

A photograph of the Dallas skyline at dusk. On the left, the Reunion Tower stands tall with its distinctive geodesic sphere top. To its right, several modern glass skyscrapers are visible, their windows reflecting the warm light of the setting sun. The sky is a pale, clear blue.

*DALLAS COUNTY GUIDANCE
FOR INDIVIDUALS AT*

**HIGH-RISK FOR
SEVERE COVID-19
OR COMPLICATIONS
FROM COVID-19**

Photo by Gabriel Tovar

HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS ARE PEOPLE THAT MEET ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- 65 years of age or older
- Live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Have an underlying medical condition:
 - Lung disease including moderate to severe asthma and COPD
 - Serious heart conditions and hypertension
 - Immunocompromised (including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplants, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications)
 - Are obese
 - Have diabetes
 - Have chronic kidney disease or are undergoing dialysis
 - Have liver disease

WHAT DO HOUSEHOLDS WITH HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS NEED TO DO?

For those living with a high-risk individual, household members should conduct themselves as if they are a significant risk to the high-risk individual.

Wash hands before interacting with high-risk household members including before feeding or caring for the person.

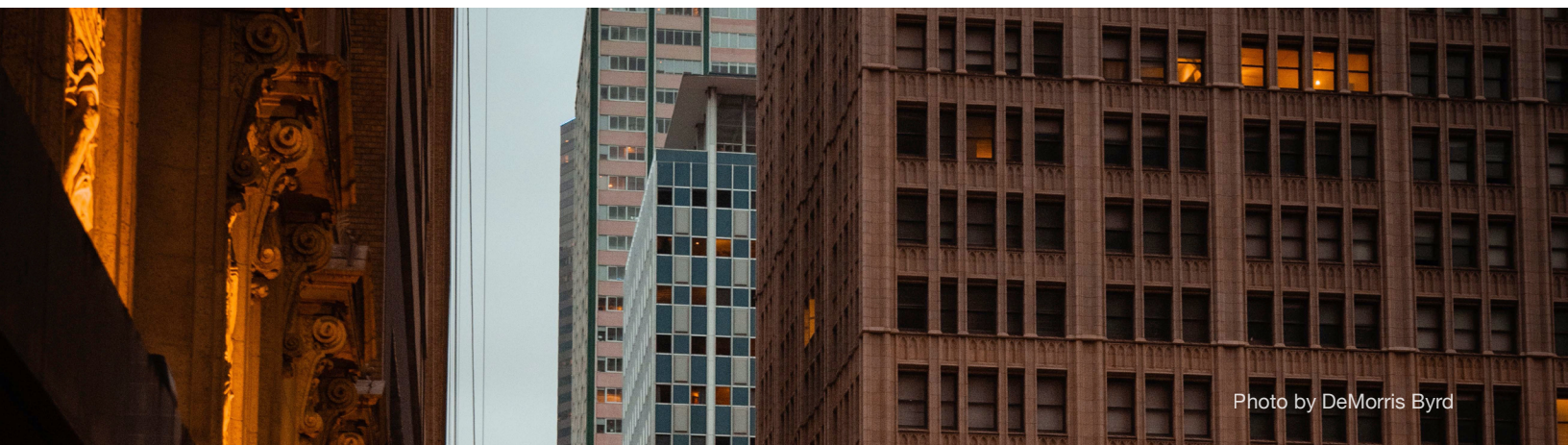
If possible, provide a protected space for high-risk household members, and ensure all utensils and surfaces are cleaned regularly.

High-risk populations should take extra precaution to avoid close contact with multiple

people, including having the same caretakers whenever possible.

Consider providing additional protections or more intensive care for a high-risk household member such as limiting visitors, using facial coverings, screening visitors, and limiting visits to crowded areas.

Those who are, or work with, vulnerable populations should undergo daily screening/symptom monitoring and should be tested if they develop COVID-19 symptoms.



1 ASSUME PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Residents must take responsibility, stay informed, take actions based on common sense, and follow the guidance offered by health care experts. Please cooperate with local public health and health care professionals who may reach out to you as part of contact tracing efforts to protect those around you.

2 DO AN HONEST SELF-ASSESSMENT

In addition, all individuals are encouraged to perform an honest self-assessment before engaging in activities outside of the home. This assessment should include asking two questions:

Am I healthy enough to leave the home, or do I fall into a high-risk category based on age or other medical conditions?

Is there someone in my home, or someone I interact with on a regular basis, who falls into a high-risk category?

If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then we would suggest extra caution and discretion before leaving the home. Is it a want or is it a need?

3 PERFORM PROTECTIVE HYGIENE, DISTANCE YOURSELF PHYSICALLY, AND CLEAN THE ENVIRONMENT

Dallas County residents must practice good hygiene and cleaning practices to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus. These include but are not limited to the following:



Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer after interactions with people or objects.



Do not work/attend functions or go to businesses while ill.



Cover coughs or sneezes into the sleeve or elbow, not hands.



