

# *Montague County*

## *Commissioners*

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### **MONTAGUE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER**

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**SUBJECT: Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19)**

**DATE: March 17, 2020**

BY MOTION MADE AND SECONDED IN AN OPEN MEETING OF THE MONTAGUE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MARCH 2020, THE MEMBERS OF THE COURT DO HEREBY APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RULES AND GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK.

In light of the ongoing global coronavirus, now known more specifically as COVID-19, outbreak, the Montague County Commissioners Court promotes the safety and wellbeing of our employees and their families.

The health and safety of our employees, their families and our citizens is our number one goal during this outbreak. COVID-19 is a respiratory virus with symptoms that are similar to influenza or 'the flu.'

**1. Employee Personal Travel to Areas with Confirmed COVID-19 Cases**

Employees engaging in personal travel should carefully consider their plans and monitor the evolving health situations prior to travelling. While we recognize that personal travel decisions are your choice, we urge you to carefully consider those decisions to avoid personal risk to you or your families. In particular, be aware of possible travel and screening restrictions and that possible incidences of exposure in restricted or high-risk areas may result in quarantine procedures in those countries. Further, we ask that supervisors refer employees to Human Resources who are returning from travel outside of the United States so we can ensure proper return to work procedures are followed.

**2. Tips to Minimize Business Disruptions**

- a) Ensure employee contact information is up to date.
- b) Have backup plan for staffing if employee (or employees) fall ill.
- c) Maintain a list of essential personnel and ensure that the Montague County Emergency Management department and Human Resources has a copy.
- d) Have plenty of disinfecting wipes/spray, tissues & hand sanitizer for employee and public use.
- e) Confirm to your staff that safety/health is our primary concern.
- f) Reinforce hand washing & housekeeping with all staff members.

- g) Elected Officials/Department Heads have permission to send sick employees home; short-term inconvenience is better than widespread illness.

### **3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

- a) The ADA gives an employee the right to privacy in his/her medical condition.
- b) If the employee informs the supervisor that he or she has a communicable disease that will affect his or her performance on the job, Human Resources can require a medical exam or health certification to confirm the illness, just as it can with any other ADA disability, and the employee will be responsible for making the appointment with their physician, the claim would be filed on the employee's insurance and any expense would be paid by the employee.
- c) If an employee is exposed to someone who is a 'presumptive positive' or tests positive for COVID-19, the employee should be sent home until the other person's test results are returned as negative or until their quarantine expires, whichever is first. Contact HR for specific instruction.
- d) If an employee does not tell his or her supervisor that he or she has a communicable disease, the employer's options are much more limited. Suspicion of a communicable disease is not enough to justify inquiry or a medical exam.
- e) However, if the employee reports to work with a wheezing cough, complains of chills and aches and the employee has recently traveled to Europe, the Middle East or Asia, the supervisor shall direct the employee to go to his/her doctor and/or local health department. Then contact Human Resources. Again, the employee will be responsible for making the appointment with their physician, the claim would be filed on the employee's insurance and any expense would be paid by the employee.
- f) Decline to give specifics about employee's medical condition to other employees.
- g) Montague County is permitted to disclose needed protected health information to a public health authority, such as the CDC or a state or local health department, that is authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (Source: Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 2020)

### **4. Paid Leave of Absence**

- a) If an employee is placed on a 14-day quarantine due to a 'presumptive positive' or positive COVID-19 test result of their own or due to someone to which the employee was exposed, and they are not able to work from home, the employee shall be paid Administrative Leave hours. (Medical certification is required by HR.)
- b) However, if an employee only displays signs of illness such as common cold or influenza but is not suspected to have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus or tests negative for COVID-19, the employee shall use their accrued time and may return to work after 24 hours of being symptom-free. Return to duty will require doctors clearance on any absence.
- c) In the event the County Judge activates a Montague County Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), employees who are not able to work from home, will be paid Administrative Leave hours throughout the extent of the COOP.

### **5. Closing of Offices**

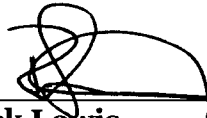
- a) In the event that a department or office is closed because of either direct impact or as a precautionary measure, the employees will be reassigned, or if cannot be reassigned then paid as Administrative Leave as if it is time worked.
- b) The determination on closing a department or office will be made by the department head/elected official and the Commissioners Court.

## 6. Employee Paycheck

Montague County intends to require employees have their paychecks direct deposited. In the event that the employee does not have direct deposit, logistical issues could subject that employee to delays in payment.

Montague County has a strong commitment to safety and the overall health and well-being of all employees and their families. We will continue to evolve our policies as this outbreak develops.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we work together as a team through this situation.



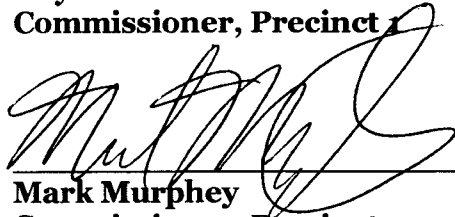
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**Rick Lewis**  
**County Judge**



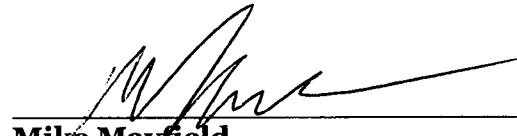
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**Roy Darden**  
**Commissioner, Precinct 1**



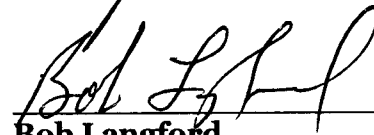
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**Mark Murphey**  
**Commissioner, Precinct 3**



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**Mike Mayfield**  
**Commissioner, Precinct 2**



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**Bob Langford**  
**Commissioner, Precinct 4**