



Denton County Judge Andy Eads



City of Denton Mayor Chris Watts

Denton County, City of Denton issue “stay at home” mandates

March 24, 2020 — Denton County Judge Andy Eads and City of Denton Mayor Chris Watts jointly issued an amended executive order for Denton County and a second Mayoral declaration of disaster and order for the City of Denton requiring residents to stay at home effective at 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

“Sometimes you have to decide between two bad choices and I am erring on the side of saving lives,” said Denton County Judge Andy Eads. “Each individual has the responsibility to stay at home and limit their actions to the necessities of getting supplies, handling medical issues and, for some, going to work to keep essential businesses in operation.”

“Nothing is more important than protecting the safety and well-being of our community,” said Denton Mayor Chris Watts. “During this unprecedented time, it is on all of us to do what is necessary to flatten the curve and minimize the spread of this virus.”

Denton County Public Health officials have confirmed a total of 36 cases of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Denton County as of Monday evening.

“Community spread is here in Denton County and we know that it will continue for a while. How long? We simply do not know,” Judge Eads said. “The quicker we properly keep our distance, the quicker kids can return to school, and our lives and businesses can continue.”

The new executive order from Denton County is effective as of 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. The order mandates:

- All individuals currently living within Denton County are ordered to STAY AT HOME or their current 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 persons may leave their residences only for Essential Activities, travel to businesses outside Denton County, provide or perform Essential Governmental Functions, or to operate Essential Businesses, all as defined in Section 2.
- All businesses operating within Denton County, except Essential Businesses as defined in Section 2, are required to cease all activities at facilities located within Denton County. For clarity,

businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their 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 public.

- All public or private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit are prohibited.
- Restaurants and beverage bars 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.
- All elective medical, surgical, and dental procedures are prohibited anywhere in Denton 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 canceled based on patient risk considering the emergency need for the redirection of resources to COVID-19 response.
- Restaurants and beverage bars 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.
- 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.

This order will be effective until March 31, 2020, unless extended by the Denton County Commissioners Court or rescinded by the Denton County Judge.

The City of Denton will incorporate these mandates as a Second Declaration of Local Disaster and Order of the Mayor. In addition to the "Stay at Home" provision, the Second Order of the Mayor will also, among other allowances, provide for:

- The suspension of all City Committee, Commission, and Board meetings through the term of this order, with the exception of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which shall meet only to consider applications subject to state law-imposed deadlines.
- All City of Denton utility non-payment shut offs are suspended during the term of this Order and no penalties shall accrue during the pendency of this Order.
- \$550,000 of spending authority during this period to proceed with the necessary emergency responses and essential functions not already budgeted.
- Authorization for the City Manager or his designee to terminate or suspend any event that is or may negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of persons within the City.

“While we are not sure how long we’ll be battling this storm together, we ask for the community’s support and understanding as we take this necessary step,” Mayor Watts said. “Your City will continue to serve you during this challenging time, and I know that our collective spirit cannot be broken.”

The stay-at-home mandate will also help support medical facilities across Denton County.

“Hospitals, the places that help us in our greatest hours of need, are now asking us to help them,” Judge Eads said. “We must ensure the health and safety of our medical professionals and first responders, who are on the front lines working to give residents the services they need when they need it most.”

Working as a team, residents in Denton County will get through this, Judge Eads said.

“Our shared sacrifices today will help all of us get through this situation as soon as possible to ensure a brighter future for everyone across Denton County. We are Denton County Strong,” he said.

Information regarding COVID-19 can be found at [CDC.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19) and [DentonCounty.gov/COVID19](https://www.dentoncounty.gov/COVID19).