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Denton County Commissioners Court
Judge Andy Eads

Amended Denton County Judge order outlines new mandates

March 18, 2020 — Denton County Judge Andy Eads has issued an amendment to the executive order for disaster declaration for public health emergency, which was adopted by the full Commissioners Court on Tuesday.

“We are taking these mandatory aggressive measures now with the first case demonstrating community spread in Denton County,” Denton County Judge Andy Eads said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Denton County Public Health officials confirmed three additional cases of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Denton County, bringing the total number to five. One of the cases involves a male resident of Lewisville in his 40s, who is in isolation and critical condition in a Denton County hospital after local transmission.

“As your county government, it is our responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all Denton County residents,” Judge Eads said. “Your health and safety has been at the center of our discussions from the onset of this virus.

“We do not take these decisions lightly. However, we must act early, act decisively and act aggressively to flatten the curve in the community spread of this disease,” Judge Eads said. “These actions are meant to spare lives.”

The new executive order is effective as of 11:59 a.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2020. The order:

- Restricts all community gatherings across Denton County to 50 people or fewer
- Orders the closing of all bars, lounges, taverns, nightclubs, gyms and health clubs, theaters, and entertainment or amusement venues. Restaurants, for now, may remain open for drive-through, delivery, pick-up and curbside service only. Dine-in service is prohibited.
- Due to this national public health emergency, President Trump has asked landlords to not proceed with eviction processes at this time. The Office of the Denton County Judge asks landlords to take this into serious consideration during these times of uncertainty.

- Nursing homes, retirement, short- 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.
- If someone in a household has tested positive for coronavirus, the remaining household members are 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.
- This order removes restrictions on delivery times 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.
- Public and private schools and institutions of higher education are encouraged to update their Multi-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan as defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) 3.108 at least 72 hours before students return to classroom settings.

This order will be effective until 11 a.m. on March 25, 2020, until it is either rescinded, suspended or amended pursuant to applicable law.

In an effort to do our part in curbing the COVID-19 virus, Denton County has chosen to take a proactive step by limiting public access to county buildings.

“Your support and understanding in this measure is greatly appreciated and your assistance in this effort strengthens our partnership for the health and safety of everyone,” Judge Eads said. “We are taking these measures to be in step with health guidelines for social distancing as well as to ensure county government operations continue effectively on your behalf.”

A number of Denton County offices will be closed for walk-in traffic effective March 19 but many will take scheduled appointments. Please contact them before your arrival to schedule a time. In addition, many county services are available online. Check the county’s website at www.DentonCounty.gov.

“I know that these restrictions will impact many of our residents and businesses,” Judge Eads said. “We want them to know that these measures are not being undertaken lightly and are being enacted solely with the health and wellbeing of all our residents in mind.”

Small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and some private nonprofit organizations that have suffered substantial economic injury due to COVID-19 may be eligible for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan of up to \$2 million, which will provide the necessary working capital to help businesses survive until normal operations resume after a disaster. Visit <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/> and submit your Economic Injury Worksheet to: TDEMPARecovery@tdem.texas.gov and sba-submissions@dentoncounty.gov. This is not an application for an SBA loan.

Information regarding COVID-19 can be found at CDC.gov/COVID19 and DentonCounty.gov/COVID19.

“Our dynamic county, though experiencing fast growth, has always had the same core values of caring for each other in good times and in tough times. We have been and will continue to be Denton County Strong,” Judge Eads said.