



MAYOR
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CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

CITY COUNCIL

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**NEWS
RELEASE**

05 / 18 / 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

City Reports Additional Cases, Open Texas Efforts Delayed One Week

EL PASO, Texas — The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is reporting **28** new COVID-19 cases bringing the county’s total number to **1,800**, the number of deaths remains at 47.

To-date 921 people have recovered from COVID-19; meaning there are 832 active cases within the county. See accompanying graphics and map for additional data points.

It is estimated that as of today more than 20,200 tests have been performed, this is a 98 percent increase from May 5, at which time approximately 10,200 tests had been performed.

Today, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott announced his plans to enter phase two to Open Texas. At the request of El Paso Mayor Dee Margo, County Judge Ricardo Samaniego, and Texas Reps. Joe Moody and César Blanco, El Paso and four other Texas counties will be able to delay openings by one week for some businesses that re-opened throughout Texas today and those businesses scheduled to open this Friday, May 22.

“Gov. Abbott has always had great affection for El Paso and especially after the August 3 tragedy,” Margo said. “We are pleased he agreed with us for a delay of one week and we appreciate his leadership.”

Gyms, some manufacturers, and office-based employers may proceed to open today pursuant to the Governor’s Minimum Standard Health Protocols. Additional businesses which include childcare facilities, personal care services that had not previously re-opened, opening restaurants at 50 percent, and various other services at 25 percent of total listed capacity, such as bars, bowling alleys, bingo halls, skating rinks, rodeos, and amateur sporting events without spectators are anticipated to re-open locally, beginning on Friday, May 29. Additional services are set to reopen on Sunday, May 31, per Gov. Abbott’s orders.

City officials will evaluate Gov. Abbott’s latest orders and will issue a more detailed directive for El Paso later this week with an emphasis on the health and wellness of our community.

“It is critically important that we all do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Governor has begun the reopening of Texas, and we must be thoughtful in our approach as to how we reopen our community per the State’s orders while still taking into account our community’s health,” said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, City/County Health Authority.

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“While we understand the desire to return back to normal, we must acknowledge that there is a new normal and we must be cautious of our most vulnerable populations,” Ocaranza continued. “We must continue to practice social distancing, we urge people to wear face coverings, and wash your hands with soap and water. The public must remember that there is no vaccine for this disease; which is why we continue to stress that each person must take responsibility and care for each other.”

Last week Gov. Abbott ordered local communities to tests all licensed nursing home residents and staff, with the support from local fire departments. Prior to the state’s orders, testing of nursing homes had already begun by DPH and the Border Regional Advisory Council (BorderRAC).

The DPH and BorderRAC in collaboration with the El Paso Fire Department is administering tests to more than 20 licensed nursing facilities within El Paso.

Members of the community who are interested in getting tested are able to learn more about the available testing throughout the county by [clicking here](#).

Health questions about COVID-19 can be made by calling the 21-COVID hotline, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For referrals to services, contact 2-1-1 and select option six (6). For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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Media Contact: Soraya Ayub Palacios
Communications and Public Affairs
915.212.1040