



Press Release



wichitafallstx.gov

For Immediate Release

March 19, 2020

City of Wichita Falls Issues Disaster Declaration in Response to COVID-19

Wichita Falls, Texas – In response to the increasing concerns of COVID-19 across the nation, Mayor Stephen Santellana has issued an emergency declaration for the City of Wichita Falls that goes into effect at 11:59PM on March 20, 2020. Pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code A, a Mayor or County Judge can declare a local state of disaster and public health emergency. The declaration puts into action the City's emergency management plan and will assist with federal funding. Mayor Santellana said, "Issuing this declaration provides additional measures to help protect our citizens and provide the necessary resources and funding to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 within our community. This decision was carefully considered as we know this will impact many local businesses and residents. This is a challenging situation for our community, with changes happening daily. With these new measures in place, it is incumbent upon all of us to support our local businesses as much as possible."

Per the Disaster Declaration issued today, any indoor or outdoor community gatherings of more than ten people will be prohibited at:

- Arenas, event venues, music venues, meeting halls and the conference center
- Auditoriums
- Indoor recreational facilities
- Gyms
- Health studios
- Indoor amusement facilities
- Bowling alleys
- Pool halls
- Theaters (theatres)
- Massage parlors
- Stadiums
- Large cafeterias
- Bars, lounges, taverns and private clubs that allow for the on-premise consumption of alcohol

Dine-in restaurants, microbreweries, micro-distilleries, and wineries are allowed to remain open, so long as they only provide take-out, delivery or drive-through services.

A community gathering does not include the following, so long as visitors are generally not within six feet of one another for extended periods:

- Spaces where more than ten persons may be in transit or waiting for transit such as airports, bus stations, or terminals
- Office space, public and private schools, child care facilities, residential buildings, or any type of temporary sheltering or housing
- Grocery stores, shopping centers or malls, or other retail establishments where large numbers of people are present, but it is unusual for them to be within six feet of one another for extended periods
- Hospitals and medical facilities

In addition, all Wichita Falls Municipal court hearings have been postponed until April 15, 2020. The Court will continue to function in full capacity, with the exception of public walk in access. Citizens may call 940-761-7880 for questions.

###