



Michael Luvera
Chief of Police

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April 2, 2020

To the Burlington Community,

Weeks ago many of us were not even aware that the coronavirus existed. Today, our schools remain closed, in-person faith-based activities limited, government services have been reduced, and other community establishments have temporarily closed or have been required to change their delivery of services. COVID19 has impacted every one of us. Some of these impacts might include the loss of loved ones; illness of ourselves, family members and others; financial instability; as well as the inconvenience of not being able to enjoy the quality of life we have become accustomed to.

Burlington police officers continue to respond to calls for service. Our overall call volume has not dropped drastically but there has been a shift in the types of calls we are responding to. COVID19 is a new community experience which brought with it unique calls for service requiring law enforcement to adapt. Law enforcement calls regarding matters such as social distancing; proclamation violations and business transactions thought to be non-essential are all things that are new to us.

This letter is a reminder that we are under a State proclamation referred to as the “Stay Home – Stay Healthy” proclamation. The “Stay Home – Stay Healthy” proclamation was put in place because our medical professionals believe that it is the best way to reduce exposures and prevent overruns of our medical providers and supplies. The proclamation calls for people remaining home but does provide for allowable essential activities such as essential shopping, seeking healthcare, exercise, and working at a place of business that is listed as essential. The entirety of this proclamation and other important COVID19 information can be found at www.coronavirus.wa.gov.

Like this letter, BPD staff and officers prefer to focus on providing information and education to our community over enforcement. Voluntary compliance is our goal as it is more effective than other options such as citations and/or arrests. We want people to follow the proclamation not for fear of facing citations or arrest, but because it is the right thing to do. Most of us are doing the right thing and following guidance given by medical professionals. However, this week we have received an increase in the number of complaints where people are perceiving that businesses may be operating in violation of the allowable essential exceptions to the proclamation. In those cases we are notifying the business that we received a complaint and asking that they evaluate their services to ensure that they are considered essential as outlined.

Please know that there are numerous industries and businesses that are considered essential. For more information about essential businesses go to coronavirus.wa.gov/whats-open-and-closed/essential-business.

Due to the complexity surrounding essential business practices and the amount of complaints received across the State of Washington, the Attorney General's Office has established a website so the public can make direct reports to the State of Washington regarding businesses that are violating the proclamation. If you have a complaint or concern we recommend you using the online form which can be found at app.smartsheet.com/b/form/09349a1c56844b539fea1c2cabd16d56.

Our staff and officers continue to provide quality service, albeit through social distancing and telephone communication as situations allow. We understand this is not easy for you, our community. Please know that it is not easy for us either, but limiting exposures is the right thing to do.

For non-emergent needs please call 360-428-3211. For emergencies please call 911.

Sincerely,

Michael Luvera

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Chief of Police