



## FAQ: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

On March 15, 2020, the City of Gonzales declared a Public Health Emergency, following the lead of state and national officials, in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect the citizenry of Gonzales. During this time, the City of Gonzales may exercise the powers granted to it pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 to implement actions that will reduce its citizenry's exposure to the disease, control the risk and promote public health.

### **How long will the Public Health Emergency within the City of Gonzales last?**

At this time, the Declaration of Public Health Emergency within the City of Gonzales is in effect until **April 9, 2020**. However, the Executive Order from Governor Abbott is mandatory for all residents of Texas and is in effect until **April 30, 2020**.

### **Are there currently any confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the City of Gonzales or Gonzales County?**

The first case of COVID19 within Gonzales County was confirmed on March 30, 2020.

### **What can I do to help reduce the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19?**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is providing the following resources regarding this illness:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html). Best practices include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds and especially after being in a public place, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Disinfect surfaces often throughout the day as the virus can live up to several days on hard surfaces
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when unable to wash hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Practice social distancing and avoid close contact with people of at least 6', as well as events and gatherings with more than 50 people
- STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK

### **What are the social gathering restrictions currently in place?**

Social gatherings within the city limits of Gonzales are restricted to no more than 10 people. This includes all indoor and outdoor spaces and residential locations. However, it is strongly advised that all social interactions and interactions with those outside of the resident's household be avoided at this time.

### **How does this affect restaurants and bars within the city limits of Gonzales?**

On March 19, 2020, Governor Abbott issued an Executive Order prohibiting all dine-in options at restaurants and bars, including outdoor spaces belonging to these facilities. Restaurants are able to fulfill curbside, delivery and take-out

orders so long as CDC guidelines as still being adhered to. That executive order will be effective 11:59PM March 20, 2020 and will expire April 30, 2020.

**How does this affect all other businesses within the city limits of Gonzales?**

Per the Governor's Executive Order issued on March 31, 2020, all non-essential businesses within Texas must close or remain closed to the public until after April 30, 2020. Essential sectors are determined by the Department of Homeland Security and can be found [here](#).

**Does the social gathering restriction apply to weddings and funerals?**

Yes, the restriction of no more than 10 would apply to these events, as well.

**Are nursing home facilities open for visitors?**

Pursuant to Governor Abbott's executive order placed on March 19, 2020, nursing home facilities will not be open for visitors beginning at 11:59PM on March 20, 2020 and ending April 30, 2020.

**Which City of Gonzales facilities are closed to the public and when will they re-open?**

At this time, the following City of Gonzales facilities are closed to the public until further notice: City Hall, Robert Lee Brothers, Jr. Memorial Library, J.B. Wells Expo Center & Arena, Gonzales Memorial Museum, Community Service Building, Public Works, the Golf Clubhouse at Independence Park, the Splash Pad and all playground equipment at City parks.

**Are City Parks open to the public?**

City Parks are open to the public at this time, with the exception of all playscapes, the Splash Pad, City-maintained basketball courts and sports fields. Green space and walking trails are open with the order to practice social distancing of at least 6'.

**Can utility bill payments still be processed?**

Yes. Options for payment include: The City Hall drive-thru (open during the regularly scheduled hours of 8am – 5pm M-F), two individual drop boxes (located on the rear side of City Hall), by phone at 855-546-1356 and online at <https://www.municipalonlinepayments.com/gonzalestx>. **If you pay online or call the automated line, a third party company will charge a convenience fee, but you can call City Hall at 830-672-2815 to make a payment without the convenience fee.**

**Will City of Gonzales residential utility services be disconnected for non-payment during the duration of the Public Health Emergency?**

A 30-day extension will be granted for all City of Gonzales utility users on payments that were due March 10, 2020. The extension will expire on April 10, 2020. Extension and late fees will be waived during this time.

**Is the City of Gonzales Police Department open?**

Yes, the Lobby of the Police Department is open for anyone needing assistance. In the event of an emergency, please dial 911.

**What are the implications for not complying with these guidelines?**

Aside from the health of the resident, their loved ones and that of each of their neighbors within the community being unnecessarily compromised, those not complying with these mandatory guidelines can be fined up to \$1,000.00 and jailed for up to 180 days.

**Are events scheduled for J.B. Wells Expo Center and Arena being cancelled and what are my options?**

Events scheduled through April 30, 2020 are being cancelled and asked to reschedule. If a new favorable date cannot be reached and the event organizer would like to cancel all together, refunds on facility rentals are being offered. If you have any questions regarding an upcoming event scheduled at this facility, please contact: 830-672-6558.

**Are Gonzales Independent School District campuses closed?**

Pursuant to Governor Abbott's Executive Order, all public schools in Texas will be closed until May 4, 2020.

**How does this affect church services within the city limits of Gonzales?**

As of March 20, all churches within the Gonzales Ministerial Alliance have suspended Sunday services. These include: Two Rivers Bible Church, First Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, Monthalia & Belmont Methodist Church, Gonzales Church of Christ, Eastside Baptist Church, Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist, Emmanuel Fellowship Church, Faith Family Church, First Lutheran Church, Gonzales Presbyterian Church, St. Joseph/Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Gonzales Family Church and Episcopal Church of the Messiah.

Per the Archdiocese of San Antonio Communications Dept., the Catholic community of Gonzales and Waelder have made the following adjustments:

- 1) Effective 3/13, all Saturday evening and Sunday weekly Masses are cancelled.
- 2) Effective 3/13, all CCD and RCIA classes are cancelled.
- 3) Effective 3/13, all parish gatherings and meetings are cancelled unless specific permission is granted by Father Stan.
- 4) Daily Mass will continue to be held as scheduled.
- 5) The church will be open during normal hours for prayer.

**Is the City of Gonzales City Council meeting for April rescheduled?**

As of March 17, 2020 the April Gonzales City Council Meeting is still scheduled at its regular time and dial-in and/or live viewing options will be communicated. If that changes, a new date will be posted and communicated.

**Are City of Gonzales Boards and Commissions meetings rescheduled?**

All Boards and Commissions meetings that are scheduled through April 9, 2020 are asked to postpone and reschedule. New dates will be communicated once made available.