

COUNTY OF PRESIDIO, TEXAS

COUNTY JUDGE DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER
DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

AS AMMENDED ON MARCH 23, 2020

WHEREAS, a novel coronavirus, designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19, has been declared a *global pandemic* by the World Health Organization,

WHEREAS, symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and can range from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death; and

WHEREAS, 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, on March 13, 2020, *the Governor of the State of Texas* issued a proclamation certifying that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster in the state and declaring a state of disaster for **ALL** counties in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Presidio County, Texas, is taking extraordinary measures to prevent the spread of this potentially devastating disease in our community; and

WHEREAS, said state of disaster requires that certain emergency protective measures be taken pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 relating to Emergency Management and Public Health, pursuant to Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code

WHEREAS, *the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC)* reports that older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions seem to be at a higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, *the World Health Organization* declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern; and

WHEREAS, as of March 7, 2020, *the World Health Organization* reported that the global number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 *surpassed 100,000*; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2020, the World Health Organization urged every country to take all necessary measures to slow further spread of COVID-19 and to *protect health systems from becoming overwhelmed*; and

WHEREAS, the CDC states that "it's likely that at some point, widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur," which translates to a large number of people needing medical care at the same time; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, *the Governor of the State of Texas* and *the President of the United States of America* declared a state of emergency in relation to COVID

WHEREAS, the emergence and spread of COVID-19 within Presidio County poses and imminent threat of widespread illness resulting from an epidemic that requires emergency action; and

WHEREAS, *the County Judge of Presidio County* has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect health and welfare of County residents from the effects of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Texas Government Code Chapter 418, Section 418.108 authorizes the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local state of disaster; and

WHEREAS, a declaration of local disaster and public health emergency includes the ability to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, prevent the spread of the disease and promote the health and safety of citizens of Presidio County;

WHEREAS, by this declaration, I declare all rules and regulations that may inhibit or prevent prompt response to this threat suspended for the duration of the incident.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE OF PRESIDIO COUNTY:

SECTION 1. *That a local state of disaster is hereby declared for the County of Presidio* pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to §418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code, the state of disaster shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or reviewed by the Presidio County Commissioners Court

SECTION 3. Pursuant to §418.108(c) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with County Clerk.

SECTION 4. Pursuant to §418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the County emergency plan, and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under this declaration.

SECTION 5. That this declaration authorizes the County to take any actions necessary to promote health and suppress the virus, including the quarantine of persons and occupied structures, examining hospitals, regulating ingress and egress from the County, regulating ingress and egress to occupied structures, establishment of quarantine stations, emergency hospitals, and other hospitals, and insuring compliance for those who do not comply with the County's rules and directives.

SECTION 6. That this declaration hereby limits the size of gatherings to not more than 10 people and mandates the cancellation of all such gatherings of more than 10 people until further notice. A "gathering" refers generally to a scheduled event or common endeavor where 10 persons are present in a confined space, room or area.

SECTION 7. This declaration authorizes the County Judge the ability to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, and promote the health and safety of Presidio County residents by limiting public gatherings, if deemed necessary.

SECTION 8. That this declaration hereby authorizes the use of all lawfully available enforcement. This declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

SECTION 9. This declaration hereby authorizes restaurants to only serve takeout orders. Dine in services will be closed to the public.

SECTION 10. This declaration hereby authorizes bars/taverns to be closed countywide.

SECTION 11. On March 23, 2020 by 12:00 p.m. this declaration hereby mandates hotels/motels and short-term rentals to close and vacate their guests through Friday April 3, 2020. The exception to this section is if guests have established rental unit as primary place of residence.

SECTION 12. On Monday March 23, 2020 by 12:00 p.m. this declaration hereby mandates RV Parks/Campgrounds, to include the Big Bend Ranch State Park, to close and vacate their guests through Friday April 3, 2020. Only exception being guests have established rental unit as primary place of residence.

SECTION 13. In accordance with Texas Government Code 418.173, a person who knowingly or intentionally violates this declaration commits an offense, punishable by a fine up to \$1,000.00 or confinement in jail for a term that does not exceed 180 days.

SECTION 14. That this declaration hereby authorizes the use of all lawfully available enforcement tools.

SECTION 15. That pursuant to state of Texas Governor Abbott's approval of a request by the Office of the Attorney General to temporarily suspend a limited number of open meeting laws in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) disaster. This action allows governmental bodies to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference to advance the public health goal of limiting face to face meetings (also called "social distancing") to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID 19). Presidio County Commissioners will conduct meetings by telephone or video conference beginning hereafter the 23rd of March, 2020. Presidio County will comply with the following requirements:

- Conduct meetings in a transparent and accessible manner.
- Provide online written notice containing a public toll free dial in number or a free of charge video conference link, before conducting telephonic or video conference meetings
- Provide the public with access and a means to participate in those meetings, preferably through two-way audio or video connections; and
- Provide the public with access to a recording of those meetings.

SECTION 16. That this declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance and, upon approval by the Commissioner's Court, shall continue in effect until terminated by the County Judge. Pursuant to this declaration, additional directives may be issued by the County Judge at any time as deemed necessary.

DECLARED THIS 23RD DAY OF MARCH, 2020.



Cinderela Guevara, County Judge
Presidio County, Texas