

## **PROCLAMATION DECLARING A LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER**

**WHEREAS**, beginning in December 2019, a novel coronavirus, now designated SARS-CoV-2 which causes the coronavirus disease COVID-19, was detected in Wuhan, China, has spread throughout the world and has now been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization; and

**WHEREAS**, symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness and in some cases death; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and advised countries to prepare for the containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing, and prevention of onward spread of the disease; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is closely monitoring the growing number of COVID-19 cases that have spread into the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, over 3,487 cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the United States, including 68 deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, the known cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in the State of Texas is currently increasing daily with 57 positive or presumed positive cases across Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, a large gathering of unidentifiable individuals without necessary mitigation for the spread of infection may pose a risk of the spread of infectious disease; and

**WHEREAS**, unless the actions as hereby provided are immediately initiated, avoidable serious illness and deaths could occur; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

**WHEREAS**, the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19 presents an imminent threat of widespread illness, which requires emergency action; and

**WHEREAS**, extraordinary measures must be taken to contain COVID-19 and prevent its spread throughout the City of Blue Ridge and Collin County, including the limitation of community gatherings of over ten (10) people and potentially requiring individuals, groups of individuals, or property to be subject to additional measures that prevent or control the spread of disease; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Office of Court Administration, in consultation with the Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, and Regional Presiding Judges has provided guidance recommending postponement of all non-essential court proceedings, minimizing staff, and taking all other appropriate measures to prevent the spread of disease; and

**WHEREAS**, a declaration of local disaster includes the ability to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease and mitigate the risk to, and promote the health and safety of, the residents of the City of Blue Ridge; and

**WHEREAS**, the measures identified in this Declaration are designed to prevent deaths in the City of Blue Ridge; and

**WHEREAS**, the identification of “community spread” cases of COVID-19 in the City of Blue Ridge and the region could potentially signal that transmission of the virus may no longer be limited to travel to outbreak areas or contact with travelers who have visited outbreak areas.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME AS THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE GOVERNING BODY, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, A GENERAL LAW TYPE A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BODY POLITIC AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE OF TEXAS SITUATED IN COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS, AND PURSUANT TO SECTION 418.108 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE (TEXAS DISASTER ACT),**

**BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE:**

**Section 1. Declaration of Local State of Disaster.** A local state of disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for the City of Blue Ridge, a Texas general law Type A municipal corporation, pursuant to Section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.

**Section 2. Duration of Local State of Disaster.** Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 418.108(b), the state of disaster for public health emergency shall continue for a period of not more than seven (7) days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the Blue Ridge City Council.

**Section 3. Publicity and Filing.** Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 418.108(c), this declaration of a local state of disaster for public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the City Secretary.

**Section 4. Activation of the City Emergency Management Plan.** Pursuant to Section 418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the City of Blue Ridge emergency management plan and grants the Mayor the powers set forth herein; including the power to temporarily close City buildings, facilities, and certain uses thereof; to temporarily postpone all non-essential municipal court proceedings; to temporarily suspend all City utility shut-offs to residential customers affected by COVID-19; and to prohibit all public and private Community Gatherings wherein ten (10) people or more are expected to be in attendance.

a. For purposes of this Order, a "Community Gathering" is any indoor or outdoor event or convening subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, that brings together or is likely to bring together ten (10) or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space, such as an auditorium, theatre, stadium (indoor or outdoor), arena or event center, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria, restaurant, or nightclub/bar, or any other confined indoor or confined outdoor space. For clarity, this includes, but is not limited to, weddings, religious gatherings, parties, funerals, sporting events, social events, conferences, and other large gatherings.

b. An outdoor "Community Gathering" under this Order is limited to events in confined outdoor spaces, which means an outdoor space that (i) is enclosed by a fence, physical barrier, or other structure and (ii) where people are present and they are within arm's length of one another for extended periods.

c. This Order also does not prohibit gatherings of people in multiple, separate enclosed spaces (including separate cubicles) in a single building such as a multiplex movie theater, school classrooms, or different floors of a multilevel building, so long as ten (10) people are not present in any single space at the same time. This Order also does not prohibit the use of enclosed spaces where ten (10) or more people may be present at different times during the day, so long as ten (10) or more people are not present in the space at the same time.

For any gathering covered by this subsection c., the Mayor of the City of Blue Ridge strongly encourages compliance with the CDC Social Distancing Recommendations, including providing hand sanitizer and tissues and increasing cleaning of commonly and frequently touched services.

d. For purposes of clarity, a "Community Gathering" does not include spaces where ten (10) or more persons may be in transit on buses, trains or airplanes; or waiting for transit, such as airports, bus stops or terminals. In addition, "Community Gathering" does not include the following spaces where ten (10) or more persons may congregate, so long as visitors are generally not within arm's length of one another for extended periods:

(i) office space or residential buildings;

(ii) grocery stores, shopping malls, or other retail establishments where large numbers of people may be present, but it is unusual for them to be within arm's length of one another for extended periods; and

(iii) hospitals and medical offices and facilities.

