



WOOD COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



SHAWN BECKER, SHERIFF

Press Release

03/19/2020 5:00PM

From: Wood County Sheriff's Department

Ref: COVID 19 virus...Temporary Changes to Sheriff's Department Operations

Beginning at 5pm today, March 19, 2020, Sheriff Becker has implemented the following actions, most of which will effect services Wood County residents have come to expect. These measures are being taken in an effort to maintain officer and community health while we all fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Police work has inherent dangers, but in alignment with recommendations and personal social distances, we hope to limit those dangers in the area of exposure for staff and citizens in the following ways:

1. All Jail Inmate Visiting is cancelled (Inmate phone privileges expanded during this time)
2. All public fingerprinting/DNA sample collecting is cancelled
3. Civil Process and open records requests will be handled by mail, phone, or email.
4. All Drug takeback/drop-off at WCSD is discouraged during this time. In certain cases, a deputy can respond to a residence to collect prescription medications.
5. All ride a longs are cancelled
6. All public deputy-requested community or school presentations are cancelled
7. All public facility tours/events/meetings are cancelled
8. Deputies will respond to residences for Project Life Saver battery changes and maintenance needs.
9. Traffic Court will not be held until June 4th 2020. Traffic Court dates from now until June 4th, will be rescheduled.
10. Please avoid unnecessary visits to the Wood County Courthouse. We encourage you to access Wood County's webpage for information that may answer your questions. <http://www.co.wood.wi.us/>

The Sheriff's Department has also modified patrol responses to lower level priority calls to reduce deputy/citizen contacts during this virus containment time. Just some examples are:

- Deputies will not respond to routine medical calls, unless life saving measures are necessary or EMS requests us
- Mailbox Damage/minor damage complaints will be taken by phone
- Fraud or ID theft will be taken by phone
- Non reportable accidents (under \$1000 in damage) may be asked to self-report on DOT website
- Citizens should also expect to meet with Deputies outside of residences to maintain recommended social distancing.

It is imperative when calling the dispatch center that you leave a good call back number for the deputy to reach you. In addition, many cell phones block unknown or restricted calls, you will need to lift that for us to reach you. Also, please advise the dispatcher if you are not feeling well. These changes will be continually re-evaluated. Thank you for your understanding.