

Baltimore Police Department



From: Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Michael Sullivan

To: Members of the BPD

Subject: COVID-19 – Calls for Service

March 17, 2020

In order to protect our officers in the field and the public at large, the Baltimore Police Department is enacting protocols for alternative responses for calls for service. It is critically important that our officers practice social distance whenever feasible to lessen the likelihood of spreading COVID-19.

Responding to Calls for Service

Baltimore's 911 specialists are following an established questioning format to identify callers with flu-like symptoms to establish the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 virus. In the event the caller meets the criteria, the dispatcher will notify responding personnel over the radio to "use universal precautions." When responding to EMS calls, where the "use of universal precautions" is recommended, if feasible, please wait for EMS personnel to arrive on-scene and be guided by EMS.

- EMS personnel should apply a mask to the patient.

Note: Masks are intended for the patient to limit the dispersal of respiratory droplets.

All Members must exercise caution when entering residences or enclosed spaces when handling calls for service. Be mindful of the symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, coughing, and shortness of breath) and the surfaces that are being touched. If at all possible, attempt to contact the complainant by phone and request parties to come out of the location and speak to them outside the location.

Mandatory Online Reporting

The Baltimore Police Department is requiring all eligible online reporting incidents be handled through online reporting and will not be dispatching a police officer to handle these incidents.

Online Eligible Incidents:

- Theft from Vehicle
 - Criteria: property taken from inside the vehicle and the victim did not have personal contact with the person who took the property.
- Theft
 - Criteria: property that is taken without your permission, and the victim did not have personal contact with the person who took the property.

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- Lost Property
 - Criteria: property is lost or misplaced and is not believed to be theft
- Vandalism to Property or Destruction of Property
 - Criteria: the act of changing, modifying or defacing public or private property.
- Vandalism to Vehicle or Destruction of Property
 - Criteria: the act of damaging or defacing a motor vehicle
- Illegal Dumping
 - Criteria: improper disposal of waste at any location other than a permitted landfill or facility

Telephone Reporting Required

The Baltimore Police Department is requiring all incidents that are not eligible for online reporting and do not require a police officer to handle in person to be handled over the telephone.

All Priority 3 and 4 calls for service will be handled over the telephone. The 911 Specialist will advise the caller that they have sent the call to the police, and an officer may be contacting the call by telephone.

Priority 3 – Routine Calls – situations that do not require immediate response to prevent imminent harm to a person or prevent significant property loss/damage and indicating criminal activity for report purposes only:

- a) Any incident that does not require immediate police response to prevent personal injury or property loss/damage (e.g. accident – property damage only, disturbance)
- b) Any incident that does not require immediate police response for evidence preservation or protection of the crime scene
- c) Any crime not in progress that does not require immediate investigation

Priority 4 – Non-Critical Calls – situations that do not require immediate police response to include:

- a) Any incident that involves a minor violation or offense (e.g. noise complaint, loud music)
- b) Any incident that involves non-criminal police services (e.g. escort, notifications)
- c) Any incident minor in nature, not in progress, that requires follow-investigation (e.g. recovered property)

If it is determined while speaking with the caller that a police officer must speak to the complaint face-to-face, advise the caller that they need to come out of their location and meet you outside so social distance can be maintained.

If an officer determines after speaking to the caller that an incident is eligible for online reporting, the officer will provide the phone number 1-844-354-2059 to the caller in order for them to call and get a link to file an online police report.