

**From:** [Fikes, Cathy](#)  
**To:** [Agenda Alerts](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Police use of face masks  
**Date:** Friday, May 29, 2020 10:54:09 AM

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**From:** Bobbi Ashurst <bobbiashurst@rocketmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 29, 2020 5:48 AM  
**To:** Handy, Robert <Robert.Handy@hbpd.org>  
**Cc:** CITY COUNCIL <city.council@surfcity-hb.org>; Chi, Oliver <oliver.chi@surfcity-hb.org>; Jun, Catherine <catherine.jun@surfcity-hb.org>; Knight, Marie <marie.knight@surfcity-hb.org>; Mello, Brittany <brittany.mello@surfcity-hb.org>; Hopkins, Travis <thopkins@surfcity-hb.org>; Gates, Michael <Michael.Gates@surfcity-hb.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Police use of face masks

Hi Rob,

Thank you for getting back to me. I appreciate all the protocols and actions you have established regarding protecting both the public and our department from contracting and/or spreading Covid-19.

I do understand the unique challenges that this pandemic creates particularly for law enforcement. In a city like HB, with our mix of residents and visitors, it is a difficult task balancing the health of our officers and the public with effective policing. I cannot stress enough the importance of our officers setting an example, and being a positive influence on the public, so knowing they have the tools to do so is gratifying.

Again, I appreciate your timely reply and hope we can all get through this in good health.

Respectfully,

**Bobbi Ashurst**  
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On Thursday, May 28, 2020, 5:55:08 PM PDT, Handy, Robert <[robert.handy@hbpd.org](mailto:robert.handy@hbpd.org)> wrote:

Hi Bobbi, I was forwarded the e-mail you sent to eh HB City Council and would like to respond specifically to your question. First of all, I think it is a reasonable question and I

appreciate you asking the City to explain. I would like to start by saying as an organization, we have done many things to keep our officers healthy in order to protect them and keep them from spreading the virus to any member of the public so they can continue to provide our public safety services.

Over the last 81 days we have instituted many things internally to protect our officers and in turn the public from the COVID Virus. I will list some of them below. The regulations have constantly shifted and at times some have been contradictory. Until the last few days, the mask guidance was "should" and strongly encouraged. The order from the weekend was buried in with other things related to restaurant openings and appears to make masks a requirement, however, the County has said they are revising the order. We take this guidance seriously but it also comes with some complications for our officers. The importance of an officer's ability to communicate accurately and effectively through the radio and with other officers directly in a critical incident cannot be understated. A mask hinders their ability to communicate, particularly over the radio. At this point we have strongly encouraged masks and have issued a number of them to each officer. We require the masks in certain high risk circumstances but requiring them for the duration of a 13 hours shift is not practical. We ask the officers to use their discretion and wear them as much as they can when interacting directly with the public when they cannot maintain 6 feet of separation. We will be waiting to see what the changes are to the order before deciding if we will change our policy.

As for things we have done to keep officers and the community safe:

We immediately changed everybody's schedule into a "platoon" style schedule and restricted movements between platoons in order to minimize cross contamination if anybody were to be impacted and become sick.

We sent home employees who were at risk or their duties were not mission critical. Many people began to work from home.

The City bought personal protective equipment for each officer and every patrol car

We instituted strict disinfecting procedures throughout the station and in police across

Set up a decontamination area in the parking lot

The City is cleaning every uniform everyday versus the previous method of employees taking them home

Every employee has their temperature checked and goes through a brief medical screening everyday

We canceled vacations, days off and put in travel restrictions.

Established quarantine protocols for exposed, sick or other circumstances when necessary

We have routinely tested employees for COPVID who met a base level criteria

The above list is a just a quick summary of many of the things we are doing to protect our employees so they can continue to serve the community and also keep them from spreading it to each other or a member of the public. I am proud to say, we got on these protocols early and have not had any employees come down with the virus. If you have any further questions about what we are doing or would like to discuss anything further, please feel free to reach out to me directly anytime.

Thanks

Rob Handy

**Robert Handy, Chief of Police**

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**From:** Bobbi Ashurst <[bobbiashurst@rocketmail.com](mailto:bobbiashurst@rocketmail.com)>  
**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 9:35:44 AM PDT  
**To:** CITY COUNCIL <[city.council@surfcity-hb.org](mailto:city.council@surfcity-hb.org)>, "[Michaelgates@surfcity-hb.org](mailto:Michaelgates@surfcity-hb.org)"  
<[Michaelgates@surfcity-hb.org](mailto:Michaelgates@surfcity-hb.org)>  
**Subject:** Police use of face masks  
**Reply-To:** Bobbi Ashurst <[bobbiashurst@rocketmail.com](mailto:bobbiashurst@rocketmail.com)>

Dear City Council and City Attorney,

Now that there is a Health order by the OC health officer regarding the wearing of face masks in public, when will our police department start wearing them?

The common concern and reason for wearing a face protection is to protect others from oneself. Our police officers are at high risk for spreading the Covid-19 virus in that their job requires a high degree of public contact. The more people one is in contact with, the higher the risk of either contracting the virus or becoming an asymptomatic carrier. It also sets a very strong example for the general public.

As an aside, do we have any information on any infection within our department? I think it needs to be made public as it brings home the importance of being vigilant, not to mention the possibility of city liability.

I understand that trying to enforce the order in crowded areas like downtown and the beaches is akin to herding cats, but our officers should at least set the example.

I don't know what the consequences are for ignoring the order but I can only hope that there are some. Otherwise why bother?

Please get back to me on this issue as I am very interested in your response.

Thank you, and stay safe and healthy,

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