

City of Alpine COVID-19 Response Strategy

Overview and Intent

The City of Alpine took action on March 20, 2020 to adopt an Emergency Ordinance that provided direction and actions aimed at minimizing the health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the residents of Alpine. Those actions were necessary to ensure that should there be cases in Alpine, the medical support and healthcare infrastructure would not be overwhelmed. Thus far, the actions taken, including minimizing the opportunities from someone to bring COVID-19 from the outside and social distancing have worked. The downside of those actions, however, has been a huge negative impact to hotels, restaurants and retail businesses. There is much that is not known about the impact of individuals who are carriers of COVID-19 but are asymptomatic. Further, there is new evidence that those who have been symptomatic of COVID-19 are not necessarily immune to have a relapse.

We have received questions community-wide about the rationale on restrictions when Alpine has not experienced a case of COVID-19. The goal since the original Order was put in place on March 20, 2020 was to eliminate or severely reduce our cases of COVID-19 in Alpine. We knew our healthcare services were limited and we lived in a remote environment. The restrictions along with heightened awareness of health and sanitary practices gave us the highest probability of achieving the goal.

Moving forward, it is the intent of the City of Alpine to maintain a healthy environment for residents, while at the same time reducing restrictions on businesses as quickly as possible so that they can return to normal business operations. Further, it is the intent of the City to encourage tourists to return to Alpine. The opportunity and challenge it to ensure all three intents are balanced. To that end, the City of Alpine is adopting a six-level plan for hotels/short term rentals, restaurants, retail businesses and travelers to/from Alpine. This approach is integrated with the healthcare and medical community. This plan also takes into consideration the President's Phased plan and works in alignment with Governor Abbott's plan for Texas. Further, the City is adopting a set of requirements for how individuals should interact with each other in Alpine, until such time as COVID-19 is no longer an issue.

Basic Ground Rules

Brewster County is one of 57 counties (there are 254 counties) in Texas with no COVID-19 cases.

Unfortunately, the number of counties without COVID is decreasing about 1 per day. As such, it is only a matter of time before COVID-19 arrives and it will be brought by a visitor to Alpine or by someone who went to another location in the state and then returned to Alpine. Following the guidelines of the State

of Texas, social distancing and frequent hand washing remain the operative actions that everyone in Alpine need follow. Anyone who enters a retail, hotel/motel/STR lobby, or restaurant is required to wear a face mask. The type of mask is left to the individual, but must cover the mouth and nose. Further, it is expected that those who depart Alpine to visit a known city location of COVID should self-isolate for 14 days on return to Alpine.

Tiered Response Level

The attached matrix defines actions to be taken depending on the tiered response level which will be defined through action by the City Council. The primary determinant of the risk assessment is defined in the top line of the matrix. Every effort will be made to ensure there is alignment with the State of Texas, Brewster County, the Big Bend Regional Medical Center and Hospital District, the Alpine ISD and SRSU. However, there may be differences from time to time that City Council will need to address. The City of Alpine will be at response Level 3 effective April 24, 2020. The City Council will reconvene at a Special Meeting on Wednesday April 29, 2020 at 5:30pm to review the upcoming Governor's Executive Order planned for Monday April 27, 2020 and adjust our Emergency Ordinance as appropriate.