



City of San Marcos FAQ: COVID-19 Virus

For information about the city's response to and information about COVID-19, please visit our [website](#).

1. What is the current status for the State of Texas?

On March 13, 2020, Governor Abbott issued a Declaration of State of Disaster to take additional steps to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health and welfare of Texas.

2. What is the current status for the City of San Marcos?

On March 15, 2020, a Declaration of Local State of Disaster was issued to allow the City of San Marcos to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and promote the health and safety of San Marcos residents by utilizing state and federal resources made available with this declaration. On Monday, March 16, the Mayor signed the first Order of Declaration of Local Disaster, and on March 17 the Mayor signed a new Order with greater limiting capacity.

3. To whom does the Order of Declaration of Local Disaster apply?

This applies to residents of and visitors to the City of San Marcos.

4. Does the Mayor's order apply to restaurants and bars?

The first order issued by Mayor Hughson did not apply to restaurants and bars so long as patrons were able to remain at least an arm's length apart. However, as of Tuesday afternoon, the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) changed, so a new order was signed by Mayor Hughson. The new recommendations apply for at least the next 15 days, until April 1, 2020:

Restaurants: Food establishments are ordered to take measures to reduce occupancy levels to ensure that no more than 10 people occupy the same space or dining room at the same time and are encouraged to provide take-away or no-contact delivery food service designed to limit exposure between individuals.

Bars: The holder of a mixed beverage permit for on-premise consumption is ordered to close common bar spaces open to the public and PROHIBITED from allowing consumption on the bar premises until April 1, 2020.

5. What does the order mean and what is San Marcos doing?

In order to protect the public and to slow the transmission of COVID-19, the City of San Marcos initiated an Order declaring a local disaster, which began at 2:00 a.m. on March 17, 2020, and prohibited Community Gatherings of 50 persons or more anywhere in the City of San

March 17, 2020

Marcos, and continuing until May 11, 2020. This order has now been terminated/modified by the new order.

On Tuesday, March 17, the City received notification that the CDC recommendations had changed to fall in line with the guidelines published by the White House on March 16. The updated guidelines recommend the cancellation and prohibition of all gatherings with 10 people or more including retail establishments such as restaurants and bars. As a result, Mayor Hughson signed a new order on March 17, 2020, that prohibits public and private events and gatherings that would include 10 people or more. This order will be valid as of 5 p.m. on March 17 and continue for a period of 15 days until April 1, 2020, before being reevaluated.

Similarly, the Hays County Health Department urges individuals who are at the highest risk from COVID-19, as determined and defined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), to not attend and to avoid community gatherings or events that will have or is likely to have 10 or more people.

6. What do you consider a Community Gathering?

A Community Gathering is any indoor or outdoor event that brings together or is likely to bring together 10 or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space, such as an auditorium, theatre, stadium (indoor or outdoor), arena or event center, meeting hall, conference center, or any other confined space.

7. How will Community Gatherings be prohibited?

The San Marcos Police Department, the San Marcos Fire Marshal's Office and other peace officers are authorized to enforce this order.

8. How can we help to contain the virus and prevent community spread?

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds several times a day, including between your fingers and underneath your nails.
- Hand sanitizers should be used only when handwashing is not available and should be at least 60 percent alcohol to be effective.
- Avoid handshaking, high-fives and hugging;
- Avoid touching your face – especially your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Stay home when you feel sick;
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue then put the tissue in the trash, or use the crook of your elbow if a tissue isn't available;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household disinfectant cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoid travel to areas that have been designated high-risk areas because of multiple verified cases of COVID-19.

9. What are the best practices to decrease chance of contracting the virus?

Best practices and helpful information is currently available on the City of San Marcos website at www.sanmarcostx.gov/covid19info, on the CDC website www.cdc.gov and through a new COVID-19 Hotline at **512.972.5555**. This is a dedicated call center established by the Austin Public Health Department to answer non-life threatening questions for residents of Hays, Travis, Williamson, and Bastrop Counties.

