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Department of
Public Safety

Thomas J. Stickrath, Director

News Release

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Ohio Department of Public Safety Reminds First Responders to Remain Vigilant during COVID-19

COLUMBUS - In response to the ongoing surge of COVID-19 spreading throughout the state, Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director Tom Stickrath is strongly encouraging that all first responders remain vigilant in taking safety precautions while interacting with the public.

In a message to the executive directors of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, Ohio Emergency Medical Services, the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association, and others, Director Stickrath encouraged all EMS providers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first-responder personnel to approach each scene with appropriate PPE and take necessary protective action to protect themselves.

"With the continued increase in COVID-19 cases throughout Ohio, all of our first responders should assume that anyone they interact with outside of their homes is carrying the coronavirus," said Director Stickrath. "I encourage our first responders to consistently wear PPE and practice social distancing to the extent possible as we proceed through what's anticipated to be a rough winter."

"The public depends on first responders to answer the call and be there whenever they're needed," said State Fire Marshal Kevin S. Reardon. "As long as COVID-19 continues to be an issue for us, responders should double down on making sure they take all possible precautions to keep themselves, their families, and their communities healthy."

Agencies in need of PPE for first-responder safety that do not have funds to purchase new equipment should contact their county Emergency Management Agency.

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