



## 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**

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

### **Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez orders county businesses to require masks**

**EDINBURG** – In his capacity as the county’s emergency management director, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez signed an order Wednesday requiring all Hidalgo County businesses to mandate the use of facial coverings by all employees and customers to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The order goes into effect at midnight Wednesday, but businesses will not have to comply with the order until midnight Friday. The order remains in effect until it is modified.

“I am growing more concerned as the number of infections in Hidalgo County continue to rise,” Judge Cortez said. “Despite abundant publicity that the rate of infection is increasing locally, too many residents appear to be ignoring commonsense preventive measures.”

While Governor Greg Abbott has restricted local mandates of any type of facial covering on residents of Texas, he said this does not apply to businesses. Therefore, Judge Cortez – upon the advice of his county health authority and health and human services director – has directed all businesses in Hidalgo County to develop a “Health and Safety Practices” plan that includes the directive for all people to wear facial coverings while inside covered businesses. Failure to abide by this rule could result in a fine of up to \$1,000 for the business.

The four-page order was signed by Judge Cortez late Wednesday, one day after Hidalgo County saw its largest single day increase in new positive cases. With 143 new positive cases on Tuesday, the known number of positive cases in the county now totals 1,255 people. Seventeen of those have now died from complications related to COVID-19.

**-MORE-**

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*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](http://www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus)*



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The order continues to strongly recommend that any person over the age of 3 in Hidalgo County wear a facial covering of their mouth and nose. Residents are also strongly encouraged to continue staying at home unless engaged in essential services and employ physical distancing of six feet or more when out in the public.

“Getting beyond this deadly virus will take a collective effort of everyone in Hidalgo County,” Judge Cortez said. “The single biggest complaint I am hearing these days is that too many people refuse to wear facial coverings. I hope this encourages people to do what we know will work to slow the spread of this disease.”

To view the Order [click here](#).

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