



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Mayor Ron Nirenberg issues new public health emergency declaration
prohibiting mass gatherings of 50 people or more***

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District confirms fourth travel-related case of COVID-19 in San Antonio

INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF 8:00 PM

SAN ANTONIO (March 16, 2020) — Today, Mayor Ron Nirenberg issued a public health emergency declaration, which prohibits mass gatherings of 50 people or more. The City Council will consider extending the seven-day declaration at Thursday's regularly scheduled meeting.

The signed declaration is attached.

In accordance with revised guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued on March 16, 2020 the public is strongly urged to avoid social gatherings in groups of more than ten people. Additionally, all bars, restaurants and other public food service locations should place tables at least six feet away from each other and space bar seating and service for standing patrons consistent with the CDC's guidance.

"I have issued a Declaration of Public Health Emergency Order No. 3 to tighten requirements limiting mass gatherings. The new declaration prohibits mass gatherings of more than 50 people. We also strongly recommend that people avoid social gatherings of 10 or more," said Mayor Ron Nirenberg. "The declaration also includes guidelines for spacing in restaurants to ensure safe social distancing and prevent the spread of COVID-19."

“The aggressive steps we have taken to date are preventing, delaying and containing the spread of this virus. San Antonians should follow these specific guidelines from health experts so we can stay ahead of the disease,” Mayor Nirenberg added. “I will implement additional measures if we discover community spread, as recommended by our local public health authorities.”

The declaration includes the following:

- Prohibits all indoor public and private gatherings and outdoor gatherings within an enclosed space of 50 persons or more anywhere in the City of San Antonio beginning at 11:59 PM on March 16, 2020 and continuing for seven (7) days.
- A **mass gathering** is defined as any event that is likely to bring together 50 or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined space, such as an auditorium, theatre, stadium (indoor or outdoor), arena or event center, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria or any other confined indoor or outdoor space.
- Recommends the CDC’s guidance urging the public to avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people

The declaration **exempts** the following from “mass gatherings”:

- Gatherings of people in multiple, separate enclosed spaces in a single building such as a multiplex movie theater, so long as 50 people are not present at the same time
- The San Antonio International Airport, public or private schools and places of worship, museums (so long as visitors are generally not within arm’s length of one another for extended periods)
- Bus stops or transit centers, office spaces, hotels or residential buildings
- Grocery stores, shopping malls, outdoor markets or other retail establishments where large numbers of people are present but it is unusual for them to be within arm’s length of one another for extended periods
- Bars, restaurants and other public food service locations
- Hospitals, medical facilities and shelters
- Jails and detention centers

In all such settings, it is recommended that the public follow social distancing recommendations, and harm reduction measures, such as hand sanitizer and tissues should be provided when possible.

Fourth travel-related COVID-19 case confirmed

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) is currently investigating a **fourth** confirmed travel-related positive COVID-19 case. This brings the number of **travel-related** COVID-19 cases in San Antonio to **four**.

A detailed contact tracing investigation for this individual is already taking place and affected individuals will be notified. The individual is in home isolation, away from the public. This confirmed case of COVID-19 is **not** a community-spread case. A community-spread case indicates that infection has been spread from a person who did not have exposure to the illness or a travel history.

“The four cases we have confirmed are all travel-related,” said Metro Health Director Dawn Emerick. “People understandably want to know where these individuals have been within our community. If they have not been anywhere that may have risked exposing the public to the virus, for the privacy of the individuals, we will not be sharing their past locations and activity. Our community can help minimize the spread of the virus by practicing good hygiene habits, social distancing and staying home if they are sick.”

COVID-19 Testing Criteria & Drive Through Testing:

Drive-through testing for COVID-19 is not available for the general public at this time. For now, drive-thru testing is only available for first responders and health care workers who meet qualifications for testing. Everyone else must be tested at a laboratory with approval from a doctor. Testing criteria and drive through testing information is being finalized with state and federal officials. We will issue updates as the information is finalized.

Patients should not contact Metro Health directly to request COVID-19 testing or go to emergency rooms to seek COVID-19 testing. A health care provider, such as a primary care physician or urgent care provider, must order the test.

Information for the public is also available at: www.sanantonio.gov/covid19.

RESOURCES FOR THE PUBLIC

Residents are encouraged to download the **Ready South Texas app**, available in the [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#) stores, to receive updates on the COVID-19 situation in San Antonio.

Additionally, residents can text COSAGOV to 55000 to receive SMS text message updates.

Public service announcements on social distancing, prevention and testing are available in English, Spanish and American Sign Language [here](#).

Posters, guidance letters and other materials are available at this [link](#).

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San Antonio: America's 21st Century City

San Antonio is a global city with a dynamic economy and workforce, a deep cultural heritage and diverse communities that are resilient and welcoming. It is one of the strongest fiscally managed cities in the country, nurturing entrepreneurship, encouraging investment and funding infrastructure. America's seventh-largest city offers a vibrant business climate and growth opportunities in bioscience, financial services, aerospace, cybersecurity, energy, transportation, manufacturing and healthcare. In 2015, UNESCO designated San Antonio's 18th century Spanish colonial missions as a World Heritage Site – the first in Texas. Proudly called Military City, USA®, San Antonio is home to one of the largest populations of active duty military, veterans and crucial military commands. For more information, visit www.sanantonio.gov