



701 N. Tool Dr.  
Tool, TX 75143

Office: 903.432.3522  
Fax: 903.432.3867

[www.tooltexas.org](http://www.tooltexas.org)  
[taustin@tooltexas.org](mailto:taustin@tooltexas.org)

## STATEMENT FROM TAWNYA AUSTIN, MAYOR CITY OF TOOL

March 19, 2020

Good afternoon.

I'm Tawnya Austin, Mayor for the City of Tool. Thank you for attending this briefing for a local update on the COVID-19 virus.

I have spent hours this week on calls and in video meetings with our Henderson County officials, the Governor for the State of Texas, and the Vice President of the United States. The fact that these officials have been having these calls with your local officials details the magnitude of the situation. In fact, as we prepared for this emergency meeting, the Governor held a press conference putting into effect the measures we were already preparing to implement.

The measures we are invoking as a city are not meant to make you fearful, but instead are intended to reduce the spread of this deadly pandemic.

To our knowledge, there has not been a confirmed case of the virus in Henderson County. That sounds great, but the fact is, that statement only means no one has tested positive. This virus can be very mild on some people, meaning the symptoms will be unnoticeable, while others will experience a much different illness, so not everyone is getting tested, nor are test kits available to do so. Our lake area is also being infiltrated by people coming in from surrounding cities that could as much as double the exposure for us.

The President of the United States, his staff, the Governor of the State of Texas and the County Judge have all made their recommendations. For that reason, I am issuing a Mayoral Declaration of Local State of Disaster Due to Public Health Emergency to be effective at midnight on March 20, 2020. This declaration authorizes the City to take any actions necessary to promote health and suppress the virus, including the closure of any and all entertainment facilities or areas within a facility, churches, private clubs / bars, and other nonessential businesses, regulating restaurants to curbside pickup and drive thru only, and insuring compliance for those who do not comply with the City's rules, pursuant to Section 122.006 of the Health and Safety Code until midnight on April 3, 2020. This declaration limits the size of gatherings to not more than 10 people and mandates the cancellation of all such gatherings until further notice.

All restaurants are encouraged to provide curbside or delivery service. Gas stations are asked to not allow inside eating but offer takeout only. In addition, it is requested gas stations take additional precautions in asking people not to gather and to use hand sanitizer.

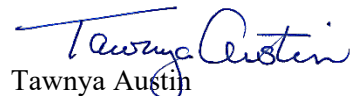
Other nonessential businesses include but are not limited to an auction business, estate sale, or other business which is nonessential to the everyday business of our city and which gathers crowds of over 10 people.

Grocery stores, convenience stores and restaurants providing curb service or delivery shall remain open in order to feed our citizens.

A person who knowingly or intentionally violates this declaration commits an offense, punishable by a fine of \$1000 or confinement in jail for a term that does not exceed 180 days.

Municipal buildings and properties shall remain closed to the public until further notice.

I fully realize the impact this has on our area businesses and our citizens. I do not take these actions lightly, however, after being on countless conference calls with state and local authorities, we must act now. The health of our citizens requires your cooperation of this action and of the actions by the State of Texas and the Federal Government. Thank you for your cooperation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tawnya Austin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tawnya Austin  
Mayor, City of Tool