

Texas State Orders – Updated August 20

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired statewide April 30 – the city of Austin will remain under a stay at home order until June 15.

**Texas encourages restaurants and bars to follow the [CDC's guidelines](#) while remaining operations.

August: 20: Fort Worth has nearly [\\$9 million to help small businesses](#) hurting because the coronavirus, which may become available to a greater number of businesses. Back in April the city set aside [\\$15 million from the federal stimulus for small business assistance grants](#). About \$6.2 million has gone out to 842 businesses. More than 90% are businesses with five or fewer employees, said Robert Sturns, the city's economic development director. The remaining \$8.8 million will be doled out in a new round of grants for small businesses with 500 or fewer employees, bars and music venues closed as of June 26 and nonprofits that have not received help through a Tarrant County program ([source](#)).

August 18 marked the first day since July 31 that Texas saw an increase in hospitalizations, according to a Houston Chronicle analysis of state data. As of Tuesday evening, there were 6,210 hospitalized COVID-19 patients across Texas. The statewide total of COVID-19 cases increased by 9,750 cases to 570,583, while the death rate climbed by 193 to 10,620 deaths statewide. The uptick in the cases may be attributed to 2,500 probable cases from Dallas County, which recently began reporting such cases, per the Houston Chronicle data team ([source](#)).

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August 18: Texas is mourning more than 10,000 known COVID-19 fatalities, 100 times more people than were [killed](#) in Hurricane Harvey, according to new figures released by state officials August 17. It's a somber mark that only three other states have passed since the pandemic hit the United States earlier this year. Meanwhile, the number of hospitalizations in the state has been trending steadily downward since a peak in July. Experts believe that a statewide mask mandate, which Gov. [Greg Abbott](#) issued in early July, has [helped slow](#) the spread of the virus. The positivity rate — a rolling average of how many coronavirus tests revealed positive cases — is still at an alarming level of 11.8%. Abbott has said any level above 10% is a ["warning flag"](#) ([source](#)).

A computer upgrade at the Texas Department of State Health Services uncovered thousands of COVID-19 cases that had previously been unreported to local counties. Some of the cases had been diagnosed as far back as March. According to DSHS, the patients had received their positive test results but the counties where those patients live had not been notified. The state notified Dallas County of a total of 5,361 cases on Sunday. The county said 4,298 of those patients tested positive in July. The rest came from March, April, May and June.

On Monday, the state notified Dallas County of 1,850 cases. Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said a "high number" of those cases had been diagnosed in June ([source](#)).

On Friday, August 14, orders in Austin and Travis County were extended until Dec. 15 as Austin's coronavirus cases plateau. In an announcement on Friday, Austin and Travis County leaders adopted revised orders to slow the spread of the virus. Mayor Steve Adler said the City extended the "Stay Home, Work Safe" order to Dec 15. The current order was set to expire on Aug. 15. Earlier on Friday, Travis

County Judge Sam Biscoe also [extended Travis County's mask mandate and disaster declaration \(source\)](#).

August 13: Effective Thursday, August 13, at 5 p.m., Williamson County Judge Bill Gravell signed an [executive order](#) permitting residents to have outdoor gatherings with more than 10 people in the unincorporated parts of the county, provided they comply with Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order [GA-28 \(source\)](#).

Texas has again set a sobering new record in the state's coronavirus crisis, reporting 324 coronavirus [deaths](#) August 12, which is the highest single-day total in any state outside the Northeast. While it's the highest death count any state has reported in months, the Texas toll is far below the highest any state has reported ([source](#)).

August 11: The number of Texans being tested for the coronavirus has fallen sharply in recent weeks, a trend that has worried public health experts as officials consider sending children back to school while thousands more Texans are infected each day. In the week ending Aug. 8, an average 36,255 coronavirus tests were administered in Texas each day — a drop of about 42% from two weeks earlier, when the average number of daily tests was 62,516. At the same time, the percentage of tests yielding positive results has climbed, up to 20% on average in the week ending Aug. 8. Two weeks earlier, the average positivity rate was around 14% ([source](#)).

With the Lone Star State recording its highest seven-day positivity rate since the pandemic began, an Austin-based doctor says hospitals are at about 80 percent capacity in the big cities as Texas surpasses 500,000 positive cases and more than 8,800 deaths, the [Houston Chronicle](#) reports ([source](#)).

In a statement Friday, Gov. [Greg Abbott](#) said local health authorities can shut down schools if there's evidence of an outbreak after students return to campus — but cannot shut them down weeks before schools open. His statement backs a legal opinion released by the Texas attorney general Tuesday ([source](#)).

