

County of Santa Clara

Office of the Sheriff

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MEMORANDUM

Laurie Smith
Sheriff

TO : All Personnel

FROM : Laurie Smith, Sheriff 

SUBJECT : Additional Updates and Guidance on COVID-19

DATE : March 6, 2020

I write to provide you with an important update regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus). This email includes specific guidance and directives to Sheriff's Office personnel, important policy reminders, and links to resources specific to law enforcement and first responders related to COVID-19.

Effective immediately, Sheriff's Office Personnel are directed to follow the recommendations of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. These directives have been approved by the County in an email sent last night by the County Executive and have been adjusted to meet the operational needs of the Sheriff's Office:

- Staff are encouraged to stay home when they are sick. The Sheriff's Office will maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits, which includes the immediate suspension of the "first day sick" rule for Sheriff's Office employees from all bargaining units. Captains and Managers are encouraged to find flexible ways to accommodate sick leave in order to reduce any opportunities for exposure.
- A doctor's note will not be required for personnel that are sick, as healthcare offices may be very busy and unable to provide that documentation right away.
- All nonessential work-related travel should be suspended.
- Division Captains and Managers are encouraged to consider ways to avoid prolonged contact and group-meetings, such as staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time, and other creative ways to avoid person-to-person contact that can mitigate transmission of illness by increasing physical distance.
- Whenever possible, staff are encouraged to minimize the number of employees working within arm's length of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences.

- Division Captains and Managers are encouraged to implement other mitigating measures within their respective divisions. This can include temporarily not using Kronos for timekeeping.

CDC What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know about COVID-19

Additional information on COVID-19 specific to law enforcement and emergency responders is available on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) and in the attached document. A shortcut to this information has also been posted to the enforcement MDT/CAPSS for easy reference by personnel in the field. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to review this information with all staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Sheriff's Office has personal protective equipment available to staff; however, it is strongly suggested that supplies be used with the utmost consideration given the national shortage and demand for PPE. Each divisions shall implement PPE controls to ensure adequate supplies are made available to personnel. The Sheriff's Office is working with County and State OES in order to ensure supplies continue to be available.

Policy Reminder and Exposure Reporting

Sheriff's Office Personnel are encouraged to review and refresh themselves on policies and procedures applicable to disease and infection control, including General Order #25.00 and Department of Corrections Policy #10.41 and #10.37. Personnel who are exposed to COVID-19 shall follow the standard exposure procedure for other types of infectious diseases, including applicable workers compensation forms and reporting. This policy may be revisited and/or streamlined over the coming weeks depending on the community spread of COVID-19.

Custody Operations

COVID-19 is a concern within our Custody Operations for a number of reasons, including the close proximity of people. Our immediate plan is one of education wherein staff, inmates and visitors are educated on basic prevention techniques, such as frequent and thorough hand-washing and avoiding skin-to-skin contact (hand-shaking). The education components are being developed and will be communicated on signage to the public, video, and in-person briefings with staff. Custody Health has also modified their screening process to specifically screen for COVID-19, including specific questions on previous travel, exposure to anyone sick who has traveled, and other symptoms, including cough and/or fever.

The Sheriff's Office is actively involved at the County Emergency Operations Center and closely monitoring for updates relevant to our personnel and operations. These updates will be passed on as they become available.

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What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)¹

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

Contact: PPEConcerns@cdc.gov



Date: March 4, 2020

(U) Background:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but cases have been identified in a growing number of other areas, including the United States.

(U) Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness.

- Data suggests that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Symptoms can include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.
- The virus causing COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2. It is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts. Respiratory droplets are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can land in the mouths or noses, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs, of people who are nearby. Close contact may include:
 - Being within approximately 6 feet of an individual with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time.
 - Having direct contact with body fluids (such as blood, phlegm, and respiratory droplets) from an individual with COVID-19.

(U) To Protect Yourself from Exposure:

- If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available and illicit drugs are NOT suspected to be present, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/ Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone you think might have COVID-19 to a healthcare facility.
- Ensure only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) have contact with individuals who have or may have COVID-19.
- Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and participate in all-hands training on the use of PPE for respiratory protection, if available.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

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(U) Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Law enforcement who must make contact with individuals confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 should follow [CDC's Interim Guidance for EMS](#). Different styles of PPE may be necessary to perform operational duties. These alternative styles (i.e. coveralls) must provide protection that is at least as great as that provided by the minimum amount of PPE recommended.

The minimum PPE recommended is:

- A single pair of disposable examination gloves,
- Disposable isolation gown or single-use/disposable coveralls*,
- Any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator (i.e., N-95 or higher-level respirator), and
- Eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face)

*If unable to wear a disposable gown or coveralls because it limits access to duty belt and gear, ensure duty belt and gear are disinfected after contact with individual.

(U) If Close Contact Occurred During Apprehension:

- Clean and disinfect duty belt and gear prior to reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label.
- Follow standard operating procedures for the containment and disposal of used PPE.
- Follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes. Avoid shaking the clothes.

Assessment:

(U) For law enforcement personnel performing daily routine activities, the immediate health risk is considered low. Law enforcement leadership and personnel should follow [CDC's Interim General Business Guidance](#).

Content source:

All content in this document is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

As of March 4, 2020. Please check the website for update.

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