

**CITY OF LAREDO EMERGENCY ORDINANCE INSTITUTING EMERGENCY
MEASURES DUE TO A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAREDO:

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, a Declaration of State Disaster was issued by Governor Abbott to take additional steps to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health and welfare of Texans; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, a Declaration of a Local Disaster was issued to allow the City of Laredo to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and promote the health and safety of Laredo residents; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus is contagious and spreads through person-to-person contact, especially in group settings; and

WHEREAS, City Charter Section 2.11 allows for the City Council to adopt an emergency ordinance to meet a public emergency affecting life, health, property or the public peace; and

WHEREAS, said state of disaster requires that certain emergency measures be taken pursuant to the Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management; therefore, the following regulations shall take effect immediately upon issuance, and shall remain in effect until the state of disaster is terminated:

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAREDO, TEXAS:

That the following is hereby in effect:

1. STATE AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE

The City authorizes the Emergency Management Director or designee to update, restrict and promulgate regulations necessary to comply with Federal, State, and Local authorities' guidance in relation to COVID-19.

2. MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND OCCUPANCY OF PREMISES

- a. Restaurants are limited to take out or drive-through service only (designed to limit exposure between individuals); dine in service is hereby prohibited.
- b. All holders of a wine and beer retailer's permit or mixed beverage permit (collectively "bars") shall close common bar spaces open to the public and are hereby prohibited from allowing consumption of alcohol on the bar premises.
- c. All of the following facilities shall close to the public while this ordinance is in effect:
 - a. Bars, lounges, and private clubs;
 - b. Fitness centers and gyms;
 - c. Bingos and amusement redemption centers;
 - d. Reception halls and party rental places;
 - e. Enclosed malls; and
 - f. Entertainment facilities such as bowling alleys, movie theatres, etc.

- d. Limit gatherings to 10 persons or less. “Gatherings” is defined as:

Any Event or convening subject to the exceptions and clarifications below that brings together or is likely to bring together (10) or more persons at the same time in a single room or space. For clarity, this includes, but is not limited to, weddings, religious gatherings, parties, funerals, sporting events, social events, conferences, and other large gatherings.

The Regulations shall not prohibit gatherings of people in multiple, separate enclosed spaces (including separate cubicles) in a single building such as school classrooms, different floors of a multi-level office, residential building or hotel, so long as 10 people are not present in any single space at the same time. This Order also does not prohibit the use of enclosed spaces where 10 or more people may be present at different times during the day, so long as 10 or more people are not present in the space at the same time.

“Gathering” does not include the following spaces where 10 or more persons may congregate, so long as visitors are generally not within arm’s length of one another for extended periods:

- (i) Grocery stores, hardware stores;
- (ii) Office space, residential buildings, and hotels, etc.;
- (iii) Pharmacies, hospitals, medical facilities, and veterinary facilities;
- (iv) Spaces where person may be in transit or waiting for transit such as airports and bus terminals;
- (v) Public or private gatherings of no more than 10 people in a single enclosed space including businesses where people are present, but it is unusual for them to be within arm’s length of one another for extended periods; and
- (vi) Hospitals and medical offices and facilities.

- d. It is recommended that all individuals practice social distancing which is defined by the CDC as remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining a distance of approximately 6 feet from others when possible.
- e. All City boards, committees, and commissions shall not meet until further notice.
- f. All nonessential City facilities shall be closed, except as determined by the City Manager for community benefit during the disaster.
- g. Everyone, especially older population and at-risk categories are encouraged to self-quarantine as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.
- h. Business and places of employment shall have safety protocols in place such as hand sanitizers and temperature measuring stations to ensure employees do not become vectors of COVID-19 while this ordinance is in effect.

- i. Businesses are urged to implement the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for business operations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
and

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

2. TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

- a. City Management shall instruct department directors to identify employees who may work from home. City employees that are identified as being able to work from home will be allowed to transition to teleworking schedules.
- b. Any employees who are unable to telework will have duties modified in order to provide the healthiest work environment including adhering to the CDC's social distancing recommendation.

3. HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

- a. All healthcare facilities are instructed to implement sanitation and screening measures such as providing all employees and visitors access to hand sanitizer and disinfecting products.
- b. Healthcare facilities must symptom check all employees and visitors and may not allow individuals into the facilities who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, unless they are patients. Anyone who is suspected or confirmed as COVID-19 positive shall be reported to the Health Department.
- c. Healthcare facilities must prominently display "Help Prevent Disease" signs provided by the City of Laredo Health Department.
- d. Healthcare facilities include hospitals, doctor's offices, clinics, 24 hour care emergency room facilities, mental care facilities, etc.

4. COOPERATION WITH HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

- a. Council directs the City of Laredo Health Department to work in collaboration with TAMIU Nursing School, LC Nursing School, UT Health Science Center, and other local healthcare systems to rapidly increase availability of testing and screening including locations for drive-thru testing.

5. UTILITIES & RENTALS

- a. No local utility shall discontinue the provision of cable, internet, water, gas, waste removal, and electric utility services to a local resident for lack of payment while this ordinance is in effect, to the extent allowed by law.

b. To the extent allowed by the law, no landlord shall evict a tenant for lack of payment while this ordinance is in effect.

c. Business that lease or rent for social gatherings are prohibited from charging fees for changing dates for canceled events to the extent allowed by the law.

6. PUBLIC TRANSIT

a. First Transit is required to keep spacing requirements imposed for social distancing purposes, must keep windows open for ventilation and maintain sanitization of the buses as needed.

7. PENALTIES

a. These regulations shall have the effect of ordinances when duly filed with the City Secretary.

b. Upon convictions, violations are a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) and not more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00).

8. EMERGENCY

a. These regulations shall take effect at midnight on March 19, 2020, and it is accordingly so ordained.

b. These regulations will continue for 14 days unless they are rescinded, superseded, or amended by future Council action.

9. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

It is hereby declared to be the intention of the City Council that the phrases, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance are severable. If any part of this ordinance shall be declared to be unconstitutional by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality shall not affect the remaining phrases, sentences, paragraphs and sections.

So Ordered, this 17th day of March, 2020



PETE SAENZ
MAYOR

ATTESTED:



Sulema B-
For: JOSE A. VALDEZ, JR.
CITY SECRETARY

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kristina K. Laurel Hale
KRISTINA K. LAUREL HALE
CITY ATTORNEY