



## **Lavaca County OEM reports the county's first COVID-19 death**

Today, Lavaca County reports its first COVID-19 related fatality. Today's death is the first one attributable to a resident of Lavaca County, diagnosed with COVID-19.

In this instance, exposure is presumed to have occurred in Victoria, but the mode of transmission is still under investigation. The victim was a former resident of Hallettsville, however, was in a long-term care facility in Victoria where the individual contracted the disease, then moved to a Victoria hospital.

A total of five cases have been diagnosed in Lavaca County since Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of emergency on March 13, 2020. State health officials report that one patient is self-quarantined at home. Two patients have fully recovered, and one is in a Travis County hospital.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Egon Barthels says, "On behalf of Judge Keith Mudd and I on behalf of Lavaca County, send our deepest sympathies to the family."

In an effort to slow the spread of this infectious disease, Texas Governor Greg Abbott has issued Executive Orders during this period of emergency. In EO GA-14 he directs citizens to "stay home" and "stay safe."

Individuals may be exposed to COVID-19 and be infectious even when no symptoms are present. If you believe you have been exposed, monitor yourself closely for symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath for 14 days after the exposure. If you experience any of these symptoms and do not need urgent medical attention, isolate at home and contact your healthcare provider.

If an individual knows they have been exposed, they should not go to work. If a fever and cough are present, they should isolate themselves from others at home and monitor symptoms.

Minimizing exposure is especially important for people who are 65 or older or who have an underlying health condition like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer. People in those groups have a higher risk of developing severe complications if they do get COVID-19, and the safest thing for them during an outbreak will be to stay home as much as possible and minimize close contact with other people. To get ready, they should talk to their doctor about getting additional prescription medications and have enough household items and groceries on hand to stay home as needed.

Governor Abbott's Executive Order No. 14 limits non-essential social gatherings, business operations, and other non-essential activities. Citizens are subject to a fine up to \$1000 and/or 180 days in jail for flagrant violations of the executive order.

The judge and emergency management personnel are communicating daily with state officials and regional leaders about the spread of the COVID-19 virus and referring callers to the official websites of the Centers for Disease Control and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The public can find up-to-date coronavirus information at:  
Texas Department for State Health Services [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus)  
Centers for Disease Control at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>  
Lavaca County at [www.co.lavaca.tx.us](http://www.co.lavaca.tx.us)  
and Lavaca County, Texas OEM Facebook at [facebook.com/LavacaOEM](https://facebook.com/LavacaOEM)

The governor's office is also providing information and links to the Executive Orders through the website [gov.texas.gov](http://gov.texas.gov)

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