



## STEPHENS COUNTY

### DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

WHEREAS the World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus, now designated COVID-19, as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe illness and cause further complications including death; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus mainly spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

WHEREAS, the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19 presents an imminent threat of widespread illness, which requires emergency action for the protection of the people of Stephens County; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of mitigation strategies can slow the transmission of the disease; and

WHEREAS, this Declaration activates the County's emergency management plan; and

WHEREAS, the County Judge of Stephens County has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to mitigate the effects of this public health emergency and to facilitate the efficient, rapid, and cooperative response to the emergency;

THEREFORE, Be It Proclaimed by The County Judge of Stephens County that:

1. A local state of disaster is hereby declared for Stephens County, pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
2. The state of disaster shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the Stephens County Commissioners Court, pursuant to §418.018(b) of the Government Code.
3. This declaration of a local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk, pursuant to §418.018(b) of the Government Code.
4. This declaration of a local state of disaster activates the Stephens County Emergency Plan, pursuant to §418.018(b) of the Government Code.
5. This Declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

ORDERED this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

  
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Michael C. Roach  
Stephens County Judge

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## **Stephens County & City of Breckenridge**

### **Public Health Recommendations - March 16, 2020**

*These steps are recommended until April 20, 2020 or until otherwise noted.*

#### **Event and Large Gatherings Recommendations**

Stephens County recommends any events over 50 people be canceled. Additionally, we strongly recommend organizers of events of any size in which people will be in close contact to cancel or postpone such events, if possible.

If you cannot avoid bringing a group of people together, we recommend the following guidelines:

- Anyone who is sick or has a member of their household that is sick should not attend.
- Those who are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness should not attend.
- Increase the frequency of sanitizing common touchpoints.
- Try to encourage attendees to stay at least six feet away from each other.
- Keep an adequate supply of hand soap, disinfectants, tissues, and paper towels.
- Encourage attendees to follow increased hygiene, such as:
  - Washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
    - If soap and water are not available, attendees should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid close contact with other people
  - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue - if available - or into their elbow

#### **Recommendations for Workplaces and Businesses**

Employers should take steps to make it more feasible for their employees to work in ways that minimize close contact with large numbers of people.

Employers should:

- Maximize telecommuting options for as many employees as possible.
- Activate their continuity of operations plan
- Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits.
- Urge employees to stay home or telecommute if another member of their household is sick.
- Consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched areas (doorknobs, tabletops, countertops, phones, key boards, etc.)
- Prioritize protective actions for employees who are at higher risk of severe illness.

#### **Recommendations for People at Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness**

People at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with lots of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. Gatherings of seniors or other people at higher risk of severe illness should be canceled or postponed.

Those at higher risk include:

- People 60 and older.
- People with underlying health conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes)

- People who have weakened immune systems.
- Pregnant women.

Caregivers of children with underlying health conditions should consult with healthcare providers about whether their children should stay home. Anyone who has questions about whether their condition puts them at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness should consult with their healthcare provider. **Those without a healthcare provider should contact a local doctor or clinic for a consultation over the phone.**

### **Mental Health Resources**

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people throughout the community. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Accordingly, we suggest the following recommendations:

- People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans, stay connected with their healthcare provider, and monitor for any new symptoms.
- Call your healthcare provider if stress reactions interfere with your daily activities
- **Contact MHMR of Stephens County 24/7 call line by phone by contacting the county's MHMR provider, Betty Hardwick at 800.758.3344 if you are experiencing emotional distress related to COVID-19.**

### **Recommendations for people who are sick**

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Do not go out in public when you are sick.
- If you are ill in any way, call your doctor's office first before going in.
- Do not go to the emergency room unless you are experiencing a medical emergency. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.
- If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, stay home and self-isolate until you have contacted a healthcare professional.

### **Recommendations for the General Public**

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer when you cannot wash your hands. Hand sanitizer does not replace washing of hands with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, use the elbow of your sleeve. Don't use your hands to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Even if you are not ill, avoid visiting hospitals, long-term care facilities or nursing homes to the extent possible. If you do need to visit one of these facilities, limit your time there and keep at least six feet away from patients.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, especially if you are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy foods, and manage your stress to keep your immunity strong.
- Clean household surfaces with standard cleaners.

Stay informed. Information is changing frequently. Visit [www.facebook.com/stephenscountytexas.gov](https://www.facebook.com/stephenscountytexas.gov) frequently for updates.

### **Recommendations for Travel**

Stephens County Emergency Management recommends all non-essential travel be cancelled at this time.

<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/> Keep up with us @ <https://www.facebook.com/stephenscountytexas.gov>