10. Are the City of San Marcos facilities going to close?

The City of San Marcos issued a Press Release Monday 3/16/2020 at 4:20 p.m. which stated that as of 5:00 p.m., the City would close the **San Marcos Public Library, Activity Center, Senior Center, Discovery Center**, and would adjust operations at the **San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter**. Since then, the Library has developed some alternate service options which will be explained below.

Municipal Court is resetting all dockets scheduled through April 1 until a later date.

Defendants who have an appearance date noted on their citation from now through April 1, 2020, and have not scheduled a court date yet, may call the court at 512.393.8190 to do so. The Municipal Court Customer service counter at the Hays County Government Center, 712 S Stagecoach Trail, will be open to the public during regular scheduled business hours, and will adjust their Wednesday closing time to 5 p.m. rather than 8 p.m. The court also accepts payments over the phone and via the website at <http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/696/Payments>.

Utility Customers & Payment Options: The City has suspended disconnections due to the effects COVID-19 may have on utility customers due to displacement, employment disruption and other unexpected results. Utility customers may pay their bill by phone at 512.393.8333 or online at <https://ipn.paymentus.com/cp/csmu>.

All City sponsored public gatherings, 50+/Senior Programs, and programs of more than 10 people will also be canceled with the remainder of City facilities and parks remaining open for normal business hours. The City offers many online resources for San Marcos residents and a complete list of those with links may be found at www.sanmarcostx.gov/remotebusiness. The public is encouraged to practice social distancing and to utilize phone and computer access to services whenever possible.

11. Will the Library provide any services?

The San Marcos Public Library has canceled all programs, classes and events. All items currently checked out have been given a due date of June 1, 2020, so no fines will accrue.

Services the Library will provide:

1. **Phone Service & Email:** Beginning Wednesday, March 18, Library staff will answer emails and provide telephone reference from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays. During these hours, patrons may request information including census and workforce assistance. Library staff will fill out resumes and job applications and email items to the patron. If email is not an option, the library will snail mail or arrange curbside pickup of the items. During this time, all printed items will be provided at no charge to the customer. Please call **512.393.8200** or email smpl@sanmarcostx.gov for assistance.
2. **Curbside Service:** This service will **begin on Monday, March 23** and will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Patrons must place materials on hold online at <http://www.hank.ci.sanmarcos.tx.us:8080/#section=home> or via telephone **512.393.8200** or smpl@sanmarcostx.gov prior to arrival and wait until they receive notification (via phone or email) that the items are

available. When people arrive, they will call the library and we will verify identify, record on the curbside form, check out materials, and place on the table on the front porch.

3. People wanting to return items will need to walk them up to the outside book drops. Items returned through the book drop will be handled by staff wearing gloves and placed on a cart and wheeled to the learning center. Items will be quarantined by date then checked in and reshelfed after 72 hours.

12. Will San Marcos cancel events also?

The City of San Marcos has canceled most community and public events, including Boards and Commission meetings, except for City Council Meetings, Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and Historic Preservation Committee meetings. Future agendas for these meetings will be evaluated to determine if the meeting can be canceled. The public is able to watch the live stream of the meetings at www.sanmarcostx.gov/videos or on the Government channel on Grande channel 16 and Spectrum channel 10.

13. Where in Hays County/San Marcos can I be tested?

Many health care providers are equipped to administer the test.

However, there are a couple of critical things that people need to know.

1. First, the CDC and DSHS are not recommending that asymptomatic people seek testing.
2. Second, if a person believes they are infected, they should first call their health care provider before going. There is a list of questions that will be asked before patients are set up for testing.

14. What if I have to work and day care has been canceled. Where can I take my kids during this emergency?

There is currently not a public option for this, so members of the community are asked to utilize their social networks and help one another out in times of need. Good examples are churches, neighborhood groups, family and friends.

15. Since a number of conferences have been canceled at our conference center, can the City arrange with Embassy Suites to use any space for Corona Virus testing and/or day care?

We should not need public space like this for mass testing. If we get to a point where widespread community transmission is occurring, we will evaluate all testing and treatment options as recommended by the CDC in cooperation with our local health care professionals and facilities. Regarding day care, members of the community are asked to utilize their social networks and help one another out in times of need.