August 6: Fort Worth residents will have to wear a mask to prevent the spread of coronavirus through at least the end of the month. On August 4, the City Council approved extending the local mandate through Aug. 31. The order, first passed on June 26, reinforces [Gov. Greg Abbott's July 2 statewide](#) order, which requires face masks and limits outdoor gatherings. Abbott's order did not have an end date, but [Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley last week extended the county's](#) declaration through the end of August ([source](#)).

[The Texas Department of Health and Human Services](#) reported 8,706 new COVID-19 cases and 235 newly reported deaths in the state on Wednesday, August 5. Through the first five days in August — Texas is averaging almost 7,895 new cases a day. In July, the worst month of the pandemic so far, the state averaged more than 8,100 cases per day ([source](#)).

The City of Austin will remain in Stage 4, according to Austin's Interim Health Authority Dr. Mark Escott. Escott gave a briefing to Travis County Commissioners on August 4 and said although Austin saw an aggressive decline in cases since mid-July, that has changed ([source](#)).

August 4: Residents of a second Texas border county are being ordered by local officials to stay home to stymie the spread of the coronavirus, as hospitals are being overrun by patients.

Starr County officials have little ability to enforce the order, however, as Gov. Abbott has forbidden local restrictions more stringent than his statewide mandates. The move comes as state officials report, once again, a near-record number of coronavirus-related deaths ([source](#)).

July 30: Coronavirus cases in Texas have risen to more than 418,000, putting the state at a higher case count than New York. Once the US epicenter of the pandemic, New York now ranks fourth in total case count behind California, Florida and Texas, according to data from [John Hopkins University](#). The main hotspot in the state has been the Rio Grande Valley, where hospitals began reaching capacity earlier this month ([source](#)).

California, Florida and **Texas**, the three largest U.S. states, all set one-day records for fatalities from COVID-19 on July 29, a Reuters tally showed ([source](#)).

Thanks to recently issued guidance from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC), several Texas breweries are now able to reopen their taprooms for on-site drinking. The pivot comes just several days after breweries [were initially told](#) that they weren't allowed to reopen their patios ([source](#)).

July 27: Cases in Texas have fallen almost 19% over the previous week, hitting roughly 8,404 daily new cases based on a seven-day moving average on Sunday, according to the CNBC analysis. Its peak in average daily new cases was 10,572 on July 20. Although Texas is showing signs that its number of new infections is starting to slow, it hit a record high in average hospitalizations of 10,840 Covid-19 patients on July 26. The same day, the state also broke a grim record of average daily new deaths of 152 ([source](#)).

After months of undercounting coronavirus deaths, Texas' formal [tally](#) of COVID-19 fatalities grew by more than 600 on July 27 after state health officials changed their method of reporting. The revised count indicates that more than 12% of the state's death tally was unreported by state health officials before Monday, July 27 ([source](#)).

On July 24, Starr County Judge Eloy Vera announced a Stay at home/Stay Safe Emergency Order amid a surge in cases in the Rio Grande Valley. The order went into effect early Friday morning. A Facebook post by the county said the order will remain in full force and in effect until 11:59 p.m., Aug. 10 ([source](#)).

On July 22, Texas set one-day records for increases in COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations in the state, forcing one county to store bodies in refrigerated trucks and prompting a top health official there to call for new stay-at-home orders. Texas reported 197 deaths and 10,893 hospitalizations. Hidalgo County has seen cases rise 60 percent in the last week, according to a Reuters tally, with deaths doubling to more than 360 ([source](#)).

July 19: The COVID-19 surge in rural Texas has escalated into a deepening public health crisis for Hidalgo County, where officials issued an order July 19 requiring those who test positive for the virus to not leave home for 14 days under threat of criminal prosecution ([source](#)).

As the Rio Grande Valley grapples with an onslaught of coronavirus [infections](#) and [hospitalizations](#), Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez is pushing hard for residents to stay at home. But the emergency order he issued July 20 mandating that people shelter in their residences, restricting travel and limiting gatherings remains an unenforceable recommendation, according to Gov. [Greg Abbott](#)'s office ([source](#)).

More than 332,400 cases have been reported in the state, and more than 4,000 people in Texas have died, [according to the Texas Department of State Health Services](#). More than 177,800 people have recovered ([source](#)).

JULY 15: Local public health officials will be able to keep Texas schools closed for in-person instruction this fall without risking state education funding, a Texas Education Agency spokesperson confirmed to The Texas Tribune July 15 ([source](#)).

July 14 marked the single-highest day for new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Texas and the third-highest day for new deaths since the pandemic began, according to a Houston Chronicle analysis. From Monday to Tuesday, Texas cases increased by 4.02 percent, or 10,859 cases, to 281,085 cases total. The state reported 104 new deaths; the death count is now at 3,378 ([source](#)).

July 14: As the tally of coronavirus infections climbs higher each day, Texas hospitals are taking extraordinary steps to make space for a surge of patients. Some facilities in South Texas say they are dangerously close to filling up, while hospitals elsewhere are taking precautionary measures to keep their numbers manageable ([source](#)).

