

COVID-19 -- City of Center Advisory and Continuity of Services

The City of Center wants to reassure our residents and businesses that essential City services are not anticipated to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are following our emergency response plans and taking necessary steps to ensure we can continue to serve our citizens. The City will be enhancing emergency response services by the Center Police and Fire Departments. Also, City water, sewer and garbage services should not be interrupted. The City will make some operational modifications consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and today's Emergency Order by Governor Abbott in efforts to reduce in-person interactions for city business and postpone public events of ten or more persons. These steps are being taken to protect staff, customers, the public health and particularly our most vulnerable citizens.

The City is taking measures to ensure the continuity of services throughout the community including communications with local medical facilities, industry partners, retail businesses and other utility providers. Center Police and Fire personnel are coordinating with other emergency responders. Public Safety contacts remain 936/598-2788 for the Center Police Department and 936/598-3288 for the Center Fire Department. If anyone requires emergency services, they still call 9-1-1. The Center Police and Fire Stations will limit access to the public to reduce contact as a precaution for the individual health of our public safety personnel.

City water and sewer utility service will continue. The City is operating both water plants on regular schedule so that all water needed is available and in compliance with all drinking water standards. City utility plants and the City annex on Riggs Street will also limit public access. If anyone has utility or public works requests, call 936/598-2941 to initiate a response.

The Governor's current order inhibits many business operations and we encourage all citizens and residents to continue to support local businesses that continue operations in adjusted fashion to comply with the Governor's statewide health order. The Center Economic Development Corporation staff has been directed to monitor State of Texas and US Small Business Administration programs for resources, information and potential aid for businesses affected by COVID-19 and will provide information on the City website as it becomes available. Staff remain available to answer any questions at 936/598-2941.

The CDC and TxDSHS encourage individual preventative measures:

- Frequently washing hands;
- Staying at home if you have any symptoms of illness, especially fever or difficulty breathing;
- Avoiding close personal contact with people, such as shaking hands; and
- Frequently disinfecting surfaces at home and in the workplace.

Additional recommendations of the CDC and TXDept of State Health Services include start practicing social distancing by:

- staying away from other people to avoid catching or spreading illness;
- avoiding crowds and minimizing physical contact; and
- staying at least six feet away from others

Operational Modifications/Update:

City Hall will also reduce public access. Customers can call 936/598-2941 for assistance or with questions including need to talk directly to personnel. To make a utility payment or service changes, the options include:

- The payment kiosk at City Hall open 24/7 accepts cash, checks, and credit/debit cards
- The night drop box at City Hall for cash or checks
- The online payment portal at www.CenterTexas.org is now available
- For additional assistance, please call 936/598-2941.

The Center Municipal Court, located at the Center Police Station is also closed to the public. Anyone wishing to resolve a ticket or citation can make payments via:

- Online at trafficpayment.com
- Mailing plea with money order to P.O. Box 1900, Center, Texas 75935
- Calling 936/598-3080 with questions or additional assistance.

Garbage collection is continuing regular Tuesday/Friday or Monday/Thursday schedules for residences and daily scheduled collection for all commercial accounts. Bulky waste disposal at the Riggs St. Annex is temporarily unavailable.

All athletic activities coordinated by Center Recreation Department are temporarily postponed. While City parks, pavilions, playgrounds, and cemeteries remain open at this time, all are encouraged to follow the recommended health and safety protocols, including the Governor's order prohibiting gatherings of more than 10 persons, social distancing and individual prevention.

The John D. Windham Civic Center and Community House staff will coordinate the postponing or rescheduling events at no additional cost to renters to honor Governor Abbott's order of no meetings larger than ten persons until April 3rd. All public events until April have been postponed by event coordinators.

The Center Municipal Airport will remain open to accommodate aviation needs and there are currently no restrictions on flight operations.