



Taos County  
COVID-19 Press Release  
March, 18<sup>th</sup> 2020

UPDATE ON COVID-19 WITHIN TAOS COUNTY

**Update:**

Two individuals have been tested positive for the COVID-19 Virus in connection with Taos County. Both individuals have since left the County to self-quarantine at their homes. Both individuals reside outside of Taos County.

One of the individuals, was from Albuquerque and was working at a local bank to help cover staffing for 2 days. That individual has since returned to her home and has gone into self-quarantine. The bank has since had the building decontaminated and affected staff members are being closely monitored.

The second individual was a guest of the Taos Ski Valley. He began to show symptoms and immediately placed himself in quarantine. He was tested at Holy Cross Medical Center. He has returned to his home to self-quarantine

As of 9:00 am March, 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 the total number of cases in New Mexico is 23.

**Messages from Public Safety Personnel:**

**Taos County Sheriff's Office:**

*The Taos County Sheriff's Office located at 599 Lovato Place remains open for business and readily available to assist the public. We have implemented a few changes to reduce the risk and spread of*

COVID-19. The public is still welcome to come to our Office for assistance, records, to report a crime, obtain a report, or to meet with a deputy. You will be greeted via intercom to better maintain social distancing and spread of the virus. The public is encouraged to take care of business by phone if practical, and to call ahead at 737-6480 during weekdays from 8:00am to 5:00pm so we can prepare your reports and have them ready when you arrive. **We have currently suspended fingerprinting for the public but all other services remain available.**

Our court security, transport, and civil process division remains intact and available to meet the demands of the civil and criminal needs of the courts. However, some Court hearing have been or may be postponed. Please call ahead at (575) 758-4030 for the Magistrate court or the District Court at (575) 758-3173 the day before to find out if the matter has been postponed. If you have been summoned as a witness in a criminal case you should call the District Attorney's Office at (575) 758-8683 to find out if the hearing has been postponed.

Our patrol division is supplemented with additional deputies to assist the community. Patrol deputies are spread throughout the county to reduce response times to emergency calls. Traffic enforcement, investigations, arrests, and crime deterrents measures have not changed. **Please don't be surprised or alarmed if Deputies ask simple medical screening questions to access persons that appear sick.** They may ask a person to wear a protective mask and gloves they carry with them, or deputies may even wear them. These are new but simple precautions that have been implemented to reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19. To report an emergency call 911 and always be the best witness you can by giving descriptive information.

TCSO is especially aware that some people are having a difficult time dealing with the pandemic. Deputies are here to assist families and individuals in need of mental health services. The New Mexico Crisis line is "here to hear you" by calling (855) 662-7474. Deputies are trained to deal with those in crisis and help is readily available.

TCSO is also sensitive to the elderly and disabled within our community. If you have a concern about a family member, friend, or neighbor you haven't seen or heard from we will gladly do a welfare check and provide assistance to them as needed. The number to call is 758-2216.

Be smart and do your part. Practice social distancing, avoid personal contact with others, stay home if you feel ill, frequently wash your exposed skin with soap and water, use hand sanitizer, and appreciate all of these things are for your health and safety.

JERRY L. HOGREFE, SHERIFF

575 737-6480

#### **Taos County EMS:**

Taos County Fire/EMS want to assure the public that during these times the department is taking steps to respond to the public's needs safely and appropriately to protect both the public and our staff. When EMS responds we ask that people exercise patience and remain calm. When EMS responds to your emergency don't be afraid or offended if EMS personnel ask questions concerning COVID-19 and are wearing masks and other protective equipment. It is for your protection and ours.

