



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Sheriff Barnes on enforcement of face coverings

SANTA ANA, Ca. (July 2, 2020) – Please see the following statement from Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes regarding the wearing of face coverings and enforcement.

“Wearing a face covering is important to mitigate the risk and spread of COVID-19. We have to be practical when considering enforcement of face coverings. With limited exceptions, not wearing a face covering is a violation of the public health order, but it is not a practical application of a criminal law violation. As many other industries are gaining compliance through an education-first approach, deputies will continue to educate the public about the statewide face-covering requirement and will request voluntary compliance.

“During this time of strained police community relations, one only needs to look to New York and other jurisdictions where enforcement has resulted in uses of force and negative outcomes to recognize that an education-first strategy, aimed at obtaining voluntary compliance, is the most sensible and realistic approach.

“I expect that Orange County residents will continue to use common sense and responsibly wear a face covering, in addition to other recommended best practices such as frequent hand washing and maintaining physical distance, for the benefit of their own health as well as the collective health of the community. We must do what is necessary to stop the transmission of COVID-19.”

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