



BURLINGTON

Police Department

TRAINING BULLETIN

Patrol Response During the COVID-19 Pandemic

When responding to calls for service, officers should be utilizing the Critical Decision Making Model to help guide them through the safest and most effective outcomes.

Step 1- Collect Information

Telecommunicators are required to ask callers questions regarding their health prior to dispatching officers to residents. In addition, telecommunicators should ask residents to come outside to meet the officers if feasible.

In addition, the Alamance County Health Department will soon be sharing locations in which confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been detected. This information will be placed into the CAD system and shared with officers regarding calls for service at these specific locations.

Officers should ask additional questions prior to arriving if they are uncertain or unclear of the situation. Once on scene, officers should continue to gather information from other people on scene to determine potential risks.

Step 2- Assess the Situation, Threat, and Risks

Evaluate the information you have received. Ask yourself, "Do I need to respond to this call (see CAD sheet)? If so, can I handle the call from a safe distance? If the person is not outside, do I need to go inside the residence, or can I call the person(s) out to me?" If upon arrival you observe a person with symptoms like COVID -19, ask yourself, "Do I have time to put on my PPE?" Contact additional resources such as your supervisor if needed. Begin to develop a working strategy to minimize risk to yourself and the public.

Step 3- Consider Police Powers and Agency Policy

Considering the current conditions, this step regarding officer's duties should be drastically different than standard operating procedures. Officers should not be placing themselves or others at risk to make arrests for low level crimes and/or misdemeanors. When conducting traffic stops, consider the impact issuing a ticket could have on a person that lost their job and may not get a check for months. Always remember WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW?



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Step 4- Identify Options and Determine the Best Course of Action:

Officers should narrow options which may be drastically different than how they typically would respond to a situation. See below examples:

- Don't walk blindly into a situation.
- When safe to do so, conduct police operations with suspects or complainants from 6 feet away
- Do not enter a residence without obtaining health information regarding the occupants and make all attempts to conduct business outside. If you must enter a house, wear your PPE.
- When conducting death investigations that appear to be caused by an illness, officers should designate a SCOUT officer to make entry into the residence first while wearing PPE to evaluate the situation. This should only be done when it is tactically safe to do so. These cases most likely will involve the elderly and extreme caution should be taken in these circumstances to eliminate multiple exposures.
- When dealing with a person who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID 19, toss them a mask to wear over their mouth and nose.

Step 5- Act, Review, and Re-assess

Once officers decide to act, it is extremely important to evaluate this action. This is a very difficult time in the policing industry and officers need to learn what works and what does not. This information needs to be shared throughout the agency to ensure we remain safe as well as members of the community.