



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Orange County Sheriff implements proactive measures to limit exposure to COVID-19

SANTA ANA, Ca. (December 8, 2020): Effective immediately and until further notice, Sheriff Don Barnes issued directives for decreasing potential COVID-19 exposure to the community and department personnel.

"Our foremost responsibility is to keep the community safe," said Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. "These precautionary measures will safeguard the health of the public who rely on our service and the members of the department who respond to their call."

The following are immediate changes that are in effect until further notice:

- The front lobby of all Sheriff's Department buildings and contract city police services substations will be closed to the public.
- All volunteer programs are suspended; this includes senior programs in contract cities, jail volunteers, and Explorer programs. Jail programs provided by staff will continue.
- Patrol deputies have been directed to utilize discretion in responding to calls for service that require social contact. Where possible, deputies will call reporting parties and take reports over the phone.
- 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.
- Personnel will not respond to non-injury traffic collisions unless vehicles are disabled in the roadway or creating a hazard.
- Public jail visiting remains suspended. Inmates are provided two free five-minute phone calls per week.
- Enhanced symptom screening for jail intake continues in coordination with the Orange County Health Care Agency's Correctional Health Services. In addition to symptom screening prior to entry to the jail, all new bookings will be quarantined for 14 days and tested for COVID-19 prior to release to general population.
- All department tours and civilian ride-alongs are postponed.

"As we have seen by mitigating COVID-19 cases in our jails, abiding by public health guidelines is necessary to stop the spread of the pandemic in our community. I encourage residents to wear face coverings and social distance," said Sheriff Barnes.

For the latest updates on COVID-19 in Orange County and additional health and safety information, visit occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/.

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