Gov. Greg Abbott said Texans “would not comply” if he issued a statewide shutdown, instead asking local authorities to enforce a mask mandate and limits on social gatherings enacted in early July ([source](#)).

July 9: Two key metrics Gov. Abbott has used to judge the coronavirus epidemic in Texas hit record highs July 8. More than 9,600 people are in the hospital. And over the past week, 15% of reported coronavirus tests have come back positive -- the highest rate since the epidemic began. Texas also hit another grim record Wednesday: 98 people died of COVID-19 ([source](#)).

Masks for students and teachers will be mandatory in counties with more than 20 reported COVID-19 cases when public schools resume in-person classes this fall, under new [public health guidelines](#) released by Texas state education officials July 7 ([source](#)).

The City of Austin added two new grants to help fund restaurants, small businesses and nonprofit organizations impacted by the novel coronavirus pandemic. First, the [Austin Small Business Relief Grant](#) will give out up to \$40,000 to individual businesses to be used for towards rent, payroll and other bills and expenses. The second grant is dedicated to [nonprofits](#) ([source](#)).

July 7: [Texas reached 200,000 total COVID-19 cases July 6](#), just 17 days after crossing the 100,000 threshold, a figure that took the state nearly four months to hit ([source](#)).

Hospitals in at least two Texas counties, Starr and Hidalgo, are at full capacity and local officials are urging residents there to shelter in place and avoid gatherings, according to local officials. [Houston's hospitals are on track to be overwhelmed in approximately two weeks](#) as cases mount, Mayor Sylvester Turner said on CBS' "Face The Nation" on July 5 ([source](#)).

After facing growing calls to mandate face masks statewide, Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order July 2 [requiring most Texans wear face coverings in public spaces](#) to help limit the spread of novel coronavirus. The order took effect [at 12:01 p.m. July 3](#). Also starting Friday afternoon, [Abbott banned most outdoor gatherings of more than 10 people](#), unless approved by local officials. Abbott had [previously limited outdoor gatherings to 100 people](#) ([source](#)).

July 1: [In the White House Coronavirus Task Force meeting on June 26](#), Dr. Deborah Birx showed a graphic with a harrowing statistic for North Texas: the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area had one of the highest positivity rates in the nation over the previous seven days. Texas had four of the top five positivity rates in America over the seven days preceding that news conference. Austin ranked highest in the nation, Houston ranked third, Dallas-Fort Worth was fourth and San Antonio was fifth ([source](#)).

On June 30, Gov. Abbott said that he is putting a stop to elective surgeries and other procedures in four South Texas counties that are seeing a rapid surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. The latest ban on elective procedures applies to Cameron, Hidalgo, Nueces and Webb counties. Last week, Abbott banned those procedures in Bexar, Dallas, Harris and Travis counties ([source](#)).

At an [Austin City Council](#) meeting, Austin's top health authority said, "right now is the time to act," and that if [Austin](#) and [Travis County](#) don't slow the spread of coronavirus, he may need to recommend new "stay home" orders ([source](#)).

On Friday, June 26, Abbott took some of his most significant actions yet to curb the recent rise in COVID-19 cases, and [ordered bars to close](#) — although they could remain open for to-go and delivery. Bars were previously permitted to operate at 50% capacity. Restaurants were also required to reduce their capacity from 75% to 50%, and most outdoor gatherings of more than 100 people were banned unless approved by local officials ([source](#)).

Hospitalizations of patients with the novel coronavirus in Texas [reached an all-time high Monday](#) (June 29) after breaking records for nearly every day the previous two weeks. The [Texas Department of State Health Services reported](#) 5,913 COVID-19 patients hospitalized Monday — a jump of 416 patients from the 5,497 hospitalized Sunday, June 28 ([source](#)).

On June 29, seven Central Texas cities began the process for enacting a mask ordinance, including Round Rock, Georgetown, Cedar Park, Hutto, Taylor, Leander and Marble Falls. The mayors in the cities of

Taylor, Hutto, Round Rock, Georgetown, Leander and Cedar Park have worked together to create the face covering requirements ([source](#)).

On June 29, the mayor of Cedar Park said he is poised to make the wearing of facial coverings mandatory amid rising rates of the coronavirus ([source](#)).

June 25: Texas now has almost twice as many people hospitalized with COVID-19 as it did on June 14, when the number was at 2,287. This spike occurred after restaurants were allowed to increase capacity to 75% and almost all businesses allowed to operate with some safety measures in place ([source](#)).

June 24 marked the single highest single-day increase for new cases statewide, according to the Houston Chronicle's data team. During the one-day period from Tuesday to Wednesday, the statewide total had risen by 4.85 percent, or 5,998 cases, and is now at 129,654 cases ([source](#)).

