
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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COVID-19 — TEXAS — 03/23/2020

As of March 23, 2020, the state of Texas has 806 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus and eight reported deaths.

Governor Greg Abbott proclaimed a [State of Disaster](#) in Texas on March 13, 2020. The proclamation authorized the use of all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with the disaster. The governor suspended, upon written approval of the Office of the Governor, any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business or any order or rule of a state agency that would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the disaster. The governor also suspended any state statute or administrative rule regarding contracting or procurement that would impede any state agency's emergency response that is necessary to cope with the declared disaster for the duration of the disaster and for that limited purpose.

On March 19, 2020, Dr. John Hellerstedt, Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, declared a [public health disaster](#) in Texas in response to COVID-19. The declaration requires Texas residents to act responsibly to prevent and control communicable disease. The declaration provides recommendations to the public, employers, and restaurant owners to help reduce and delay the spread of the virus.

The governor issued an [Executive Order](#) on March 19, 2020, designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The Order applies from March 20, 2020, through April 3, 2020. The Order:

- Requires every person in Texas to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 persons.
- Directs people to avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms or massage parlors. The use of drive-through, pickup, or delivery options is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of the Executive Order.
- Restricts visits to nursing homes, retirement homes, and long-term care facilities unless the purpose of the visit is to provide critical assistance.
- Closes schools.

The Texas Legislature is currently not in session as it meets in regular session during odd-numbered years. Upcoming meetings listed on the Texas [House](#) and [Senate](#) websites through the end of April have been postponed.

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