16. Can the city help the hospitals in Hays County arrange testing outside the hospital building in their parking lots by loaning the hospitals tents or other types of temporary "structures"?

We remain very hopeful that widespread community transmission of the disease will not affect our area. If that does happen, the City will collaborate with our local hospitals to provide the most effective processes for testing, quarantine, and treatment. Central Texas Medical Center is currently making arrangements for a temporary external structure for this purpose.

17. Is testing free or do I have to pay?

The answer to the question is not yet completely clear. Governor Abbott and the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) have asked health insurers and health maintenance organizations operating in Texas to waive costs associated with the testing and telemedicine visits for the

diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19). Additionally, TDI is requesting that insurers report their actions related to consumer cost-sharing and access to services so that the department can ensure consumers are aware of their available benefits. Complete information may be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-tdi-ask-health-insurance-providers-to-waive-costs-associated-with-coronavirus>

- For Private Lab Testing - Cost depends on the lab.
- Can someone with no health insurance get tested for COVID-19? Yes, people with no health insurance have the option of getting tested at a public health lab or at a private lab.

18. When should I get tested?

You should call your health care provider or the local health department if you are experiencing fever above 100.4 along with cough, chest congestion, or shortness of breath. You will be asked a series of questions to determine whether you meet certain testing criteria before you can be tested.

Testing criteria includes having fever, cough, shortness of breath PLUS:

- having had close contact with a confirmed case,
- having traveled to a location with ongoing transmission of COVID-19,
- having risk factors for getting very sick from COVID-19, or
- being hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms even if you do not have any risk factors.

19. Have any travel restrictions been placed at the San Marcos Municipal Airport?

No travel restrictions have been implemented at the airport. However, the travel restrictions in place nationwide do apply to people traveling to and from our airport. We will provide ongoing updates.

20. If the president or governor declares that all restaurants, bars, movie theatres, and other public places are closed and I am a member of the wait staff, a cook, a bartender, I am not going to be able to pay rent. Is my landlord going to be able to evict me from my apartment or house?

Evictions are civil matters between landlord and tenant and are presided over by our local Justices of the Peace. As of Monday, 3/16/20 the local J.P.'s notified us that they are temporarily suspending eviction hearings until the health crisis has subsided.

21. Is there a web site or other type of computer site that I can access that will answer at least some of my questions? The best resource is still the CDC's site and the several pages they have created specifically to answer questions for various segments of our communities about the COVID-19 situation. www.cdc.gov. We also have helpful info on the city's website at www.sanmarcostx.gov/covid19info and at www.HaysInformed.com.

22. Will the San Marcos Outlet Mall Close?

The San Marcos Premium Outlet and Tanger Outlet merchants determine their hours of operation. Store closures are happening daily with current closures at 40% of the 230 current retailers at the malls. As of Tuesday, March 17, the outlet malls have adjusted hours:

Tanger Outlets: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Daily with individual retailer store hours varied. Please check their website for the latest real time information at www.tangeroutlet.com/sanmarcos.

Premium Outlets: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Monday through Saturday), and 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Sunday). Please check their websites for the latest real time information at www.premiumoutlets.com/outlet/san-marcos.

23. Current resources for local businesses in San Marcos

The San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce provided a weblink to resources available to local businesses, such as resources for businesses facing possible layoffs, Small Business Loans due to the impact of COVID-19, and tax relief available through the IRS.

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/COVID-19.html?soid=1102102920409&aid=UVc7NoyhIn4>

24. Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Resources

The WSRCA team is committed to meeting the needs of job seekers and employers in our nine-county region as a result of COVID-19, and want to ensure that the health and safety of our customers and staff are taken into consideration in these difficult times. Although the career centers currently remain open, there are several options you may choose to receive services: in person at our locations, by visiting our website at www.workforcesolutionsrca.com, logging in to www.workintexas.com, or via phone at **512.244.2207**, or toll free at **1.866.518.0576**.

25. You can help San Marcos, too!

San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce is Seeking your Feedback. Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey to help us better understand how COVID-19 is impacting you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XTDRC65>

San Marcos will continue to follow the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Health Services, the Hays County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control. Current updates and helpful links may be found at www.sanmarcostx.gov/covid19info.