



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes

SANTA ANA, Ca. (December 5, 2020): Below please find a statement from Sheriff Don Barnes.

"2020 has been a difficult year in many ways. The pandemic, civil unrest, and fires have affected us all.

"Governor Newsom has announced new stay-at-home orders for much of California, including Orange County. The ever-changing nature of these orders and the increase of COVID-19 case numbers bring additional uncertainty and stress to California residents.

"Compliance with health orders is a matter of personal responsibility and not a matter of law enforcement. The Orange County Sheriff's Department will remain consistent in our approach. Orange County Sheriff's deputies will not be dispatched to, or respond to, calls for service to enforce compliance with face coverings, social gatherings, or stay-at-home orders only. Deputies will respond to calls for potential criminal behavior and for the protection of life and property. Our actions remain consistent with the protections of constitutional rights.

"To put the onus on law enforcement to enforce these orders against law-abiding citizens who are already struggling through difficult circumstances, while at the same time criticizing law enforcement and taking away tools to do our jobs, is both contradictory and disingenuous.

"As we have done throughout this pandemic, we must remain diligent in preventing the spread of the virus by following public health recommendations, like wearing a face covering and practicing social distancing. Conversely, policy makers must not penalize residents for earning a livelihood, safeguarding their mental health, or enjoying our most cherished freedoms.

"The month of December is typically a time for celebrating. I know this year is different, but we do not need to cancel the spirit of the season. I encourage you to remake holiday traditions to accommodate public health guidelines, reach out to a neighbor, or help someone in need. The Orange County Sheriff's Department will continue our tradition of charitable efforts for those in need and our commitment to keep you safe during the holidays."

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