

**POLK COUNTY, TEXAS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: March 13, 2020

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Contact: Polk County Office of Emergency Management

Phone: (936) 327-6826; Fax: (936) 327-6890



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Update

On March 11th the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Governor Abbott has declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas. At this time, there are 39 cases of COVID-19 in Texas. There are no reported cases of COVID-19 in Polk County. The County will remain open and operational at this time. We follow the guidance of our Public Health Authorities and will make decisions based on their recommendations.

Polk County has put the following preventive measures in place to protect the health of Polk County residents:

1. We have communicated CDC Guidance for COVID-19 to the general public, travelers, local healthcare professionals, first responders, schools, and businesses.
2. We have asked the public to practice good hygiene and common sense to protect their own health such as: covering coughs, washing hands, cleaning frequently touched objects and surfaces, avoiding people who are sick, and staying home when you are sick.
3. We have requested that the public call ahead to their healthcare providers before seeking medical attention if they suspect that they have been exposed to COVID-19.
4. We have informed the public that the medical community is working with public health to make sure that anyone that meets the Texas Department of State Health Services COVID-19 testing criteria will be evaluated for testing.
5. The Public can access information on COVID-19 from CDC and the Texas Department of State Health Services on the Polk County, Texas and Office of Emergency Management websites, Facebook pages, and factsheets on COVID-19 are available in public buildings (County Courthouse, Judicial Center, Emergency Management, City Halls).
6. The Polk County Districts Courts canceled jury duty trials scheduled for Monday, March 16th. Do not report for jury duty.

7. Beginning Monday, Polk County Senior Centers in Livingston, Onalaska, and Corrigan will be closed until further notice. The Polk County Department of Aging will have meals ready for pickup at each center for seniors currently enrolled in the seniors program to take home. Meals-on-Wheels deliveries will continue as normal.

8. The Veterans Services Office is open by appointment only until further notice. For appointments, please call their office at (936) 327-6838.

Instructions for the Public

Older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease seem to be at a higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. Older adults and all people with chronic medical conditions should consider postponing nonessential travel, be self-aware of their surroundings and preferably stay away from large gatherings.

Businesses, please review your Continuity of Operations Plans and follow the guidance for Businesses and Employers on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>.

Please do not panic. Please be mindful that when you panic you may cause others to panic as well. It's good to stock up on some necessary household items, but hoarding or over shopping is not necessary.

Facebook is a great tool for spreading information. Unfortunately, Facebook is also a great place for spreading false rumors. It is important to get your information from reliable sources.

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus or visit the CDC's Frequently Asked Questions page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> to learn more about COVID-19.

Please look for further updates on the Polk County Emergency Management Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PolkCountyEmergencyManagement) or on our website at www.PolkCountyOEM.com.

Updates can also be found on the Polk County, Texas website at www.co.polk.tx.us or on the Polk County, Texas Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PolkCountyTexas/>.