On June 23, Abbott allowed local officials to tighten restrictions on outdoor gatherings — limiting them to 100 people, a threshold he originally set at 500 people. He also said the state would impose new safety rules for child care centers, after making prior rules optional earlier this month ([source](#)).

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has ordered all licensed hospitals in counties that include major cities such as San Antonio, Dallas, Houston and Austin to postpone elective procedures in order to protect hospital capacity for Covid-19 patients ([source](#)).

On June 22, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said that “additional measures are going to be necessary” and the state will have to take “tougher actions” if daily coronavirus cases and hospitalizations continue to climb at current rates ([source](#)).

During its Board of Trustees meeting, Austin ISD said the maximum capacity on each general education bus this coming semester will be 12 to 14 students. Special education buses can hold four to 10 students depending on the number of students in wheelchairs. All buses will be cleaned after each trip and at the end of the day ([source](#)).

On June 18, Gov. Abbott said Texas students will be returning to public schools in person this fall ([source](#)).

June 18: The number of people sickened with [Covid-19](#) across [Texas](#)' hospitals hit a new high June 17, surging about 11% in a single day. There are 2,793 patients hospitalized with a coronavirus infection in the state, [up from 2,518 patients reported June 16](#), according to updated data from the Texas Department of State Health Services ([source](#)).

With Gov. [Greg Abbott](#)'s apparent blessing, Bexar and Hidalgo counties have imposed a new mask rule for local businesses, saying they must require employees and customers to wear masks when social distancing isn't possible ([source](#)).

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams and Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley [don't plan to require businesses mandate face masks](#) to limit the spread of the novel

coronavirus, even after Gov. Greg Abbott gave his approval of Bexar County's plan to do so and other local officials said they would consider similar orders ([source](#)).

June 15: Texas health authorities said there were 2,287 patients sickened with Covid-19 across its hospitals on Sunday, the sixth new high for coronavirus hospitalizations in the state in less than a week ([source](#)).

Orders in [Austin](#) and [Travis County](#) were revised June 15 as Austin's [coronavirus hospitalization average rises](#). Mayor Adler tweeted that the City extended the "Stay Home, Work Safe" order to Aug. 15. The current order was set to expire on June 15. The order extension continues the provisions from the previous order, which include wearing fabric face coverings when in public, socially-distancing six feet away from others and practicing excellent hygiene by "washing your hands with soap for 20 seconds, cleaning high touch surfaces, covering sneezes, etc. ([source](#)).

[Houston](#) is considering a new stay-at-home order as cases of [coronavirus](#) begin to rise again in [Texas](#) as well as other parts of the country, according to reports ([source](#)).

June 11: [For three consecutive days this week the state has set new records for COVID-19 hospitalizations](#). According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, there are some 2,153 patients being treated for the coronavirus. That number is up from 2,056 patients on Tuesday (June 9) and 1,935 patients Monday (June 8). The number of hospitalizations in Texas has jumped 42% since Memorial Day. Texas' percentage of tests coming back positive has also jumped to levels that are among the nation's highest ([source](#)).

Harris County and Houston's "stay home" order officially expired at midnight on Wednesday, June 10. Judge Hidalgo has not yet said if a new or similar order would replace it ([source](#)).

Effective June 12, restaurants may expand their occupancy levels to 75%. Counties with 10 or less active COVID-19 cases may expand their occupancy limits to 75%. Counties that fit this category but have not previously filed an attestation with DSHS will need to do so ([source](#)).

Texas reported a record-breaking number of COVID-19 hospitalizations June 8 as the governor plans to [reopen more businesses and double capacity](#) ([source](#)).

On June 3, Gov. Greg Abbott announced the third phase of reopening Texas' economy while containing the spread of [COVID-19](#). Under Phase III, effective immediately, all businesses in Texas will be able to operate at up to 50% capacity, with very limited exceptions ([source](#)).

Residents of San Antonio and Bexar County no longer have to stay home because of the novel coronavirus. City and county stay-home orders, first imposed on March 23 and extended repeatedly since then, expire June 4. Mayor Ron Nirenberg and Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff have no immediate plans to reimpose the restrictions ([source](#)).

Food Service: Restaurants were permitted to expand to 50% capacity on May 22 if they followed these [guidelines](#). Bars were able to reopen in most of the state at 25% capacity May 22.

May 26: Gov. Greg Abbott expanded upon the list of businesses allowed to reopen amid the novel coronavirus outbreak Tuesday, allowing water parks, recreational sports, driver education programs and food courts to soon resume ([source](#)).

**Texas encourages restaurants and bars to follow the [CDC's guidelines](#) for planning for Coronavirus and implementing certain cleaning and employee procedures.

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