



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Affairs Director Carrie Braun

W: 714-647-7042 | C: 714-904-7042

Visiting, programming at OC Jails temporarily suspended; free inmate phone calls offered

SANTA ANA, Ca. (March 16, 2020): Based on recommendations from local, state and federal health authorities, and as part of the department's ongoing COVID-19 prevention efforts, the Sheriff's Department will temporarily suspend public visitation and inmate programming at all Orange County Jail facilities.

The temporary suspension will be in effect until March 27, at which time, the Sheriff's Department will reassess whether to reinstate visiting and programming. The visiting suspension will not apply to attorney-client visits or other official legal visits.

Given how COVID-19 spreads, the Sheriff's Department is committed to our role in protecting the public by following the recommendations of public health authorities, which include avoiding large gatherings and practicing social distancing when possible.

Although Sheriff's Department jail facilities do not offer contact visits, visiting days draw large numbers of the public who sit in close proximity in the lobby of our facilities. Jail programming utilizes outside contractors and volunteers to teach courses in the jail facilities. By temporarily suspending these operations, the Sheriff's Department helps minimize risk to the public, staff, volunteers and those in our care and custody.

The Sheriff's Department understands that visiting and programming play a critical role in inmate rehabilitation, however safety remains the department's top priority. To that end, inmates will have access to two, free five-minute phone calls each week.

At this time, there are no other impacts to Sheriff's Department operations, and department members will continue to implement practical health and safety protocols in the commission of their duties.

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

##