



NEWS RELEASE

RIVER FOREST POLICE DEPARTMENT

James O'Shea – Chief of Police

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Public Information Officer:

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-For Immediate Release-

Police to Utilize Alternative Procedures to Handle Non-Emergency Calls and Reports Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

RIVER FOREST, IL The River Forest Police Department continues to make public safety its top priority. The Department is committed to providing professional service for our community and keeping our employees healthy. This is critical to ensure we continue to protect and serve the people of River Forest. During these uncertain times, it's important we take a proactive approach for the prevention and management of COVID-19. As a result, we have made modifications in the manner we will be able to interact with the public, consistent with social distancing.

These changes involve non-emergency customer services. For any incident that does not present a significant threat to life or property, officers will begin the initial investigation over the phone. If it is determined an in-person response is warranted, the officer will keep a safe distance from the reporting party. These steps are to limit citizen exposure, adhere to social distancing, and to maintain a properly staffed police force. Residents may be asked to step outside to speak with responding officers.

We will continue to respond to emergencies, priority crimes, crimes against persons, alarms, suspicious persons, suspicious vehicles, accidents with injuries, and accidents with lane closures or major property damage. Additionally, our investigative efforts to find and hold accountable individuals who violate the law will not stop. Officers will not tolerate reckless driving on Village streets and will not allow this pandemic to be used as a ruse to commit violent acts or other serious criminal offenses against residents or visitors alike. The Department will continue high-visibility patrols and maintain operational readiness throughout the Village.

These modifications are necessary for the health, safety and welfare of our community and first responders. We are continuing to consult with public health officials and statewide leaders to assess the COVID-19 situation. As soon as we can safely rescind these modifications, we will resume our normal, in-person community engagement and customer service efforts.

As a reminder, our Department is not currently accepting walk-in reports, child safety seat installations, or civilian fingerprint requests but we remain dedicated to assist you by phone or email during this pandemic. The on-duty Watch Commander will be a primary point of contact for phone and email correspondences, plus he/she will determine if an on-scene or alternative response is warranted. The Chief of Police and his staff are closely monitoring all criminal or community policing calls for service being reported in River Forest. Crime Prevention Officer Ben Ransom can be contacted at 708-366-7125 ext. 343 or bransom@vrf.us with regard to any senior services, juvenile matters, business inquires, or any other community policing initiatives.

We will continue to keep you informed of any changes. If you are experiencing any flu-like symptoms or those consistent with COVID-19, please do not enter the Village Hall or violate social distancing best practices while meeting in person with an officer. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through this together.