



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. (March 16, 2020): Earlier today, Sheriff Don Barnes issued directives and implemented a strategy for decreasing potential COVID-19 exposure to the community and Department personnel.

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

The following are immediate changes having direct impact on the public 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 and those provided by jail volunteers. Jail programs provided by staff will continue.
- All department tours and civilian ride-alongs will be postponed.
- 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 necessary reports over the phone.
- Community service officers and motor deputies will not respond to non-injury traffic collisions unless vehicles are disabled in the roadway or creating a hazard.
- Public jail visiting is suspended, and inmates are provided two free five-minute phone calls per week.
- Enhanced symptom screening for jail intake has been implemented in coordination with the County Health Care Agency's Correctional Health Services.
- All training at the Sheriff's Regional Training Academy is suspended.

"We are being proactive in limiting our actions to mission-critical activities at this unprecedented time," said Sheriff Barnes. "This is not something we want, but reducing the number of non-essential contacts limits the possibility of exposure. We will constantly reevaluate these measures on a daily basis and intend to return to full service as soon as it is reasonably safe."

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

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