



Waco-McLennan County Emergency Management

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Date: April 1, 2020

To: Waco-McLennan County Businesses

From: Shawn Nixon, Operations Section Chief

Subject: Best Practices for Essential Business

Businesses and employers can help prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in McLennan County. We encourage employers to plan and respond in a flexible way to varying levels of disease transmission in the community and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most American workers will likely experience low (caution) or medium exposure risk levels at their job or place of employment. All employers need to consider how to best decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in their workplace. This may include activities in one or more of the following areas: a) reduce transmission among employees, b) maintain healthy business operations, and c) maintain a healthy work environment.

Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay at home. Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers. Employees who are well but have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.

Thank you to our essential businesses for the services you are providing in this difficult time. We strongly recommend the following precautions to protect yourself, your employees, your patrons, and the broader community:

- **Offer delivery options or curb service**
- **Limit the number of patrons allowed inside at a time, based on the size of the facility and social distancing recommendations.**

This will require monitoring and enforcement, including to promote social distancing and safe hygiene practices among patrons who are waiting outside. Businesses should be creative in developing social distancing plans that meet their unique needs, and firm in requiring employees and patrons to abide by them. Even at essential businesses, everyone who can work from home should do so. Only employees who need to be physically present should come to work. It is strongly advised that you make hand sanitizer, and surface cleaning products easily available to all employees.

Businesses can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and enforce social distancing requirements by:

- **Post signs** on the front door and throughout the business, reminding patrons to practice good health habits and maintain a six-foot distance apart.
- **Enforce the six-foot rule.** Imagine a person lying horizontally between you and another person – that's six feet. Keep that distance between you and others. A full-size bed is also 6-feet long. Consider putting down strips of tape in check-out lines to indicate where customers should stand.



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- **Implement an exclusive shopping hour for seniors and those at-risk** to protect the citizens who suffer most if they contract the virus.
- **Provide hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes, tissues, and signs encouraging their use for patrons.** Provide gloves for employees.
- **Clean surfaces that people touch often** like doorknobs, counters, phones, faucets, shopping carts, and baskets. Financial institutions that are only conducting business via the drive-thru windows should remember to clean the transport tubes often.
- **Ensure that all employees frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- **Install sneeze guards or plastic barriers** between staff and the public. Place produce and other non-packaged food behind barriers and have staff handling these with gloves on.
- **Communicate with your patrons** via signage and regular social media posts regarding any changes in hours or other important updates.
- **Business owners or managers who have questions** about the order and restrictions can call the Waco-McLennan County Emergency Operations Center COVID-19 hotline at (254) 750-1890. Residents or employees who believe a business is in violation of these restrictions are urged to call the EOC COVID-19 hotline as well. Restaurants may operate under the order solely to provide food through online, delivery, pickup, or walk-in ordering. Dine-in services are strictly prohibited.

We urge businesses to follow these recommendations to protect the health of both employees and the public. Thank you to all of our business owners and staff for doing your part to keep Waco and McLennan County healthy and our store shelves stocked. We need you now more than ever.