



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) JULY 2, 2020 UPDATE

- Normally, I start these update with the latest numbers, and then discuss any new developments from Governor Abbott's office. Today I will switch that around because the Governor issued some very significant guidance this afternoon that goes into effect at noon tomorrow.
- This afternoon at 2:30, the Governor issued Executive Order GA-29 that requires (with very few exceptions) that *"every person in Texas shall wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public, or when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household."* The Order states that local law enforcement and other local officials can and should enforce this Executive Order. Finally, the Order removed the previous statement which read *"but no jurisdiction can impose a civil or criminal penalty for failure to wear a face covering."* That means the City/County/State can now issue a citation for failure to cover your face. If you wish to see the EO, it is posted at www.gov.texas.gov. There you will find the 10 situations in which a face covering is not required.
- There is nothing ambiguous about this Order. Beginning at noon tomorrow, if you are in any store or space open to the public, you must cover your face; failure to do so can result in a fine not to exceed \$250. The Governor also issued a Proclamation simultaneously with the latest Executive Order regarding outdoor gatherings – effective at noon tomorrow. Gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited unless the Mayor approves the gathering, and those can be made subject to certain restrictions.
- What impact does the Proclamation have on the City fireworks display on Saturday evening? The fireworks display will still occur. Groups cannot be more than 10 people (unless you live in the same house), and if you are unable to maintain six feet of distance between the groups of 10, then you need to wear a face covering. I have authorized the Gatesville Police Department to ensure the size of groups and distancing are followed on Saturday night. I would simply ask for your cooperation so that you and everyone else gets to enjoy a great fireworks display, when many other cities in our area have cancelled their events.
- Now, for the latest numbers. There were at least five additional confirmed positives in the City limits today (however it is very possible that a specific household may actually have more than one confirmed positive case residing there), one additional case just outside the City limits, and two additional cases in Coryell County with a Gatesville address. You will recall in an earlier update, that I reported we had a total of five positive cases from June 2nd through June 26th. The five new cases are all from one day, and due to reporting lags by the Department of State Health Services, I would anticipate there are even more that simply have not been posted yet. Sadder yet, while not within the City limits, Gatesville had its first COVID-19 fatality last night – revealed in a post-mortem test. That indicates the individual was asymptomatic, and died of COVID-19.
- I am 100% percent convinced that this virus will not defeat the residents of Gatesville, if we simply do the right thing – simple things – over and over. Thanks to everyone who is simply doing the right thing in these difficult times. I ask that if you are sick or at risk, please stay home. If you have a neighbor who is at risk, consider asking them what you can do for them to help out a fellow citizen.

Bill Parry
City Manager