***Before calling 911 with COVID-19 concerns, please call the Coronavirus Hotline first at 1-855-600-3453. Be patient as it may take some time to get through. Calling an ambulance to be transported to the Emergency Room for testing will NOT ensure a faster testing process and will only tie up limited resources.***

*To keep employees and customers safe our walk-in office will be closed to the public. To pay your bill please mail your payment, if you would like to make a payment with a credit card call our office at (575) 737-6432.*

*Chris Medina, EMS Chief*

### **Taos County Fire:**

*Taos County Volunteer Fire Districts and Taos County EMS personnel along with Taos County E-911 Dispatch Center do have protocols in place in regard to helping our citizens who may be infected by the COVID-19 virus.*

*Along with protecting the public we also want to protect our First Responders, so if you feel like you may have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 before calling 911 or any healthcare facility, please call the Coronavirus State Hotline 1-855-600-3453.*

*We want to ensure everyone will get the proper emergency help needed either by local first responders or by a consult over the phone via the state hotline. All other regular 911 calls will be answered and handled appropriately.*

*Please do not call 911 and downplay your signs and symptoms of COVID-19 just to get an ambulance or first responders to your home. Please be truthful to our E-911 Dispatchers while they take your call. Remember we all want to be safe and properly protected from this virus.*

*For Taos County Burn Permits please visit the Taos County website and visit the Fire and EMS page and look under forms for the fillable burn permit version. Please provide a valid email address so we can email you your approved burn permit.*

*Mike Cordova, County Fire Chief*

### **Office of Emergency Management:**

*Taos County OEM is prepared to activate our Emergency Operations Center if needed. The County also has a mass notification system. You can sign up for this for free at the County website.*

*Bobby Lucero, OEM Director*

### **E911 Center:**

*As your 911 center, otherwise known as Taos Central Dispatch, for Taos County we would like to re-assure the constituents of Taos County and the surrounding areas that we have taken the proper steps in an attempt to stop the Coronavirus from spreading in our community. Our Emergency Medical Dispatch program has protocol questions that we are asking on all medical calls related to the Coronavirus. All of*

*our dispatchers who ask these questions are Emergency Medical Certified and are fully qualified to ask these questions, please be patient and answer the protocol questions we ask you. We at Taos Central Dispatch understand and know that we are your primary resource for emergency calls as well as medical calls. Taos Central Dispatch is prepared for this pandemic and we are here to help you feel as comfortable and confident as possible during these trying times.*

*If you have any questions call the numbers and staff below, so not to tie up our 911 LINES.*

DOMINIC MARTINEZ  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
575-737-6451

REBECCA RODRIGUEZ  
OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR  
575-737-3831

### **How to Protect Yourself:**

The NM Department of Health along with the CDC and Office of the President are recommending some basic steps to help protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19.

- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (*sing your ABC's to help with the timing*)
- If washing your hands is not an option use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Stay at home as much as possible
- IF YOU FEEL SICK, STAY HOME
- Avoid social gatherings if possible and keep gatherings to 10 people or less
- Avoid contact with sick individuals
- If you suspect you have symptoms of the COVID-19 virus please call the NM Coronavirus Hotline at 1-855-600-3453 to speak with a healthcare professional about what you need to do next. This is a very busy hotline so be patient and follow their guidance.

### **Taos County Complex Building Precautions:**

The County Complex has implemented precautions to help protect the staff and public.

- If possible, please conduct business with the County by phone or email. The mainline phone number is (575) 737-6300
- If you need to come into the complex please use the main entrance (the double doors that face the courtyard). You will be greeted at the information desk and you may be asked some screening questions before you proceed. These questions are designed to help protect the staff and other patrons from the spread of the COVID-19 virus so please answer to the best of your ability.
- We are asking the public to please come between the hours of 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM if they need to visit the complex in person for essential business.
- Taos County has made many of the documents available online, please check the website at <https://www.taoscounty.org>

**Future Updates:**

In an effort to keep the public as best-informed as possible Taos County will be issuing an update at noon every day via our social media platforms as well as on the website <https://www.taoscounty.org> Please check these for the most current information. The County have several Facebook pages that will be posting updated information, they are listed below:

- Taos County Sheriff's Office Facebook page
- Taos County Fire & EMS Dept. Facebook page
- Taos County Office of Emergency Management Facebook page
- Taos County LEPC Facebook page
- Taos County Facebook page

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