

**NEWS RELEASE**

For media inquiries, contact: Nick Wolda  
nwolda@thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov

## **The Woodlands Township COVID-19 Update, March 19, 2020**



### **Township closes parks, continues providing services to residents**

The Woodlands Township assures residents that it will continue to provide essential services while also prioritizing the health and safety of employees and the community. In order to continue services and protect employees and residents, the following have been implemented.

- The Woodlands Township Town Hall and the Recreation Centers facilities at Bear Branch Park and at Rob Fleming Park are presently closed for walk-in business for 60 days. All parks are closed (see additional information below.)



- Township maintenance and emergency services operations will continue with emphasis on health and safety. The Township's resident call center will continue but will be operated remotely so that resident concerns can be addressed.
- For covenant applications, the Township has a drop-off location and support materials located outside the Town Hall at 2801 Technology Forest Blvd. Information dropped off by applicants will be picked up and processed by staff.
- In addition, the Township's IT department is in the process of installing technology to allow remote video meetings for the Township Board of Directors and for the Development Standards Committee, in compliance with the revised standards for Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) requirement as authorized by the Governor during this declared emergency. Information on accessing and participating in remote meetings will be shared when it becomes available.

## **The Woodlands Transit**

Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, The Woodlands Express Park and Ride services will continue operations at the Research Forest Park and Ride location only. The Sterling Ridge and Sawdust Park and Ride locations will be closed until further notice. For more information, please call 936-273-6100.

## **The Woodlands Township closes parks, playgrounds**

In light of the evolving situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus), The Woodlands Township Board of Directors voted on Monday, March 16, 2020, to close the Township parks, which includes tennis courts, basketball courts, skate parks, sportsfields, playgrounds, ponds, dog parks and restrooms to the public. Signs will be placed at each facility, noting that park equipment is not disinfected and unauthorized use is at one's own risk.

Additionally, the Board and Township have agreed to close all spraygrounds, pools, boathouses, recreation centers and Texas TreeVentures.

"At this time, we simply do not have the capacity to sanitize our 150 parks and playgrounds as people come into contact with each surface," said Township Chairman of the Board Gordy Bunch. "For the safety and health of our community and children, the Board is asking our residents to avoid utilizing the parks and playgrounds at this time. We recognize that this is a difficult situation for everyone in our community and we ask for your cooperation and patience."

## Township Emphasizes the Importance of Social Distancing

### *What is social distancing?*

Social distancing is a set of actions intended to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease. The objective of social distancing is to reduce the probability of contact between persons carrying an infection, and others who are not infected, so as to minimize disease transmission, morbidity and ultimately, mortality.

*The CDC has advised the following with regards to social distancing:*

- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care. If you are sick, please contact your healthcare provider **BEFORE** going to their office so that arrangements can be made for your safety and the safety of others.
- **If you go out in public**, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often, particularly after contact with high-touch surfaces. Limit your public outings to only the essentials. If possible, work remotely from home and consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social or commercial networks. **Stay home** as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.
- **Avoid cruise travel** and non-essential air travel.
- **Avoid crowds** as much as possible.

Please note, these measures are for your safety as well as the safety of others. It is critical at this time to observe social distancing and relegate all non-essential outings to a later date.

## Neighborhood Watch Paint Kits

Neighborhood Watch Address Paint Kits will not be available until at least April 13, 2020. For residents who are currently borrowing paint kits, they are asked to keep the kits until the Township offices have reopened.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING KEEPS US SAFER**

As we navigate this difficult time, The Woodlands Township encourages residents to observe CDC guidelines for social distancing and safety.

- Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care. If you are sick, please contact your healthcare provider **BEFORE** going to their office.
- Postpone** all non-essential appointments. **Work remotely** if possible.
- Keep a 6 foot distance** from others when on walks or in public.
- Utilize grocery delivery or pick-up** if possible.
- Limit close contact** while in public and **wash your hands** often.

**When in doubt:** Stay home as much as possible and limit your person-to-person interactions.

Stay informed at [www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/covid19](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/covid19)



## **Governor Abbott orders closings**

Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced that State Public Health has issued a statewide public health declaration. As such, the Governor by executive order issued an order matching the recommendations of the federal government and CDC.

As such, individuals should not gather in groups larger than 10. No restaurant dining in, but drive-through, curbside and delivery are still available and encouraged. All gyms are to close. No visits to nursing homes or assisted living except for the need of critical care. All schools are closed temporarily. Online or other options are to be used as determined by local districts.

The order goes into effect at 11:59 p.m. on March 20, 2020, and runs through midnight on April 3, 2020. The order may be extended as necessary.

The governor reiterated that this is not a shelter-in-place. Domestic travel is unrestricted. Businesses and governments are open to provide essential services but encouraged to have employees work from home.

The state does now, by virtue of issuing the public health emergency, have the ability to issue forced quarantine. The governor reiterated the hope is that citizens will comply. The state is not currently using forced quarantine.

## **Montgomery County Food Bank—How can you help?**

In partnership with Houston Food Bank and Feeding America, and in communication with government, school, and health care officials, the Montgomery County Food Bank is actively working to ensure the safest handling of food distributions to our community, while also assessing innovative ways to meet the evolving need, including needs for seniors and schoolchildren.

To ensure the highest food safety standards for our community, the food bank leverages the virtual world for support of our food distributions, and is not encouraging community food drives.

The best way you can safely help, and show your passion for hunger relief in your community, is to host and share the Virtual Food Drive:

- Share this link through your social media channels, company and community networks, church and neighborhood groups, or any other vehicle. Your reach helps tremendously and any amount helps. <https://mcfoodbank.org/virtual-food-drive/>
- For Volunteer Services, to ensure the highest level of safety standards, the food bank is enforcing strict guidelines and limiting volunteer numbers. If you would like to apply to be a part of those limited shifts, please visit our website, [www.mcfoodbank.org](http://www.mcfoodbank.org).



## Stay Connected

Please stay connected to The Woodlands Township through our many communications channels. Learn more and sign up at [www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/stayinformed](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/stayinformed).

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*The Woodlands Township publishes this update to inform residents and businesses regarding the COVID-19 and its impact on The Woodlands Township. Additionally, The Woodlands Township has launched a special COVID-19 information page that can be found at [www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/covid19](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/covid19), formatted for both desktop and mobile devices. Please sign up for Township news and notifications at [www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/notifyme](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/notifyme).*