



Combating COVID-19

Call for Public Safety Resources Needed from the Frontline

To continue containing and responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, there is a clear and urgent need to keep our first responders safe and healthy as they carry out their mission to serve and protect our California communities during this crisis. In New York, the NYPD has already confirmed 129 cases, another 2,407 have called out sick. If these numbers foreshadow what California law enforcement can expect in the coming days and weeks, we must do everything in our power to support our officers as they rise to meet this moment.

What Are We Asking For?

PORAC is requesting that urgent action be taken by state and federal elected officials to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Increased supply of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Right now, we have officers in the field that either have no masks or only one. Officers are being asked to reuse and recycle masks intended for single use or are otherwise using bandanas and other materials.
- There is an immediate need for disinfectant to ensure resources such as vehicles, duty belts and gear can be properly and appropriately sanitized after coming into contact with individuals who could potentially transmit the virus.
- The CDC has also recommended that law enforcement officers wear disposable examination gloves and eye protection.
- For more information on the CDC's recommendations for PPE for law enforcement officers to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, please click [here](#).

2. Expedited testing for first responders showing symptoms or who encounter an infected individual

- California must establish designated COVID-19 testing sites for first responders throughout the state, conducted by first responders to prioritize testing for those on the frontline of this pandemic.
- Designated testing sites should be set up in order of priority – high-risk regions with the greatest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases should be prioritized first.
- For more information and an example of how this program is being implemented, please review the Seattle Model by clicking [here](#).

3. Establish COVID-19 as a presumptive occupational illness to be covered under workers' compensation

- As peace officers and first responders are essential personnel, they are exempt from California's shelter-in-place order and are at significantly higher risk for contracting the virus every day in the course of their duties. Should any officer or first responder contract the virus while performing their duties, we believe this qualifies as a work-related illness that should be covered by workers' compensation.

4. Obtain hotel space for peace officers that have contracted COVID-19, are awaiting test results, or have had a documented contact with a citizen that has tested positive for COVID-19

- In cities throughout the state, hotel occupancy rates are hovering around 10%, and that excess hotel space has been secured for homeless individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. We believe similar arrangements can and should be made for the peace officers serving our communities.
- Reserving hotel space for peace officers exhibiting symptoms will prevent the spread of the virus to their families and fellow peace officers; as departments begin to adjust their work schedules to reflect staff “flexing,” we cannot afford a diminished police force.

5. Prioritized delivery of a vaccine, if and when available, to first responders

- To ensure officers and first responders can continue to provide necessary services to the public during this health emergency, if a vaccine or other medical protocol that mitigates the effect of COVID-19 becomes available, peace officers and first responders, in addition to those hospitalized and in immediate need, should be among the first to receive it.

To protect the health and safety of our communities, we must protect the first responders who serve them. With the right tools and equipment in place, California’s elected leaders and communities can have the full confidence that law enforcement and our first responder partners will rise to face this challenge and exceed expectations, ensuring our communities are supported during this health crisis.

The Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC) is the largest statewide organization of its kind, representing 77,000 public safety members across more than 930 public safety associations in the state.

Questions?

Please reach out to:

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****Disclaimer – This tele-townhall was recorded. We will send everyone a link to the recording for future use.***