



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Richard F. Cortez
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ellie Torres
Commissioner, Precinct 4

**OFFICE OF
COUNTY JUDGE
RICHARD F. CORTEZ**

Public Affairs Division

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 23, 2020

Hidalgo County Judge extends emergency safety orders, stipulates that bars shall remain closed, schools to follow state guidelines

EDINBURG – Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez on Friday signed new orders that extend existing safety measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and officially declared that bars shall remain closed for patronage within its doors.

The order will go into effect at one minute after midnight on Monday, October 26, and shall remain in effect until the Judge modifies or rescinds it with new orders. His previous safety orders, signed last month, were set to expire at one minute before midnight on Sunday, October 25.

The new orders also stipulate that, "Public schools may operate as provided by, and under the minimum standard health protocols found in guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Private schools and institutions of higher education are encouraged to establish similar standards."

"I recognize the desire by some to allow bars to open for on premise consumption, but I am not prepared to take that step quite yet because bars are considered to be high risk for infection," Judge Cortez said. The day before Governor Greg Abbott announced that bars in Texas could reopen with the permission of county judges, Hidalgo County was removed from a list of areas with high hospitalization rates.

"We are working with bar owners to try and find safe ways to open by following certain protocols," Judge Cortez said. He noted that his new orders still allow bars to sell alcohol on a delivery or takeout basis. "In addition, the Commissioners Court has already approved awarding financial support for those businesses that have been closed three or more months because of our orders."

Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus



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The remainder of the nine-page document leaves existing safety measures in place. This includes:

- Allowing commercial businesses to operate at 75 percent of current capacity provided facial coverings are worn when it is impossible to maintain six feet of physical distance.
- Event organizers, except for churches, must limit operations at 50 percent of its current capacity for all indoor events.
- Facial coverings will be required, except for those people under ten years of age, those who are exercising outdoors and those with medical conditions.

Please see [extended emergency safety order](#).

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