and fulfillment, storage for essential businesses, funeral homes, crematoriums and cemeteries. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other services providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operations of residences and Essential Businesses. Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with the support of supplies needed to operate.
 - vii. **News Media.** Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services.
 - viii. **Childcare Services.** Childcare facilities may continue to operate; however, to the extent possible, it is recommended that groups consist of no more than 10 and be kept separate.
3. Any manufacturer who retools so that a substantial part of their business is for the purpose of manufacturing and producing ventilators may apply for an “essential business” exemption under this Order.
 4. 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 timeframe, 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 Bell County for the next 60 days.
 5. If someone in a household has tested positive for coronavirus, the household is ordered to isolate at home and follow the directives from their health care provider. Members of the household cannot go to work, school, or any other community function, provided that workers included in Essential Healthcare Operations may continue to work in accordance with CDC guidance. All persons are encouraged to take advantage of telehealth services offered by healthcare providers, including expanded telehealth services now available to Medicare patients.
 6. Nursing homes, retirement, 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. These facilities are also required to institute temperature checking of all staff

entering the facility at least twice per day and limit physical contact between residents in the facility wherever possible.

7. For individuals who are 65 and older and individuals with compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions, the following recommendations are made:
 - a. Remain indoors
 - b. Outdoor exercise activities should be solitary
 - c. Prescreen all essential visitors
 - d. Do not visit homes or places with more than one person
 - e. Ask all visitors to wear masks
 - f. Follow social distancing guidelines
 - g. Do not use public transit except in an emergency
8. Daycare facilities may continue to operate but it is recommended that groups in the facility consist of 10 or fewer in those settings and kept separate to the extent possible.
9. This Order shall be effective until 11:59 p.m. on April 3, 2020, or until it is either rescinded, superseded, or amended pursuant to applicable law.
10. The Bell County shall provide copies of this Order by posting on the Bell County website and by filing with the Bell County Clerk. 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 Order.

IT IS SO ORDERED

**DAVID BLACKBURN
COUNTY JUDGE**

Filed this the 23rd day of March, 2020 in the Office of the County Clerk.

Accepted : _____

Shelley Coston, County Clerk



Bell County 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. Stay home. Avoid people who are sick.

2) Workplace and Businesses: Minimize Exposure

- Suspend nonessential employee travel.
- Review and determine who are essential and non-essential workers and allow non-essential workers to stay home.
- Ensure employees practice social distancing and do not work within six feet of one another.
- Urge essential 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.
- Maximize telecommuting options.
- Persons who need to be at work to provide essential services of great benefits to the community must 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 handrails.
 - Finding ways to implement social distancing.

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.
- School 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 citywide school closures, and families should prepare for further 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.
- Ensure social distancing practices are implemented to the full extent possible.

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 head 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 Bell County residents to reduce their risk of getting sick, as with seasonal colds or the flu, still applies to prevent COVID-10:

- 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.

You can also prepare for the 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 school closures.
- 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.