



TOWN OF TAOS

PRESS RELEASE

March 18, 2020, Taos, NM – This evening the Town received a copy of an amended order from the Secretary of Health, under the emergency authority of the Governor, to order the closure of most businesses that involve public assembly. Specifically, the order mandates the following:

- **Any gathering of more than 10 people is prohibited.**
- **Restaurants, bars, breweries, eateries and other food establishments must close to dine-in customers; take-out and home delivery are permitted.**
- **Indoor shopping malls must close.**
- **Recreational facilities, health clubs and resort spas must close.**
- **Theaters must close, including movie theaters.**
- **Flea markets must close.**
- **Typical business environments that are not engaged in the provision of an essential service should limit operations to the greatest extent possible and minimize employee contact.**
"Typical business environments" are defined as businesses, governmental organizations, political subdivisions and other entities engaged in commercial, industrial, charitable or professional activities.
- **Hotels, motels and other places of lodging shall not operate at more than 50 percent of maximum occupancy.**
This restriction does not apply to operations providing lodging to health care workers who are engaged in the provision of care to New Mexico residents or those businesses providing temporary housing to individuals employed and working in New Mexico.
- **HOARDING: grocery stores and other retailers are ordered to act to prevent hoarding.**
Grocery and retail stores are ordered to limit the sale of over-the-counter medications, durable medical equipment, baby formula, diapers, sanitary care products and hygiene products to three packaged items per individual.
- **ENFORCEMENT: The state will ramp up surveillance of businesses to ensure compliance.**
Violators of the public health order could lose their licenses to operate, face fines or even jail time. New Mexicans wishing to report a violation of the order may call their local non-emergency number and make a report.

- **EFFECTIVE DATE:** The order is in effect as of March 19th, 2020 until April 10, 2020, but can be extended as needed.
- **INTENT:** The new public health order is a means of temporarily limiting person-to-person contact in New Mexico.
- **ADVISORY:** New Mexico health officials strongly advise residents to stay home and to undertake only those outings that are essential to health, safety and general welfare in order to stop person-to-person contact. Additional advisories and orders will follow as conditions warrant.

The public should be advised that the Town is required to act on and enforce all orders issued by Executive Order or Health Order, Alert or Advisory by the Governor, Health Secretary or other departments and officials upon the authority of the Governor during this health emergency.

The Town fully supports the proactive measures of the Governor in attempting to keep Taos and New Mexico from the epidemic levels of illness overwhelming other areas of the country

We are a rural community, but not isolated enough to be immune from the effects of this new virus, as we recently saw with our first positive case being detected.

New Mexicans have done an outstanding job of limiting the spread of the virus and most cases are attributable to those who have travelled overseas, to the east or west coast or another infected area, or were close associates of those persons.

Both positive cases detected in Taos were not from here and are in self-isolation in their homes outside of our region.

We have an opportunity by, yes, all agreeing to sacrifice a little bit more and a little bit earlier than others, to show the rest of the nation how to handle this correctly.

The Town is working on putting a business assistance team together to help those employers hurt by the economic sacrifice that all of our stores and business owners will be making in the coming weeks. We are also actively working with our other fellow governments, utilities, non-profits, churches and community groups to develop a coordinated effort to assist those individuals and families who may be in need as a result of job or income loss. And we are working with Holy Cross and will be reaching out to area physicians and clinics by supplying generators, tents, tables, chairs and other equipment to expand capacity and provide a safer screening process for everyone needing to seek health care.

As is always the case, our community will be there for those in need. But we will need to be vigilant and need every one to pitch in and do what is needed.

The Town greatly appreciates the overwhelming response of the public and business community to comply voluntarily with all of the orders and recommendations of the Governor in attempting to be proactive in getting ahead of this unprecedented national crises.

For additional information on this press release contact Rick Bellis, Town Manager at rbellis@taosgov.com or (575) 751-2002.