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CO. CLK. BELL CO. TX

Bell County Disaster Declaration

Directive #4

Stay Home Stay Safe

DATE AMENDED ORDER & DIRECTIVE ISSUED: March 27, 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 #3 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 23, 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THEREFORE, the March 23, 2020, Directive #3, of County Judge David Blackburn is hereby rescinded and the following Directive #4 is hereby ORDERED: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 essentials 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 27, 2020 and will continue through 11:59 a.m. on April 6, 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 HEREBY ORDERS:

1. Effective as of 11:59 p.m. on March 27, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 a.m. on April 6, 2020:
   (a) All individuals currently living within Bell County are hereby ordered to shelter at their place of residence, save and except to the extent allowed by this Order as set forth herein:
      a. For the purposes of this Order, residences include structures that are single family, multi-family, hotels, motels, shared rentals, and similar facilities.
      b. To the extent possible, individuals that 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.
      c. All persons may leave their residences for :
         i. Essential Activities, as further defined herein;
         ii. Essential Governmental Functions, as further defined herein:
         iii. Essential Businesses, all as further defined herein;
         iv. Businesses that Support Essential Businesses, as further defined herein.
   (b) All businesses operating within Bell County, except Essential Businesses and Businesses that support Essential Businesses, as defined in below in Section 2, are required to cease all activities at facilities located within the County.
      a. For clarity, all businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences (i.e. working from home).
      b. To the greatest extent possible, all Government Functions, Essential Businesses and Businesses supporting 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 or for purposes of worship. However, places of worship are strongly urged to heed and follow the guidelines for limiting the number of people gathering, utilizing alternative means for worship to include livestreaming and videoconferencing, and to follow the social distancing guidelines. The demographics of many faith-based organizations comprise significant numbers of the COVID19 high risk population group and gatherings in numbers greater than 10 puts those congregating at dire risk.

(d) All individuals and businesses should comply, to the extent possible, with social distancing requirements of six feet and other social distancing guidelines that may be recommended in order to best protect self and others.

(e) 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.

(f) 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 is hereby suspended until May 31, 2020.

(g) If someone in a household has tested positive for COVID19, 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.

(h) 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.

(i) For individuals who are 65 and older and individuals with compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions, the following recommendations are made and strongly urged:

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

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 Businesses that Support Essential Businesses.

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 is the maintenance or improvement of health via the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, recovery, or cure of disease, illness, injury, and other physical and mental impairments in people and pets. Health care is delivered by health professionals in allied health fields. It includes work and locations done in providing primary care, secondary care, and tertiary care, as well as in public health. Physicians and physician associates are a part of these health professionals. Example of healthcare operations include:

a. Dentistry
b. Pharmacy
c. Midwifery
d. Nursing
e. Optometry
f. Audiology
g. Psychology
h. Occupational therapy
i. Physical therapy
j. Biotechnology companies
k. Mental health care providers
l. Healthcare suppliers
m. Substance abuse service providers
n. Blood banks
o. Medical research
p. Laboratory services
q. Home-based and residential-based care for seniors, adults, or children
r. Veterinary care.

ii. **Essential Government Functions.** An essential governmental function is a function provided by a political subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, or a school district. Essential governmental functions and activities are those that are needed to ensure the continuing operation of those agencies to provide for the health, safety, education, and welfare of the public.

a. Further, nothing in this order shall prohibit any individual from performing or accessing Essential Government Functions, such as voting in an a duly called and authorized election. All Essential Government Functions shall be performed, to the extent possible, in compliance with social distancing requirements.

iii. **Essential Critical Infrastructure & Activities.** Essential Critical Infrastructure & Activities is 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). Example of essential critical infrastructure work and activities includes:

a. public works construction
b. residential and commercial construction
c. airport operations
d. water, sewer, gas, & electrical
e. oil refining
f. public transportation
g. solid waste collection removal and disposal

h. internet and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services)
i. financial institutions, including pay day lenders and pawn shops
j. defense and national security-related operations and business that support such
k. manufacturing operations
l. distribution and logistics operations
m. media, including newspaper, television, and radio
n. childcare and daycare

iv. **Essential Retail.** Essential retail is the sale of consumer goods and services during a time of national, state and/or local disaster that is necessary to maintain a residence and/or essential business and/or a business supporting an essential business. Example of essential retail include:

a. grocery stores
b. warehouse stores
c. liquor stores
d. gas stations
e. convenience stores
f. farmers' markets
g. food cultivation, including farming, fishing, and livestock
h. food delivery services
i. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for pickup, delivery or carry out. In-room dining must be closed. The restriction of pickup, delivery, or carry out does not apply to cafes and restaurants located within hospital and medical facilities
j. Any entity that typically provide free services to students or members of the public on a pick-up and take-away basis only.
k. Laundromats
l. Dry cleaners
m. Laundry service
n. Automobile & motorcycle sales
o. Auto-supply
p. Automobile, motorcycle and bicycle repair
q. hardware stores
r. Construction supply stores
s. Gun stores
t. 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. **Businesses that Support Essential Businesses and Services Necessary to Maintain Essential Operations of Residences or Other Essential Businesses.** Businesses that Support Essential Business and Services are ones that are necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operations of residences and Essential Businesses. Examples of businesses that support residences and essential businesses are:

a. mail and shipping services
b. residential and business cleaning and maintenance
c. warehouse/distribution and fulfillment

d. storage for essential businesses
e. funeral homes and services relating thereto like crematoriums and cemeteries
f. Plumbers
g. Electricians
h. Exterminators
i. Lawn care services
j. Law offices
k. Real estate offices, not to include site visits for the purpose of showing a property
l. Title offices
m. Mortgage offices
n. Accounting offices
o. Office supply stores

3. This Order shall be effective until 11:59 a.m. on April 6, 2020, or until it is either rescinded, superseded, or amended pursuant to applicable law.
4. Failure to comply with this Directive and the orders contained herein is an offense punishable by a fine of up to $1,000 per day or confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days
5. 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 27rd day of March, 2020 in the Office of the County Clerk.

Accepted : Shelley Coston

Shelley Coston, County Clerk

Bell County Social Distancing Recommendations

1) **High Risk Populations**
   - High Risk populations, per the CDC, are:
     - People 65 years old and older, and
     - People with underlying health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and compromised immune systems.
   - For High Risk populations:
     - Stay home
     - Outdoor exercise should be a solitary activity
     - Prescreen all essential visitors to your home
     - Don't visit homes or places where gatherings are occurring
     - Ask all visitors to your home to wear a mask
     - Follow social distancing guidelines
     - Don't use public transit except in an emergency
     - Don't be around 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 stops in their workplace to minimize risk.

3) **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.

4) **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.

5) **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.

6) **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.