

WACOPS Member Update March 25, 2020 – COVID-19

Dear WACOPS Members and friends:

On Monday, March 23, 2020 Governor Inslee imposed the Stay Healthy Stay Home order. Though identified as an essential service (union and worker advocacy) WACOPS has closed our Olympia office. Staff are working from home and we are actively completing the essential work of our critically important organization.

We have much to update you on, including a comprehensive Legislative Recap prepared by our lobbyist, Jeff. Additionally, I must inform you of the grief we feel for the family of Trooper Schaffer who was killed in the line of duty laying a spike strip out to stop a wanted person. We have posted our sympathy on our Facebook page and will be communicating with our dear friends at the Washington State Patrol Troopers Association.

As you all know too well, virus pandemic or not, the work of our State's law enforcement goes on. We have much to share with you about the work of WACOPS and our broader mission, but today, again, I'm going to focus on COVID-19 only.

COVID-19 impacts Law Enforcement --

Last week I asked you to inform me of any cases of COVID-19 you're experiencing, how your department is handling it, and what your personal experience as a first responder has been. I hope you will let me know. The stories you share with me will inform my ongoing conversations with the Governor's office. As a member of WACOPS you ensure that we have access to our State's policy makers and that includes the excellent staff in the Governor's office. We are your voice and it matters.

As a result of my request, a member reached out today and shared his story about his illness, the steps he had to take to get tested, and just moments ago (7 days after getting tested) he has informed me that he is positive for COVID-19.

In addition to getting information to you, we are trying to inform policy makers about the urgency of getting priority testing for first responders and priority processing of those tests. Washington is a big state and has an honored tradition of being independent with each community proud of their unique nature. Even so, during this time, we must have a universally accessible way for all our State's first responders to get tested and verified quickly.

We are working to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, public policy mistakes and the health care system's failure to recognize the testing and test processing needs of our state's first responders. Please take a minute to drop me an email informing on any experience you've had, or you feel confident you can report on accurately. Good news stories and frustrations are all important and welcome.

SOURCES of News --

It is critically important that you get your COVID-19 information from trusted sources. In addition to your own department management, and WACOPS, you may be surfing the web looking for updates. We realize your spouses, dear friends, and other family may be leaning on you for updates or verification of things they are reading or hearing about. Below are a few sources you can consider. There may be others, and please let me know if you have found a dependable resource that we can share with other members.

A. Virus cases around the world – Johns Hopkins University

Today, we found this interactive map that is managed by the Johns Hopkins University. It shows the virus cases worldwide, including detail by country, state, and county.

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

B. Centers for Disease Control – All things COVID-19

Many of you have already been visiting this important site. You can also access the President's directive regarding "15 Days to Slow the Spread."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

C. Washington State Department of Health – COVID-19 Page

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

Included on this page, if you scroll down just a bit, is a set of links related to documents that tell the reader the steps to take if they have been diagnosed or they believe they may have the virus. Additionally, there is information about what to do if you think you've been exposed and other important directives.

Key steps to avoid contracting COVID-19 –

Wash your hands (20 seconds or longer) with soap and water.

If you cannot wash, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol

Stay home (if possible)

When out in the community remain 6 feet from other people

Do not wear a facemask (they are in limited supply) **unless you're sick**, or you are assisting someone sick that cannot wear a mask.

FIRST RESPONDERS: Follow the directive of your department.

Glove-up!

Here are two links (shared a couple times now) for LE specifically --

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

Please let me know if you have information that will be important to our members. As the only statewide law enforcement advocacy organization we have a diverse membership; east/west, north/south, urban/rural, municipal/county, etc. Your experiences are important and can help to focus our work in Olympia.

Please be safe,

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