



For Release: March 15, 2020

Contact: mediarequest@mcsso.maricopa.gov

SHERIFF PENZONE ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING SECURITY CHANGES IN COUNTY JAILS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

Out of concern for the spread of the COVID-19 virus, I feel that it is appropriate to immediately suspend access into our jail facilities for volunteer or supplemental services. This directive will not affect access for court ordered interactions or legal obligations.

At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our jails. I make this decision, however, as a precautionary measure to protect our officers, staff, and the incarcerated population to mitigate the potential spread of this disease.

Our newly established tablet technology, which is deployed throughout our jail system, allows family, friends and community members to continue to communicate with inmates through the use of video visitation, messaging and e-mails.

Further restrictions involving all inmate visits and programs will be evaluated daily as new information is provided by County, State and Federal Public Health organizations and in consultation with our inmate health care provider (Maricopa County Correctional Health Services).

Disinfection activity continues and includes more frequent sanitizing of frequently-touched surfaces and recommendations to staff and inmates about frequent hand washing with soap.

I am also in contact with private industry to determine availability of additional safety equipment and products to facilitate safety and sanitary health needs within our jail system.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends people wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching our face or coming in contact with people who are sick, clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces using a cleaning product that contains bleach, and when possible, avoid large gatherings.

The health and safety of our staff is my number one priority. We must also minimize exposure to our jail population to ensure we mitigate any exposure to infectious disease.

I will continue to monitor the situation to ensure resumption of all activities as soon as safely possible.

With great appreciation and respect for the work of our public safety professionals,

Sheriff Paul Penzone