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CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

CITY COUNCIL

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**NEWS
RELEASE**

05 / 7 / 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

City, County to Amend Local Directive, Reports Seven Deaths

EL PASO, Texas—The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is reporting **seven (7)** additional COVID-19 deaths, bringing the total number of deaths to **30**. The patients include four (4) males in their 80s, a male in his 70s, a female in her 60s and a female in her 40s, all of who had underlying health conditions.

El Paso is also reporting **71** new COVID-19 cases bringing the county's total number to **1,190**. To-date **619** people have recovered from COVID-19; consequently, there are **541** active cases within the county. Positive cases in El Paso County include 625 females and 565 males; see accompanying graphics and map. There are 62 patients who are hospitalized, and 40 of those hospitalized are currently in ICU.

"We once again are saddened to report seven new deaths due to COVID-19, and our hearts go out to the families of these seven individuals," said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, City/County Health Authority. "We are now at 30 deaths in our community – one too many. We want to remind the public that the best defense against this deadly virus is staying home, practice social distancing and frequently washing your hands with soap and water. We are all vulnerable to contracting this deadly virus, so we must all do our part in order to stop the spread of this virus in our community."

City and County officials have amended the current Local Emergency Directive in response to Governor Abbott's Executive Order Number 21 issued on Monday, May 4 in an effort to stimulate the Texas economy. Part of the amended directive will go into effect on Friday, May 8 at 12:01 a.m. and will incrementally start to re-open the economy.

We know now that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in the amended directive, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our community. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

The amended directive will include changes to begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, May 8, 2020, some of which have already been implemented by the State of Texas:

City Facilities

- City Facilities shall remain closed until further notice
 - All city parks and recreational areas and facilities, including City tennis courts, City basketball courts, hike and bike trails, public swimming pools, water parks, splash pads, public museums and public libraries.
 - The area near Socorro Independent School District Student Activities Complex ("SAC") located near 1300 Joe Battle Boulevard.



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- The use of any type of recreational vehicle at any outdoor area is prohibited.
- City parks will remain closed except for use of designated walking paths adjacent to streets, parks, or within public parks.
- Franklin Mountains State Park shall remain closed until further directed by Texas State officials.

Outdoor Sports

- Sports that do not include contact with other participants and have no more than four participants play the sport at a time.
- The use of all private and public golf courses, private tennis courts and fishing is permitted in accordance to the guidelines.
- Bars, sexually oriented businesses, interactive amusement venues such as bowling alleys, video arcades, amusement parks, water parks, splash pads, massage establishments, tattoo studios, piercing studios shall remain closed until further notice.

Retail Stores

- In-store retail services are allowed to operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the retail establishment.
- Dine-in restaurant services, for restaurants that operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the restaurant. Value services are prohibited except for vehicles with placards or plates for disabled parking.
- Movie theaters may operate up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of any individual theater for any screening.
- Shopping malls may operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the shopping mall.
 - Food court dining areas, play areas and interactive displays and setting must remain closed until further notice or directed.
- Wedding venues and services required to conduct weddings may operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the facility.
- Cosmetology salons, hair salons, barber shops, nail salons/shops, and other establishments where licensed cosmetologists or barbers practice their trade may open by ensuring at least six feet of social distancing between operating work stations.
- Tanning salons must ensure at least six feet of social distancing between operating work stations.
- Private swimming pools (This does not apply to City-owned pools, which will remained closed.)
 - Indoor swimming pools may operate up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the pool facility
 - Outdoor swimming pools may operate at up to 25 percent of normal operating limits as determined by the pool operator.

Starting at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, May 18, 2020:

Offices

- Offices consisting of more than five individuals or 25 percent of the total office workforce must adhere to maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- Non-essential manufacturing services, for facilities that operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the facility.

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- Classes must operate at up to 25 percent of the total listed occupancy of the gym or exercise facility.
 - Locker rooms and shower facilities must remain closed, but restrooms may open.

Churches/Places of Worship

- At-risk population (those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system) are asked to watch or participate service remotely.
- Facility designate an area inside and reserve for at-risk population, or offer a service for at-risk population attendees only.
- Ensure proper spacing between attendees.
- Alternate rows between attendees (every other row left empty).

The updated Local Directive once completed will be made available at www.epstrong.org under "Health Orders."

Residents are encouraged to report non-compliance by calling the police department non-emergency at (915) 832-4400. **Any violation to the amended Emergency Directive will be issued a Class C Misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.** Anyone with questions about the local directive can call 3-1-1.

Health questions about COVID-19 can be made by calling the 21-COVID hotline which is operational from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For referral to services, contact 2-1-1 and select option six (6). For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication** Among All Members of the Community