

# COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Law Enforcement Updated 03/25/2020

**How can law enforcement personnel reduce their risk of COVID-19 exposure?** When feasible, law enforcement personnel should maintain a six-foot separation from others.

If feasible, law enforcement personnel should ask persons they are interacting with whether they are sick with fever or respiratory illness (i.e., cough, difficulty breathing). If the person says they have been sick or is visibly ill (sneezing and coughing), law enforcement personnel should put on any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator (facemasks are an acceptable alternative until the supply chain is restored), eye protection (like a face shield or goggles), and gloves before having prolonged close (less than 6 feet) interactions or direct contact.

Law enforcement should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer (if soap and water is unavailable) after having direct contact with all individuals.

**When should Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) be used?** If feasible, law enforcement personnel should ask persons they are interacting with whether they are sick with fever or respiratory illness (i.e., cough, difficulty breathing). If the person says they have been sick or is visibly ill (sneezing and coughing), law enforcement personnel should put on any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator (facemasks are an acceptable alternative until the supply chain is restored), eye protection (like a face shield or goggles) and gloves before having prolonged close (less than 6 feet) interactions or direct contact.

**Should law enforcement take any special steps to clean vehicles?** Routine cleaning is appropriate. For soft (porous) surfaces, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces.

**Should law enforcement take any special steps to clean equipment?** Clean and disinfect duty belt and gear before reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label. Follow standard operating procedures for the containment and disposal of used PPE. Follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes, avoid shaking the clothes and launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

**When does public health consider law enforcement to be exposed to COVID-19?** Law enforcement personnel are considered exposed to COVID-19 in the following situations:

- Taken a cruise anywhere in the world in the last 14 days
- Traveled outside of Iowa for business or vacation in the last 14 days. For persons living near the state border, short-term, incidental trips into bordering states are exempt.
- Live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19
- Provided care for a patient with symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19

without using proper PPE

- Had close contact (within 6 feet for more than 2 minutes) with a person who is visibly sick with respiratory symptoms (i.e., sneezing, coughing) or says they are sick with fever or respiratory symptom

**What should law enforcement personnel do if they are exposed to COVID-19?** It can take up to 14 days for someone who is exposed to COVID-19 to develop illness. However, exposed law enforcement personnel are allowed to go to work as long as they remain asymptomatic and monitor their temperature at the beginning and end of their shift. When law enforcement personnel are not working, they should stay at home and isolate themselves from other people and animals living in the home for 14 days.

If law enforcement personnel become symptomatic at any point during their shift, they should be sent home immediately to self-isolate. If you need healthcare, first call and notify your healthcare provider that you are a law enforcement officer (and considered Essential Service personnel) who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Your healthcare provider can assess whether you need to be examined in the office or if you can recover at home.

Remember you should contact your agency supervisor to make them aware of the situation.

**What should law enforcement do if they are sick?** Law enforcement personnel who are ill with fever or respiratory symptoms (like cough or difficulty breathing) should stay home and isolate from other people and animals in the house until:

- They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Their other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

**What should law enforcement personnel do if someone in their home is sick?** If law enforcement personnel live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, they are considered exposed to COVID-19 and should take the measures outlined above.