



NEWS RELEASE

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

The Woodlands Township COVID-19 Update, March 23, 2020

Harris County COVID-19 Case Count

Harris County Public Health (HCPH) has 3 new cases of COVID-19, which brings the total to 54 positive cases, including one COVID-19 related death, reported on March 19, 2020. These new cases do not include those within the City of Houston.

HCPH's new case details:

- A 40-49 year-old woman, who lives in the Northwest quadrant of Harris County- (recovered)
- A 60-69 year-old woman, who lives in the Northwest quadrant of Harris County- (community spread)
- A 50-59 year-old man, who lives in the Northwest quadrant of Harris County- (travel-related)

Harris County now has multiple cases without travel history and we do not know the source of transmission. This implies that COVID-19 is spreading in our community. Community spread makes it harder to identify and contain the virus since anyone can become infected. [We need the public's help to prevent further community spread.](#)

Harris County Launches Online Screening Tool to Streamline COVID-19 Testing, Two Additional Testing Sites for Residents

Harris County announced an online COVID-19 assessment tool for residents who believe they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms such as fever or dry cough. The online screening tool is available now at [ReadyHarris.org](https://www.readyharris.org).

The two testing sites will only test people pre-identified as high-risk through a two-step screening process. The initial screening will be online with only those meeting certain risk criteria moving on to a phone-based screening with a medical professional. [Only after the phone screening will qualified residents be directed to a testing site.](#)

Montgomery County COVID-19 Case Count

Montgomery County Public Health District, in conjunction with Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management, can confirm Montgomery County now has 19 positive cases of COVID-19. As of 3 p.m. today, MCPHD has been notified of 117 negative and 19 positive test results of county residents. Results are pending for another 147 residents.



Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

A message from Captain Tim Holifield of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Here at the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office our number one focus is, and has always been, the safety and protection of our citizens. Our team is working tirelessly to fulfill our vision, mission and goals, and to provide citizens with the most accurate information, as is the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management.

Currently, our staff is in a very healthy position. As of today we have not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the Sheriff's Office. Our personnel have the appropriate instruction to utilize social distancing whenever possible and we have a system in place to decontaminate after any encounter. Additionally, we have proper decontamination procedure for our personnel, equipment and vehicles for any exposure.

While this is a very fluid situation, and as we work to ensure we do not spread the virus, we ask citizens to respect and honor the requests for social distancing so to not expose themselves, their families, and the rest of the community. As the days and weeks progress, our policing model may be revised. Please know that Sheriff Rand Henderson and our entire team are here, working and focused on protecting the citizens and residents of Montgomery County and The Woodlands Township.

Harris County Precinct 4 Constable's Office

A message from Captain Jonathan Zitzman of the Harris County Precinct 4 Constable's Office

The Harris County Precinct 4 Constable's Office has been working closely with the Harris County Office of Emergency Management and all of our regional partners to ensure we are up-to-date with current information and focusing on best practices. Our Office has no confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of today and we have instituted many safety precautions to ensure our deputies are practicing social distancing when feasible and have the ability to operate in a clean and sanitized environment. Our Communications Center is inquiring about COVID-19 symptoms with callers and they may request that individuals step outside of their homes or businesses when deputies arrive, to limit any potential spread or exposure.

The Constable's Office is working diligently to protect our deputies and community members and prevent the spread of the virus. We respectfully ask for patience and cooperation from the public regarding any requests from our agency. As this situation has the potential to change or escalate over the next several days and weeks, we are fully prepared to adjust our procedures and protocols as needed. For more information and resources available to the public regarding COVID-19 in Harris and surrounding Counties, please visit www.ReadyHarris.org.

We appreciate and are thankful for the partnership with The Woodlands Township and Creekside Park; we are here to help. If you need law enforcement services, please call us 24/7, at 281-376-3472.



Jobseeker Information

If you have lost your job due to the Covid 19 outbreak, the Texas Workforce Commission has waived the waiting period to apply for unemployment benefits. A link to the Texas Workforce Commission application is here: <https://twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers>

Resource Phone Numbers

Montgomery County has opened a COVID-19 Call Center at 936-523-3916. Harris County residents may call Harris County Public Health at 832-927-7575 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day, or Ask My Nurse at 713-634-1110 for clinical questions.

Food Banks

Local food banks are inventorying their resources to ascertain what will be needed in the days to come. Many Township residents have expressed a desire to volunteer or donate; please see the information below regarding those needs.

- [Interfaith of The Woodlands](#): Interfaith is continuing to provide Senior Grocery Delivery, Crisis Assistance Services and Food Pantry Assistance. The biggest need in the coming weeks is funding to purchase specific and essential foods, toiletries and paper goods in bulk from local grocery stores and The Food Bank. [Please read on to learn how you can lend support to Interfaith.](#)
- [Montgomery County Food Bank](#): The Montgomery County Food Bank's (MCFB) operations are continuing as normal. The MCFB is monitoring the situation closely and taking necessary precautions to help make sure that food and product remains safe and that our distributions and volunteer activities can continue. [MCFB is conducting a virtual food drive; please read on to learn how you can help.](#)

In addition, free groceries will be distributed, while supplies last, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, and Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at the Community Assistance Center parking lot at 1022 McCall Street in Conroe. For more information, please call 936-539-9211 to see if you qualify for this service.

