

LEGAL ALERT

**KEEPING FIRST RESPONDERS SAFE
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is deeply impacting our communities. The extent of the impact will depend a great deal on the government's ability to contain the virus. Police officers, firefighters and paramedics are on the frontline of this response and keeping these first responders safe and healthy is crucial to containing the effects of the virus.

The Metropolitan Alliance of Police ("MAP") has contacted many of our clients asking that serious and systematic measures be taken to protect our police officers from COVID-19. The International Alliance of Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) also has offered comprehensive guidance for law enforcement agencies in regard to COVID-19. At the top of the IACP's recommendations deal with clear, consistent and frequent communications with public safety officers and providing them with the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to minimize the chances of COVID-19 infection. In this regard, the IACP guidance states that:

"Communicate clearly, consistently, and frequently with agency staff about changing policies and procedures.

- Prepare officers to answer questions about testing kit availability, travel restrictions, quarantine and isolation, personal safety measures including who the public should call for such information.
- Designate a command staff leader or team to spearhead coordination with external agencies and disseminate information to agency staff.

Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to all officers with training on its proper wear, removal, and disposal.

- Put together Go-Bags that include PPE for officers and first aid supplies for response to community members.

For any questions or comments you might have regarding this newsletter, please feel free to contact:

Authored By:

Name: Thomas M. Melody

Email: tmmelody@ktjlaw.com

Phone: (312) 984-6426



Name: Jason A. Guisinger

Email: jaguisinger@ktjlaw.com

Phone: (312) 984-6462



For any questions or comments you might have regarding this newsletter, please feel free to contact:

Chicago Office

20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1660
Chicago, IL 60606

T: (312) 984-6400

F: (312) 984-6444

Orland Park Office

15010 S. Ravinia Ave., Ste. 10 Orland
Park, IL 60462

T: (708) 349-3888

F: (708) 349-1506

Streator Office

7 Northpoint Drive
Streator, Illinois 61364

T: (815) 672-3116

F: (815) 672-0738

Lincolnshire Office

250 Parkway Drive, Ste 330
Lincolnshire, Illinois 60069

T: (312) 984-6400

F: (312) 984-6444

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- Increase the frequency of disinfecting patrol cars, holding cells, locker rooms, break rooms, and other agency facilities to reduce exposure to the virus.”

The IACP guidance also contains detailed information on the following subjects:

- Developing a contingency plan for staffing shortages.
- Communicating clearly and consistently to the public as information emerges.
- Utilizing incident command systems (ICS) to aid in agency response.
- Creating a plan for critical incident stress management.

Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published interim guidance on COVID-19 for all first responders. **According to the CDC, “[t]his guidance applies to all first responders, including law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, and emergency management officials, who anticipate close contact with persons with confirmed or possible COVID-19 in the course of their work.”**

The CDC’s guidance can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

The IACP recourses can be found here: <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/law-enforcement-information-on-covid-19>

Additionally, according to the CDC interim guidance, the “EMS Infectious Disease Playbook,” published by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response’s Technical Resources, Assistance Center, Information Exchange (TRACIE), is a resource available to infectious disease emergency response planners at <https://www.ems.gov/pdf/ASPR-EMS-Infectious-Disease-Playbook-June-2017.pdf>.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, please do not hesitate to contact KTJ with any questions or for guidance dealing with this unprecedented virus. **Regardless of your legal question or concern related to local government, a KTJ attorney is ready to provide a prompt response.**