

*Office of the Governor
State of North Carolina*

*Roy Cooper
Governor*



*20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-0301*

March 31, 2020

The Hon. John W. Ingram, V, President
North Carolina Sheriffs Assoc.

Chief David L. Hess, President
N.C. Assoc. of Chiefs of Police

Dear Law Enforcement Partners:

By now you are aware that I have issued a Stay at Home order for the state of North Carolina to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and prevent our medical facilities from being overwhelmed by seriously ill patients.

This Order has the effect of law, and a violation of it is a Class 2 misdemeanor. I appreciate your partnership in keeping your communities safe and helping slow the spread of this pandemic across North Carolina.

It is my hope that people obey this Order to protect themselves and their loved ones, and to protect you and first responders from having to enforce its provisions. I trust your judgment in handling compliance by reminding those who may be violating its provisions, particularly the social distancing and mass gathering limitations, about the requirements of the Order.

Simply put, arrests should be a final option in affecting the changes we need to make to keep people healthy and safe. Local orders, the statewide order, and the gravity of the pandemic worldwide should be enough to convince people of the seriousness.

Additionally, I wanted to let you know that at my request COVID-19 testing guidance has been clarified, and it prioritizes law enforcement members who may have been exposed to the virus.

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The new guidance includes first responders such as law enforcement, firefighters, correctional staff, detention workers and emergency medical technicians at the same level as health care workers in the COVID-19 priority list for testing by the North Carolina State Laboratory for Public Health. Currently, tests results are returned within 24 hours from when the laboratory receives the sample, though it has been taking several days for private labs to provide test results.

While hospitalized patients must remain at the top of this priority list, law enforcement and other first responders who believe they may have contracted the disease are also a priority due to the essential nature of your work.

We continue to push for more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers, though unfortunately those items are in short supply across the nation and the world. Please know that we are working every day to get North Carolina more supplies.

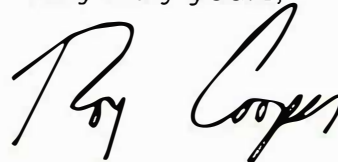
Finally, in answer to the Sheriff's Association question regarding "drive-in" worship services convened in open-air areas: I trust law enforcement's judgment in directing people to abide by local and state health department guidance. These kinds of gatherings appear to be acceptable as long as individuals remain in their vehicles and avoid contact.

These are difficult times for our state, and you should know that I appreciate your unfailing service during this time. Public servants who risk their own health and safety to keep our state strong are heroes every day, but especially during this time of crisis for our state and nation.

Thank you again for your service to your community and to our state.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roy Cooper

Attachment: [DHHS COVID-19 Provider Guidance](#)