



COVID-19 FOR COPS

Personnel Practices & Funding Help

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Deploying personnel

Nationally, law enforcement agencies are trying to ensure sufficient on-duty personnel while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Agencies have taken steps such as:

- Wearing face masks and gloves on duty;
- Returning specialized personnel to uniform patrol;
- Moving from 8-hour to 12-hour shifts;
- Diminishing contact among officers by moving roll calls outdoors (where greater social distancing is possible) or using technology to conduct “virtual” roll calls; and
- Reducing overlap in the presence of personnel in locker rooms and other station facilities.¹

Police retirees

Police departments may employ retirees to work during COVID-19 with no limits on hours or income. This means that retired officers (or other retirees) brought back during the emergency need not worry about the 960-hour limit per calendar year or the annual cap on earnings. No link between the emergency and retiree’s work must be shown. Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020.

Police department funding

Emergency supplemental funding available from Bureau of Justice Assistance for COVID-19 related costs. The Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Program will provide funding to assist eligible states, local units of government, and tribes in preventing, preparing for, and responding to coronavirus. Allowable projects and purchases include, but are not limited to, overtime, equipment, hiring, supplies (such as gloves, masks, sanitizer), training, and addressing the medical needs of inmates in prisons and detention centers. Application deadline May 29. To apply: [bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553](https://www.bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553).

Gun licenses

LTCs and FIDs do not expire during COVID-19 emergency. As of March 10, no licenses have expired or will expire until the emergency ends. The deadline for licensing authority (LA) action on any application extends until 45 days after the emergency ends. Chapter 53, *supra*.

The LA still retains the power to approve, deny, suspend, or revoke an LTC or FID during the emergency. Chapter 53.

Release of pre-trial detainees

SJC directs any magistrate to consider, in determining bail, the risk of an arrestee getting COVID-19 — especially one who is at least 60 years old or has a pre-existing health condition. *Committee for Public Counsel Services v. Chief of the Trial Court*, SJC-1296 (April 3, 2020).

Supermarket guidelines

Department of Public Health (DPH) requires that grocery stores limit occupancy to 40% of their maximum. This includes customers and staff. Stores with a maximum occupancy of 25 or less are exempt. If a line forms outside a store, employees must monitor those waiting to maintain social distance. Issued April 7, the guidelines state: “If lines form outside the grocery or other physical security concerns arise, local law enforcement should be notified and consulted.”²

Websites & free police training – Tuesday, April 21

Strategies for Youth (SFY) offers free webinar on police/youth interactions during a time of crisis. Tuesday, April 21 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. <https://strategiesforyouth.org/>

Attorney General creates a new website — <https://www.frontlinema.org/> to respond to the urgent need for centralized information for frontline workers, including PPE, priority testing, safe housing, meals, self-care and emergency childcare. It also invites the public to help by offering messages of support, buying meals for frontline workers, helping to provide a safe place for workers to stay between shifts, and ways to donate PPE.

Good for citizens concerning programs, scams, and other helpful information — <https://www.mass.gov/guides/resources-during-covid-19>.

² Other recommendations include having one-way aisles designated for shoppers by signs and floor markings. Also, stores must continue to provide at least one hour in the early morning exclusively for shoppers age 60 and over.