

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PURPOSE ORDER

WHEREAS, Lowndes County, Georgia, which includes the cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta, has experienced an event of critical significance as a result of COVID-19, otherwise referred to as Coronavirus disease; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a National Emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp declared a Public Health Emergency for the State of Georgia due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, as of 12:00PM on March 23, 2020, the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) reported 772 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 25 deaths attributed to this virus throughout Georgia; and

WHEREAS, of those 772 cases, 8 have been identified in Lowndes County; and

WHEREAS, in the judgment of the Chairman of the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners, with concurrence from the Mayors of the cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta, based on advice from the Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency, there currently exist emergency circumstances within Lowndes County, and each of the previously identified cities, requiring extraordinary and immediate corrective actions for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of all the citizens of Lowndes County, including individuals with household pets and service animals; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends social distancing measures be implemented by all individuals to prevent the continued spread of illness within the community; and

WHEREAS, local, state, and federal health officials all indicate that they expect additional cases of COVID-19 to be identified in the coming days, and based on the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 additional person-to-person transmission is likely; and

WHEREAS, should COVID-19 continue to spread in Lowndes County at a rate close to what other communities in Georgia are experiencing it would quickly overwhelm local resources and capabilities; and

WHEREAS, to prevent or minimize injury to people and damage to property resulting from this event; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to OCGA § 38-3-28(a), political subdivisions of the state are authorized and empowered to make, amend, and rescind such orders, rules, and regulations as may be necessary for emergency management purposes and to supplement the carrying out of Articles 1 through 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

(1) That the Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency activates the Emergency Operations Plan; and

(2) That the following measures also be implemented effective March 24, 2020, at Noon and continuing for a period of fourteen (14) days ending at Noon April 6, 2020, unless otherwise rescinded or continued:

(i) Voluntary Stay Safe At Home: A voluntary stay safe at home policy is hereby implemented requesting that individuals not loiter, wander, stroll, or play in any public place within the territorial limits of Lowndes County, to include the cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta, provided however, that the provisions of this policy shall not apply in the following instances:

1. When a person is engaged in an errand of an emergency nature;
2. When a person is traveling directly to, or returning directly home from, lawful employment or are engaged in lawful employment that make it necessary to be in any of the above-referenced places during the prescribed period of time;
3. When a person is engaged in vehicular travel through Lowndes County;
4. When a person is walking or running to or from their residence for fitness related purposes; and
5. When a person is procuring food or medicine or seeking medical care.

(ii) Prohibition on Gatherings: Public or private gatherings of more than ten (10) persons are prohibited anywhere in Lowndes County for the duration of this Order. For the purposes of this Order, a "gathering" is any indoor or outdoor event or convening, subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, which brings together or is likely to bring together, ten (10) or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space, such as an auditorium, stadium (indoor or outdoor), tent, arena, event center, music venue, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria, church, or any other confined indoor or confined outdoor space, to include birthday parties, family reunions, baby showers, weddings, and funerals. For the purposes of this order, a "gathering" shall not include the following, provided that these establishments implement social distancing measures to comply with CDC recommendations:

1. Office space, public or private schools, child care facilities, residential buildings, or any type of temporary shelter or housing;
2. Hospitals and health care facilities; and

3. Grocery stores, shopping centers, malls, or other retail establishments.

(iii) **Worship Services:** No worship services shall be held in Lowndes County if attended by more than ten (10) persons during the period that this Order is in effect. This includes church services, funerals, church suppers or socials, Bible Study groups, choir practice, leadership meetings, or any other church related activity which would cause ten (10) or more people to congregate. Nothing in this Order shall prohibit the live streaming of services or other remote service options so long as they do not result in ten (10) or more people being present.

(iv) **Recreational and Entertainment Facilities:** All indoor facilities operated for the purpose of recreation or entertainment shall be closed for the duration of this Order except for those facilities where less than ten (10) persons, including employees, are present at any one time and each of such persons has a prior appointment to allow for their use of the facility at such time. Examples of these types of facilities include, but is not limited to, dance studios, gymnastics studios, bowling alleys, pool halls, skating rinks, trampoline parks, playgrounds, and movie theaters.

(v) **Gyms and Fitness Centers:** All gyms and fitness centers shall be closed during the period of this Order.

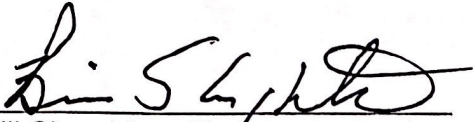
(vi) **Bars and Restaurants:** All bars and restaurants shall immediately suspend all on-premises food and drink consumption for customers. Restaurants may continue to operate their kitchens for the purposes of providing take-out or delivery services provided they adhere to the following additional guidelines:

1. A restaurant shall follow the CDC guidance by ensuring, at minimum, a 6-foot distance between all patrons and limiting occupancy to no more than ten (10) individuals at any given time.
2. A restaurant shall implement employee screening and prohibit any employee from entering the restaurant premises if they meet any of the criteria listed below:
 - a) Any person showing, presenting signs or symptoms of, or disclosing the presence of a respiratory infection, including cough, fever, shortness of breath or sore throat;
 - b) Any person who has been in contact with any person(s) known to be infected with COVID-19, and who has not yet tested negative for COVID-19 within the past 14 days;

For purposes of this section, "restaurant" shall include any establishment which operates for the purpose of preparation and serving of meals, lunches, short orders, sandwiches, frozen desserts, or other edible products for consumption on premises and which derive at least 50 percent of gross sale from food products.

(3) That this Order may be enforced in accordance with and as provided by OCGA §§ 38-3-4, 5, and 7.

SO ORDERED this 24th day of March, 2020.



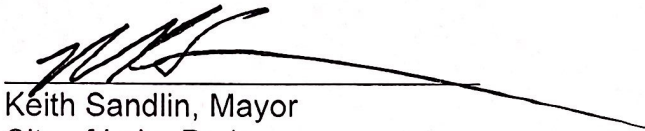
Bill Slaughter, Chairman
Lowndes County Board of Commissioners



G R Holton, Mayor
City of Dasher




Bruce Cain, Mayor
City of Hahira



Keith Sandlin, Mayor
City of Lake Park



Cornelius Holsendolph, Mayor
City of Remerton



Scott Matheson, Mayor
City of Valdosta