Clean high-touch surfaces (buttons, door handles, counters, etc.) regularly.



Avoid touching your face.



Refrain from hand shaking.



Distance physically and keep 6 feet between people.



Wear a mask when out in public or when in the company of others.

4 ASSESS THE RISK

Individuals must assess their risk and make decisions based on their specific circumstances. Those at high risk for COVID-19 (elderly, diabetic, etc.) and those around them should use extra precautions as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS).



Photo by Krik Cameron

THIS DALLAS COUNTY GUIDANCE SYSTEM FOR THE RISK OF ACTIVITIES THAT MAY PUT THE PUBLIC AT RISK OF ACQUIRING COVID-19 IS BASED ON GUIDANCE FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS AND THE CDC.

The system includes four levels of risk: **RED**, **ORANGE**, **YELLOW**, and **GREEN**. Local infectious disease specialists and public health experts will use the latest information on local disease activity to advise county officials on the risk level that applies. Specific indicators for relaxation of activity level include:

- A **progressive decrease** in daily COVID-19 **hospital admissions** in the county over more than **14 days**.
- A **progressive decrease** in daily COVID-19 **ICU admissions** in the county over more than **14 days**.
- A **decreasing trend** in the daily number of COVID-19 **deaths** over more than **14 days**.

On the other hand, a progressive increase in any of these indicators might lead to moving back temporarily to a higher level of restriction.

RED is the level of guidance Dallas County functions under current shelter in place orders. It translates to **STAY HOME, STAY SAFE**, only travel for essential needs, restrict activity and gatherings, enhance protections for high-risk individuals such as the elderly, limit food service, and engage in no personal care services. Each level of guidance after **RED** becomes less restrictive and corresponds to improvement in the

COVID-19 epidemic indicated by having fewer hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths. After 14 days of improvement in these indicators, the risk will be downgraded from **RED** to **ORANGE**. Then if the metrics are met for another 14-day period, the level can be safely downgraded from **ORANGE** to **YELLOW**, etc. The goal of this system is to protect you and those around you from COVID-19 infection. **GREEN** is the lowest level and represents the new normal needed to protect the community from a return of COVID-19 and appearance of future pandemics.

The color-coded guidance system was put together under the leadership of the Public Health Subcommittee of the Economic Recovery Committee and the DCHHS Department to provide specific direction to Dallas County residents.

FOLLOW GUIDANCE – Public health and economic opportunity are linked. Residents are urged to strictly follow the protective measures of each color to maintain their own health and avoid a resurgence of the pandemic that would cause greater economic harm.

Additional CDC guidance for high-risk populations can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/what-you-can-do.html>

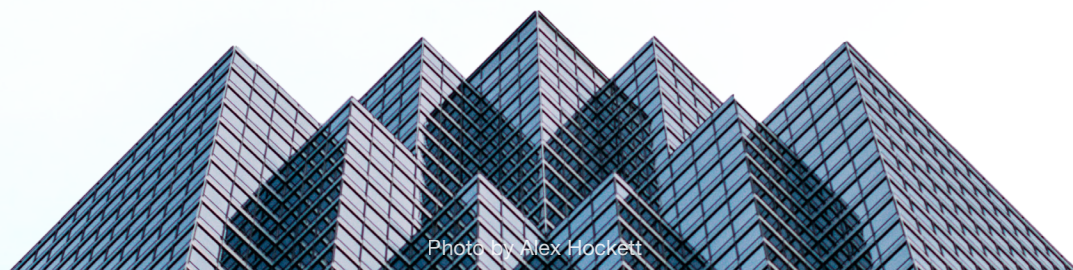


Photo by Alex Hockett

What should a high-risk person do?

High Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Travel only for essential needs; use telework if possible.

Do not visit friends or family without urgent need.

Avoid physical interactions with all people outside your household or residence.

Do not visit hospitals, nursing homes, or other residential facilities.

If you go out, wear face coverings.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

Moderate Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Travel only for essential needs; use telework if possible.

Do not visit friends or family without urgent need.

Avoid physical interactions with all people outside your household or residence.

Do not visit hospitals, nursing homes, or other residential facilities.

If you go out, wear face coverings.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

Low Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Travel only for essential needs; use telework if possible.

Do not visit friends or family without urgent need.

Avoid physical interactions with all people outside your household or residence.

Do not visit hospitals, nursing homes or other residential facilities.

If you go out, wear face coverings.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

New Normal Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Wear face coverings at all times in public.

For any travel, use appropriate precautions (mask and physical distancing) and avoid high risk areas.

Use telework if possible.

When visiting friends or family, wear face coverings when within a 6-foot distance. Limit physical interactions with other individuals except for members of your household or residence.

Limit social interactions to groups of 20 or fewer people outside your residence.

Limit visits to hospitals, nursing homes, or other residential facilities.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

How should I interact with a high-risk person?

High Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Wear a face covering.

Avoid physical interaction with high-risk individuals as much as possible. If you must interact, practice physical distancing.