In all such settings, the Mayor of the City of Blue Ridge recommends following Social Distancing Recommendations, and personal hygiene measures, including providing hand sanitizer and facial tissues.

**Section 5. Temporary Housing and Emergency Shelter.** Pursuant to Section 418.020(d) of the Texas Government Code, the City of Blue Ridge is authorized to: (1) temporarily or permanently acquire by lease, purchase, or other means sites required for installation of temporary housing units or emergency shelters for disaster victims; and (2) enter into arrangements necessary to prepare or equip the sites to use the housing units or shelters, including arrangements for the purchase of temporary housing units or shelters and the payment of transportation charges.

**Section 6. Protective Control Measures and Facilities.** Pursuant to Section 122.006 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, the City of Blue Ridge is authorized to adopt rules to protect the health of persons in the City of Blue Ridge, including quarantine rules to protect its residents against communicable disease and provide for the establishment of quarantine stations, emergency hospitals, and other hospitals.

**Section 7. Reporting of COVID-19 Testing.** The city manager shall establish an order that all public, private, and commercial labs within the City of Blue Ridge shall report the number of COVID-19 tests conducted on a daily basis to the City of Blue Ridge and establish a penalty for failure to report.

**Section 8. Limits on Large Gatherings.** Pursuant to Section 418.108, the city manager shall establish an order to limit the size of gatherings to no more than ten (10) people.

**Section 9. Penalties.** Pursuant to Section 418.173 of the Texas Government Code, Peace officers, City of Blue Ridge Code Department inspectors, and the Office of the Blue Ridge Fire Marshall, are hereby authorized to enforce this order. Persons who violate this Order commit a misdemeanor violation punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 or confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days.

**Section 10. Effective Date.** This Proclamation shall take effect immediately upon its issuance by the Mayor of the City of Blue Ridge, Texas.

**I HEREBY DECLARE A LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER WITHIN THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE** to continue until March 25, 2020 subject to the continuation or renewal of the City Council of the City of Blue Ridge upon the expiration of seven (7) days as provided by Texas Government Code Section 418.108.

**ACCORDINGLY**, I further proclaim activation of the City Emergency Management Plan and the activation of all other statutory and ordinance powers vested in me and all officers of the City of Blue Ridge to act in the premises and for the purposes stated. Prompt and general publicity is hereby proclaimed and ordered as to the issuance of this Proclamation.

**ORDERED** this 19th day of March, 2020, in the City of Blue Ridge, Collin County, Texas, in witness whereof I hereunto subscribe my name.

Filed with me, City Secretary Edie Sims of the City of Blue Ridge this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020, by Mayor Rhonda Williams whose signature I hereby certify is true and genuine, with general publicity of the foregoing Proclamation being put into effect the same date as the signing thereof.



Mayor Rhonda Williams  
City of Blue Ridge



City Secretary Edie Sims  
City of Blue Ridge



## **Social Distancing Recommendations**

### **1) Vulnerable Populations: Limit Outings**

- a. Vulnerable populations include people who are:
  - i. 60 years old and older; or
  - ii. People with certain health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease, and weakened immune systems.
- b. For vulnerable populations, don't go to gatherings (of 10 people or more) unless it is essential. If you can telecommute, you should avoid people who are sick.

### **2) Workplace and Businesses: Minimize Exposure**

- a. Suspend nonessential employee travel.
- b. Minimize the number of employees working within arm's length of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences.
- c. Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits.
- d. Permit sick employees to stay home without providing a doctor's note.
- e. Consider use of telecommuting options.
- f. Some people need to be at work to provide essential services of great benefit to the community. They can take steps in their workplace to minimize risk.

### **3) Large Gatherings: Cancel Non-essential Events**

- a. Recommend cancelling or postponing large gatherings, such as concerts, sporting events, conventions or large community events.
- b. Do not attend any events or gatherings if sick.
- c. For events that aren't cancelled, we recommend:
  - i. Having hand washing capabilities, hand sanitizers, and tissues available;
  - ii. Frequently cleaning high-touch surface areas like countertops, doorknobs, and handrails; and
  - iii. Finding ways to create physical space to minimize close contact as much as possible.

### **4) Schools: Safety First**

- a. Do not have your child attend school if sick.
- b. If you have a child with chronic health conditions, consult the child's doctor about school attendance.
- c. Frequent re-education of students and staff regarding personal hygiene measures (handwashing, etc.) and ensuring that appropriate signs are posted.
- d. Schools should equip all classrooms with hand sanitizers and tissues.
- e. Recommend rescheduling or cancelling medium to large events that are not essential, even if the events would otherwise comply with the Order.
- f. Explore remote teaching and online options to continue learning.
- g. Schools should develop a plan for citywide school closures and families should prepare.