

WCOEM: March 30, 2020 as of 3:34pm COVID-19 Update for Walker County

Walker County overview:

DSHS website has Walker County listed as having 3 confirmed cases. We have 2 active cases and the first case we recorded has “graduated out”, so the total on the DSHS website is aggregate. We have not been able to get test kits from the state to test our population with symptoms. We are calling daily to try and get our order pushed through.

Governor Abbott issued Order GA-08 which orders the following:

1. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, every person in Texas shall avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.
2. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms or massage parlors; provided, however, that the use of drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of this executive order.
3. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.
4. In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, schools shall temporarily close.

There are a lot of questions concerning grocery stores, The Home Depot, Tractor Supply and Academy allowing more than 10 people in at a time and not social distancing. According to the Governor, they are considered essential businesses and cannot be “enforced” by local officials to follow guidelines. The Governor stated “so long as the necessary precautions are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19”.

Local officials do not want to issue a “Stay At Home” order. This is a popular decision by some citizens and unpopular decision by others. If everyone will follow the Order and Guidelines that are in place, such an order will not be necessary. A Stay At Home order does not shut down everything as some suggest; there are many exceptions that must be included. Citizens should contact their local officials to express their concerns either way.

A county wide curfew is in place to protect life and property by keeping unessential traffic and people off of the streets between 11:50pm-5:00am.

The CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) coronavirus webpages are reliable sources of information. DSHS is monitoring the Texas situation seven days a week. They are working closely with emergency response agencies, local health departments and the CDC. The most up-to-date information and guidance can be found via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. The Coronavirus Task Force continues holding frequent national briefings. DSHS COVID-19 Call Center 1-877-570-9779 Hours 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

Our report from this point forward will be more condensed and updated with essential information.

For Statewide case numbers and information, visit <https://dshs.texas.gov/news/updates.shtm#coronavirus>

For National case numbers and information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>

Texas total testing – 35,880

Public Labs – 3,704

Private Labs – 32,176\*

\*number does not include the total tested by all private labs.

Texas COVID-19 cases – 2,877

Fatalities – 38

124 of 254 counties reporting cases.

Harris County is testing for coronavirus for the entire region. Access their online screening tool to help with testing at [www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org) and click on the “coronavirus testing” button. You will answer some screening questions and be given an identifier number. They will prioritize tests based on symptoms. You must have symptoms to be considered for testing. If you do not have access to the internet, call 832-927-7575.

As always, if you are sick enough to be admitted to the hospital you can go to any hospital. They are testing individuals but are strictly following guidelines for testing.

Huntsville Memorial Hospital has installed an outside triage; it is not a testing site. The purpose is to limit those entering the hospital.

Walker County OEM will provide this update each weekday after the statewide and national numbers are updated.