



WHARTON COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Wharton County, TX, Thursday, May 28, 2020 1200 hours

Wharton County Office of Emergency Management has received a report today from the Texas Department of State Health Services that we have **one (1)** new positive case of COVID-19 and **zero (0)** new recoveries were reported. The total who have tested positive for COVID-19 is now **fifty-three (53)** in Wharton County and we have had **thirty-eight (38)** reported cases who have recovered. Wharton County has **fifteen (15)** active COVID-19 cases. The new case is a male, 50-60 yrs old, living in the El Campo area, type of transmission is unknown. A local nursing home released a letter about seven positive cases at their facility. Our County Health Authority assures us that all of these cases are properly accounted for in our totals.

Social distancing is working! In Wharton County, it is easy to see that we are making a difference by following the CDC guidelines. Keep up the good work! Wash your hands, avoid crowds, wear face coverings when appropriate and use common sense.

May 18, 2020, Governor Abbott provided an update on state case data and upcoming steps in the Open Texas plan, announcing that Texas was officially entering Phase 2. Here are some of the highlights from his press conference, order GA-23 and the regulation checklists available on the Open Texas website <https://gov.texas.gov/organizations/opentexas>.

Texas is averaging more than 25,000 tests administered per day at more than 600 testing sites across the state, and the rate of positive tests continues to decline.

Individuals should continue avoiding groups larger than 10 and minimize in-person contacts. Texans should also self-screen for illness before going into any business.

Texans age 65 and older should continue to stay home as much as possible, and others should avoid being within 6 feet of individuals in that age group to help keep them safe.

Changes as of May 18, 2020

Childcare centers have reopened with restrictions and enhanced sanitation practices in place, including modified drop-off and pick-up procedures, and screening of staff and children upon arrival. Standards for the number of children per caregiver – and square-foot requirements - have also changed.

Massage, personal care and beauty services including electrolysis, waxing, tattoo studios, piercing studios, and hair loss treatment and growth services, have now been allowed to reopen. Their restrictions are in line with those placed on hair and nail salons.

Youth Clubs (i.e. scouts, FFA, etc.) may resume, limited to no more than 10 individuals gathered at a time while indoors.

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Wharton County OEM will provide updates at <http://www.co.wharton.tx.us/> and on facebook.

Office buildings can expand staffing to the greater of 10 employees or 25% of their workforce, provided that individuals maintain appropriate social distancing.

Changes as of May 22

Restaurants may begin operating at 50% capacity, though child play areas, interactive games and video arcades must remain closed. The current regulations do not yet expand capacity for retailers, shopping malls or movie theaters beyond their current 25% occupancy restriction.

Bars, bowling alleys, bingo halls and skating rinks may reopen at 25% capacity. Bar restrictions include providing service only to seated individuals, discouraging activities with close human contact like dancing, and guidelines similar to restaurants such as not allowing tables larger than 6 people.

Aquariums, natural caverns and similar facilities (excluding zoos) may reopen at 25% capacity

Rodeos and equestrian events may reopen at 25% capacity, though larger gatherings like county fairs are not yet allowed

Drive-in concerts may begin as long as spectators remain in their vehicles and in-person contact is minimized.

Effective May 29

Outdoor areas of zoos may reopen at 25% capacity. Children's play area, interactive functions/exhibits and indoor portions of zoos, other than restrooms, must remain closed.

Effective May 31

Professional basketball, baseball, softball, golf, tennis, football and car racing may resume WITHOUT spectators physically present.

Youth camps, including overnight camps, may resume with restrictions and enhanced sanitation practices in place.

Youth sport practices may resume with restrictions, including only one parent or guardian present as a spectator. Games and similar competitions, with or without spectators, may not begin until June 15.

Effective June 1

School districts can hold summer school with social distancing guidelines in place

Under the current orders, interactive amusement venues such as video arcades, amusement parks and water parks remain closed.

Wharton County school districts have scheduled their graduations. Check their websites for specific dates and times.

You can find GA-23 and a link to the requirement checklists for businesses, customers and more on the gov.texas.gov website. Wharton County along with its community partners, will provide more updates about this next phase of re-openings upon the release of further information by the State.

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