

**POLK COUNTY, TEXAS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: January 5, 2020

Time: 4:45 p.m.

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**Polk County Forced to Reduce Business Capacity
Due to TSA Hospitalization Rate**

POLK COUNTY, TEXAS – The hospitalization rate in Trauma Service Area H (of which Polk County is a member) has surpassed the limit set forth by Texas Governor Greg Abbott in Executive Order GA-32.

Per GA-32, areas with high hospitalizations are defined as those who have had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent.

Because TSA H has had sustained high hospitalization rates, all businesses currently operating at a 75 percent occupancy rate in Polk County **must reduce their occupancy to 50 percent, effective Friday, January 8, 2021.** Exceptions to this rule may be found on the Governor’s Website: gov.texas.gov. Additionally, due to this hospitalization rate, TABC has mandated that all bars and similar establishments in Polk County must close.

Further, all elective surgeries are prohibited in Polk County (and all other counties which are part of TSA H) until further notice.

While the Governor and TABC both offer an appeal process for this reduction of capacity, Polk 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 reported over the last 14 days. Polk County has averaged 14 cases per day for the past 14 days, thus far surpassing the minimum allowed.

With increasing case numbers and high regional hospitalization rates, Polk County residents are encouraged to be mindful when making decisions regarding their own health and safety. Social Distance, wear face coverings, and wash your hands regularly. Slowing the spread of COVID-19 is the best way to get these businesses reopened to maximum capacity.

Per GA-32, this rollback in occupancy can be reversed once hospitalization rates in TSA H have been 15 percent or less for at least seven consecutive days.

Angelina County & Cities Health District and Polk County will continue to monitor COVID-19 data and will update residents as more information becomes available from DSHS and the Governor’s Office.

For more information regarding this update, please visit the following websites:

- Texas Governor Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov
- Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/>
- TABC: <https://www.tabc.texas.gov/coronavirus/ga-32/>