



DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the City of Laredo (“City”) is a Home Rule City, acting under its Charter adopted by the electorate pursuant to Article XI Section 5 of the Texas Constitution and Chapter 9 of the Texas Local Government Code; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Laredo City Council have been duly elected and qualified and vested with the authority through its police powers to pass and enforce any law that is reasonably necessary to protect the public health; and

WHEREAS, in December 2019 a novel coronavirus, now designated COVID-19, was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness, and in some cases death; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), advising countries to prepare for the containment, detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of the disease; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the COVID-19 outbreak should be characterized as pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, pursuant to Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code, Mayor Pete Saenz issued the City’s first Declaration of Public Health Emergency for COVID-19, which has since been amended by the Laredo City Council through the adoption of multiple Emergency Ordinances to conform with changing recommendations by the Local Health Authority, the needs of our particular community, and state law; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2021, a designated new variant of concern by the World Health Organization (WHO), B.1.1.529 Omicron was first identified in the United States which is now known to be more transmissible than delta and the original virus strain, leading to a surge in positive cases across Texas, with more than 1 in 5 COVID-19 tests reading positive; and

WHEREAS, although these high positivity rates haven’t yet translated into significant numbers of hospitalizations, because the variant is so infectious, mitigation is needed to address the growing number of city and health care workers contracting the variant and requiring isolation, in order to continue to provide the community with basic municipal services, and deter shortage of hospital personnel to care for patients in what is already designated a medically underserved area of the state; and

WHEREAS, the Local Health Authority has identified the level of community transmission as substantial enough so that a proactive approach is needed to mitigate the local spread of this infectious disease; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the mayor is designated as the emergency management director of the City of Laredo, and may exercise the powers granted to the governor on an appropriate local scale; and

WHEREAS, a declaration of local disaster and public health emergency includes the ability to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, promote health, compel persons to undergo additional health measures that prevent or control the spread of disease, including isolation, surveillance, quarantine, or placement of persons under public health observation, including the request for assistance from the governor of the state resources, and access funds available for disaster relief and reimbursement at the state and federal level; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority granted to the Mayor under the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, I hereby authorize the use of all available resources of state government and political subdivisions to assist in the City's response to the situation; and

WHEREAS, I Pete Saenz, Mayor for the City of Laredo, together with the Local Health Authority have determined that extraordinary and immediate measures must be taken to respond quickly to reduce the number of people exposed and infected with the virus, as well as those that could potentially be impacted by lack of hospital personnel; and

WHEREAS, the City of Laredo will continue to work collaboratively with the Local Health Authority to ensure that all appropriate measures are undertaken to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the City of Laredo.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCALIMED BY THE CITY OF LAREDO THAT:

- (1) A local state of disaster and public health emergency is hereby declared for the City of Laredo pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
- (2) Pursuant to §418.108(b) of the Government Code, the state of disaster and public health emergency shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the City Council.
- (3) Pursuant to §418.108(c) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster and public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly by the City Clerk.
- (4) Pursuant to §418.108(d) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster and public health emergency activates the City of Laredo's emergency management plan.

- (5) Pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the Mayor for the City of Laredo, in coordination and consultation with the Local Health Authority and Director of Health issue this Emergency COVID-19 Mitigation Order "Order" attached hereto as {Exhibit A}. Failure to comply with this Order may subject the employee to progressive discipline for each violation up to and including termination.
- (6) As Mayor, I further reserve all other authority and powers conferred by state law to respond as necessary to the situation which is the subject of this Decoration.

This Proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

SIGNED THIS 4th DAY OF JANUARY, 2022.



PETE SAENZ,
MAYOR

ATTEST:



JOSE A. VALDEZ, JR.,
CITY SECRETARY



{EXHIBIT A}

EMERGENCY COVID-19 MITIGATION ORDER

*Effective January 5, 2022, and until Further Notice, all city employees are required to comply with the following COVID-19 mitigation requirements. **Failure to comply with this Order may subject the employee to progressive discipline for each violation up to and including termination.***

I. City Employee Requirements Following Exposure

A. Reporting. Any city employee who tests positive or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or whose household family member tests positive for COVID-19, **is required** to promptly notify both Employee Health & Wellness *and* their Department Director or immediate supervisor.

B. Employee Who Tests Positive. Any city employee who tests positive for Covid-19 is required to stay home for a minimum of (10) ten days. The earliest an employee may return to work is on the 11th day after testing positive provided all symptoms have been resolved.*

***Personal leave accruals will be utilized for all employees not subject to a Collective Bargaining Agreement.**

C. Household Family Member with Positive Test Result. Any City employee not experiencing any know symptoms of COVID-19 who has a household member that tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work **only under the following conditions:**

(1) Proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken by the within (24) twenty-four prior; *and*

(2) Proof that the exposed City employee has completed one of the following:

Their booster vaccine; *and*

- Their primary series of Pfizer/Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months; *or*
- Their primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months; *and*

(3) A K95 or N95 mask is worn by the exposed City employee at all times when working around other employees or interacting with the public; *and*

(4) Proof of an additional negative COVID-19 test taken within (24) twenty-four hours of day 3 and day 5.

Note: If at any time an exposed City employee develops any COVID-19 symptoms, they should immediately seek a test and stay home until further notice.

If an employee exposed to a positive household family member is unable to comply with each of the four (4) conditions above, he or she is required to stay home for ten-days. The

earliest an employee may return to work is on the 11th day after testing positive provided all symptoms have been resolved.*

***Personal leave accruals must be utilized for all employees not subject to a Collective Bargaining Agreement.**

II. City Related Travel

All city related travel and trainings shall be postponed /rescheduled until further notice.

III. City Business

All boards, commissions, and committee meetings shall be either be rescheduled or, whenever possible, conducted by video conference call in strict accordance with Section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code. Whenever possible, all other City meetings should be conducted through telephone or video conference.

IV. City Owned Facilities

The capacity for City of Laredo libraries, recreation centers, and administrative buildings open to the public shall operate at 50% for visitors, or otherwise adjusted, in an effort to minimize exposure and spread of COVID-19 through the proper enforcement of social distancing measures.