



Jeffrey Spence
Chief of Police

**CITY OF GAHANNA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF POLICE**

Memorandum

SUBJECT COVID-19 Response Plan	NUMBER 2020.03.006	NUMBER OF PAGES 4
DATE OF APPROVAL March 16, 2020	DATE OF ISSUE March 16, 2020	EFFECTIVE DATE March 16, 2020
TYPE OF MEMORANDUM Operational Protocols	DISTRIBUTION Division-wide	ISSUED BY Chief Jeffrey B. Spence

Purpose: The COVID-19 Virus pandemic and spread requires us to implement measures to comply with one of the most effective means of prevention which is limiting exposure to the disease by social distancing. We do not know the depth or breadth of this disease yet. Protecting and preserving the ability for first responders to report for duty and respond to critical calls is our top priority. Outlined below are emergency operational protocols and changes to the level of service provisions that the Division will offer during this time.

Division-wide Services Cancelled Until Further Notice or as Indicated

- Fingerprinting and background checks
- Division-sponsored public events scheduled for the next 45 days
- Ride-a-longs, Division tours, Citizen Police Academy
- Reserve officer monthly hourly requirements waived and casual ride-a-longs

Facility Security

The Division lobby will remain open for public access. Signage will direct persons to use the lobby phone to communicate with the on-duty dispatching staff. The window pass-through will remain sealed except as necessary to provide vehicle releases, accept pay-outs, and facilitate required exchanges.

Field Services

Traffic Stops. Traffic Stops are limited to priority stops only, or those associated with violations that present a significant public safety risk, e.g. erratic driving, hazardous speeds, impaired driving indicators, other aggressive/distracted driving violations.

Non-Injury Traffic Crashes. Callers are advised that we are not currently taking non-injury crash reports and directed to exchange information and contact their insurance company. An officer should be dispatched to any non-injury crash if:

- The roadway or travel way is blocked
- If a subject is reported to be refusing to exchange information
- If a threat to public safety is associated with the incident (e.g. “road rage”, a devolving or potentially volatile encounter between those involved, etc.)

Non-Violent or Non-Emergency Reports (excluding thefts with a detention) Upon receipt of a report of non-violent or non-emergency offenses or matters, dispatchers obtain a call-back number and advise caller that they will receive a call-back. A call folder is generated pursuant to routine procedures, and a district or other appropriate unit dispatched on the call.

The dispatched officer refers to the call folder (call-back #) and facilitates reporting over the phone to the extent practical, to include the provision of a report number if necessary. Officers should assess whether there is evidence to collect, it’s potential evidentiary value, whether there is a known suspect, etc. and coordinate/cause an on-scene response as deemed appropriate.

- Officers may return to headquarters for purposes of contacting reporting parties.
- Officers may call from a Mifflin Township watch room where the VDCs are set up.
- Shift supervisors may assign a “desk officer(s)” for the purpose of facilitating telephone-based reporting, depending on call volume and other operational factors.

Medical-Related Calls. Absent a critical need or emergency (e.g. non-breather, serious injury), all medical-related calls should be deferred to the Mifflin Township Fire Department. Shift supervisors may direct a stand-by response, but officers should not enter unless it becomes necessary to assist in an emergency capacity.

Reports of Theft (Shoplifting) Involving a Detention. The Division will coordinate with loss prevention representatives from our major retailers regarding theft response and charges. In the interim, if a theft report involves a detained subject (by loss prevention personnel), respond pursuant to established procedures. However, every effort should be made to:

- Minimize contact by proximity and duration.
- Preferred enforcement is the issuance of a summons vs. physical arrest when practical.
- Do not detain suspect in a Division vehicle absent an urgent officer safety need.

Intoxication-Not able to Care for One's Self and Subject to Arrest. Make every effort to release the individual to a responsible person including family members or associates; preferably picked-up but release may include the provision of a transport. If release to a responsible party cannot be facilitated, consider transport to Franklin County Corrections Center I/II for acceptance or detention in a facility holding cell (for up to six hours) to see if the condition improves such that subject can be released. If detained at headquarters, ensure all appropriate screening and prisoner checks are conducted and logged.

Division Vehicle Exposure. In the event a subject with confirmed COVID-19 exposure or a subject who is symptomatic is detained in a Division vehicle, have the vehicle towed to headquarters if the vehicle is in the field and remove from service. Notify Support Services via e-mail and copy your chain of command. The Division is in the process of obtaining an ultraviolet device for decontamination purposes and can coordinate with the City of Columbus for extensive decontamination procedures.

Communications

Dispatch Call Screening (and prisoner screening for officers)

Dispatchers, after obtaining necessary information and assuring callers that first responders are on the way to a call that will necessitate an on-scene response, should further screen callers to assess Potential Infectious Condition(s) (PIC):

- 1) Are you or anyone in your household exhibiting flu-like symptoms, including fever, coughing, or respiratory distress and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19/Coronavirus?
- 2) Have you or anyone in your household had contact with a person with COVID-19 or Coronavirus infection (if yes, when)?
- 3) Dispatchers will provide information regarding any Potential Infectious Condition (PIC) to other communication centers and first responders also assisting on the call.
- 4) Dispatchers will ask callers to meet first responders outside the residence or business when practicable on all calls.

Officers facilitating telephone reporting who determine that an on-scene response is required, or those conducting a prisoner medical screening, also complete these screening questions.

An affirmative response to these screening questions should be considered along with the totality of circumstances to formulate and guide a response plan in consultation with the shift supervisor. **In no way should we create an impression to callers that we cannot respond in any capacity whatsoever due to COVID-19.**

The Division has obtained a quantity of M95 masks and they have been distributed to field services personnel to mitigate exposure risk. The masks are reusable unless saturated during exposure with a patient – to reuse spray with disinfectant and let air dry.

Medical-Related Calls. Absent a critical need emergency (e.g. non-breather, serious injury), all medical-related calls are deferred to the Mifflin Township Fire Department. Shift supervisors may direct a stand-by response, but officers do not enter unless it becomes necessary to assist in an emergency capacity.

Elder-Care and Residential Care Facilities. Non-emergency calls to elder care and residential facilities are suspended. Officers are directed to work with onsite staff to address the issue or report by phone.

9-1-1 Hang-Up Calls

- **To medical facilities and businesses** – if contact is made with a representative of a medical facility or business and upon call-back the Dispatcher is advised that no emergency exists, an appropriate call is logged with such a notation, but no officer dispatched.
- **To private residences** – An officer is dispatched pursuant to routine procedures. If contact is made upon call-back and the Dispatcher is advised that no emergency exists, the caller is directed to meet the responding officer outside the residence whenever practical

Investigative Services

Investigative Services Subdivision personnel will conduct investigative follow-ups via telephone to the extent practical

By Order of:



Chief Jeffrey B. Spence