
LIBERTY COUNTY, TEXAS NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE

LIBERTY COUNTY, TEXAS – DECEMBER 22, 2020

GENERAL QUESTIONS: 936.336.4665 / 936.336.4667 / 936.334.3219

Yesterday, we received the a letter from Dr. John Hellerstedt, Commissioner, Department of State Health Services, informing us that the Trauma Service Area our county belongs to has exceeded an important threshold for COVID hospitalizations set by Governor Abbott's order GA-32.

That order states:

"In areas with high hospitalizations as defined below, any business establishment that otherwise would have a 75 percent occupancy or operating limit may operate at up to only 50 percent. . 4.3219 'Areas with high hospitalizations' means any Trauma Service Area that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID- 19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent, until such time as the Trauma Service Area has seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID- 19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is 15 percent or less."

Because the Trauma Service Area in which Liberty County is located (TSA R) has had sustained high hospitalization rates, all businesses currently operating at a 75 percent occupancy rate in Liberty County **must reduce their occupancy to 50 percent, effective Wednesday, December 23, 2020**. Exceptions to this rule may be found on the Governor's website: gov.texas.gov. **Additionally — and due to this hospitalization rate — TABC has mandated that all bars and similar establishments in Liberty County close.**

Further, all elective surgeries are prohibited in Liberty County and all other counties which form TSA R until further notice.

While the Governor and TABC both offer an appeal process for this reduction of capacity, Liberty County does not qualify. Per the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), a county must have fewer than 30 total cases of COVID-19 over the last 14 days. Liberty County has averaged approximately 21 cases *per day* for the past 14 days, thus far surpassing the minimum allowed.

With increasing case numbers and high regional hospitalization rates, Liberty County residents are encouraged to be mindful when making decisions regarding their own health and safety.