Do not visit hospitals, nursing homes, and other residential care facilities.

Those working with high-risk individuals should be screened and tested in a targeted fashion.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

Moderate Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Wear a face covering.

Avoid physical interaction with high-risk individuals as much as possible. If you must interact, practice physical distancing.

Do not visit hospitals, nursing homes, and other residential care facilities.

Those working with high-risk individuals should be screened and tested in a targeted fashion.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

Low Community Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Individuals not experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should take extra precautions and follow strict hygiene standards (wear face covering, practice hand hygiene, clean environmental surfaces) when interacting with high-risk groups.

Do not interact with symptomatic individuals.

Limit visitors to hospitals, nursing homes, or other residential care facilities.

Those working with high-risk individuals should be screened and tested in a targeted fashion.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

New Normal Risk for COVID-19 Transmission

Individuals not experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 take extra precautions (wear face covering, practice hand hygiene, clean environmental surfaces) when interacting with high-risk groups.

Take proper precautions when visiting hospitals, nursing homes, or other residential care facilities.

Use frequent hand hygiene.

Clean environment frequently and thoroughly.

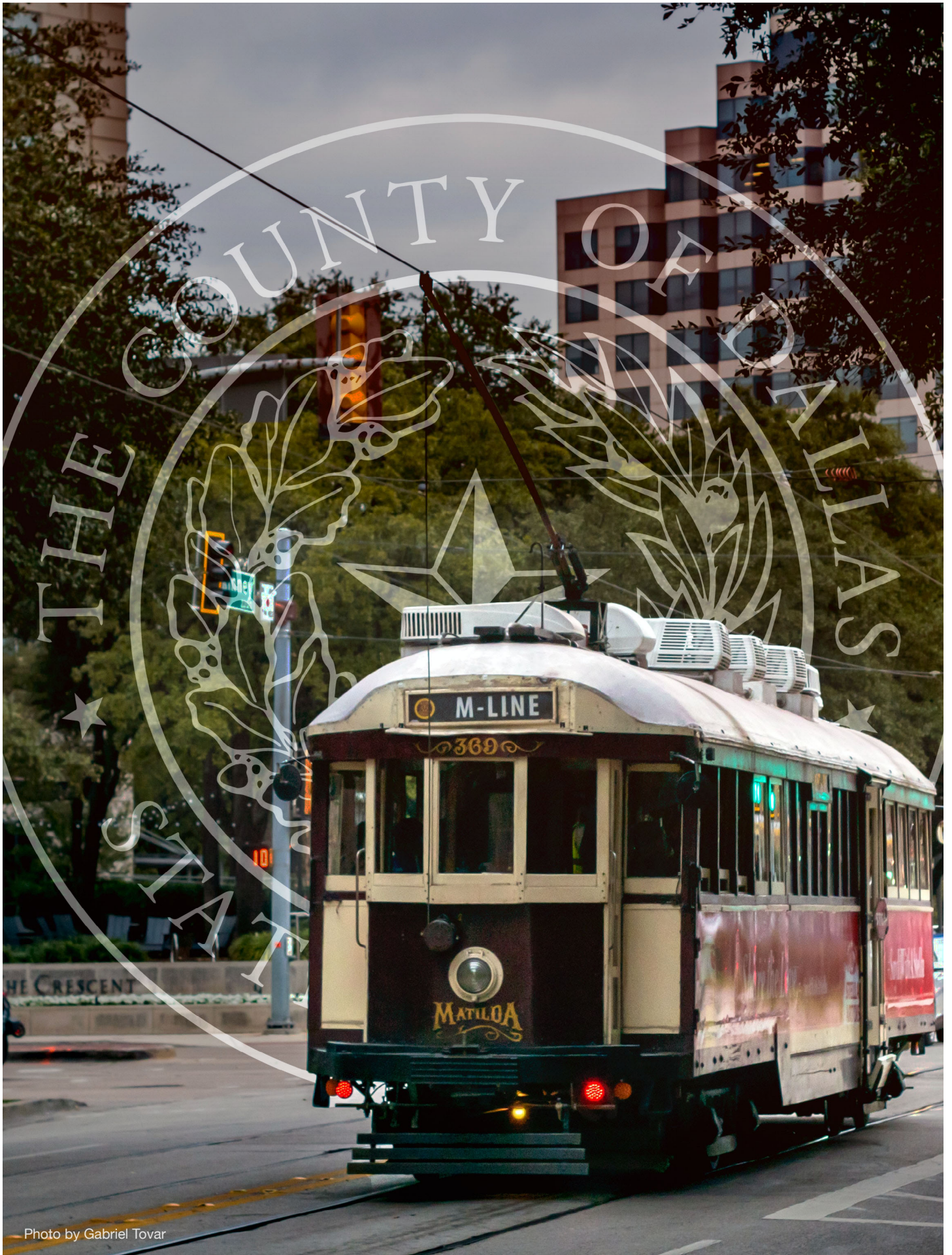


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