Meals on Wheels

[Meals on Wheels Montgomery County \(MOWMC\)](#) needs the community's help in feeding local, homebound seniors. They are currently receiving an unprecedented number of calls from seniors in need of meals and are seeking out emergency funding to cover this growing need.

Donations are being accepted through the [virtual food drive](#) or by dropping off shelf-stable food items at the MOWMC kitchen in The Woodlands. If you have been exposed to anyone showing symptoms of any kind, or are feeling unwell yourself, please do not bring your donation.



2235 Lake Robbins Drive, at the loading dock on the right side of the building
Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

There is a critical need for the following shelf-stable items right now (low sodium preferred):

- Vegetables
- Soup
- Beans
- Tuna fish / chicken
- Peanut butter
- Crackers / graham crackers
- Oatmeal, individual packets
- Powdered milk
- Chocolate, vanilla or strawberry flavored liquid meals including Ensure Original and Glucerna Original

For more information, please visit <https://www.mowmc.org/2020/03/16/covid-19-updates/>

The Woodlands Township looks to technology to hold meeting electronically

The Woodlands Township Board of Directors will hold its first ever public meeting via videoconference this Wednesday, March 25, 2020 with a scheduled time to begin at 6 p.m. Central Daylight Time. The Board will be discussing matters related to COVID-19. The meeting can be viewed online at <http://www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/778/Meeting-Videos>.

"The Woodlands Township Board of Directors is committed and here to help our residents and business," said Chairman Gordy Bunch. "We are fortunate and blessed to have incredible support by our directors and staff to help continue meeting, in an innovative way, as we need to take care of our community."

Participation by members of the public in open meetings of the Board of Directors is welcomed and encouraged, Chairman Bunch said. During the March 25, 2020, videoconference Board meeting, members of the public may provide public comment by calling 877-853-5247 (toll-free), then enter ID 966 224 808 #. Calls will be taken in the order the calls are received and only during the "public comment" agenda item. This phone number is active only for the March 25, 2020 Board meeting. New phone numbers will be issued for each future meeting during the public health pandemic emergency.

Township Chairman Gordy Bunch Addresses the Community

Township Chairman Gordy Bunch addressed the community in a video from the Township Board Chambers, giving an encouraging and inspiring message that we can get through this together. [View video](#). The link directs to the video on Facebook, but you do not need to log in or have an account to view it.

Township Emphasizes the Importance of 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 Township Board of Directors has closed the Township parks system and the placement of signage at all parks as a precaution to the coronavirus outbreak.

Township law enforcement resources will only be used to enforce park closure rules for large groups that are blatantly in violation of the most recent Montgomery County and Harris County Orders regarding gatherings at public facilities. We strongly encourage residents to abide by CDC guidance during this crisis.



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.
- Utilize grocery delivery or pick-up if possible.
- Keep a **6 foot distance** from others when on walks or in public.
- 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.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/covid19



Dining at a Distance: Dine out without dining in!

Visit The Woodlands, the destination marketing organization for The Woodlands, is actively compiling and updating a list of local restaurants offering delivery or curbside pick-up. View and share the growing list of restaurants here: www.visitthewoodlands.com/eatlocal. If you aren't currently listed and would like to be, [fill out the form here](#) and we'll add it! If you're already listed on this page and need it to be updated or have a menu changed, please email amber.george@visitthewoodlands.com.



Garbage, Recycling and Yard Waste

Waste Management is continuing to operate all curbside collection and Recycle Center services as normal. No interruptions to the standard schedule have occurred. Due to heavy volume, your collection may occur at a different time of day than usual. Please Note: Waste Management Call Center staff are transitioning to work-at-home for their health and safety. Until this transition is complete, please report a missed pickup, bulk pickup request, or other concern by emailing to cssatex@wm.com. Be sure to provide your name, address, village, regular service date, and the nature of your request.

Beware: FBI Sees Rise in Fraud Schemes

Scammers are leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to steal your money, your personal information, or both. The FBI advises you to be on the lookout for the following:

Fake CDC Emails.

Watch out for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other organizations claiming to offer information on the virus. Do not click links or open attachments you do not recognize.

Phishing Emails.

Look out for phishing emails asking you to verify your personal information in order to receive an economic stimulus check from the government. While talk of economic stimulus checks has been in the news cycle, government agencies are *not* sending unsolicited emails seeking your private information in order to send you money.

Counterfeit Treatments or Equipment.

Be cautious of anyone selling products that claim to prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19. Be alert to counterfeit products such as sanitizing products and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 respirator masks, goggles, full face shields, protective gowns, and gloves.

If you believe you are the victim of an Internet scam or cyber crime, or if you want to report suspicious activity, please visit the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

For more information about internet fraud related to COVID-19, [please visit the FBI website](#).

The Township's Coronavirus page

The Woodlands Township has launched a special COVID-19 information page that can be found at www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/covid19. This page includes the latest news from The Township, updates from partner agencies, social distancing strategies, important links, frequently asked questions, live Twitter feeds and more and is being updated frequently. Please check back often.



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.

The Woodlands Township publishes this update to inform residents and businesses regarding the COVID-19 and its impact on The Woodlands Township. Please sign up for Township news and notifications at www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/notifyme.