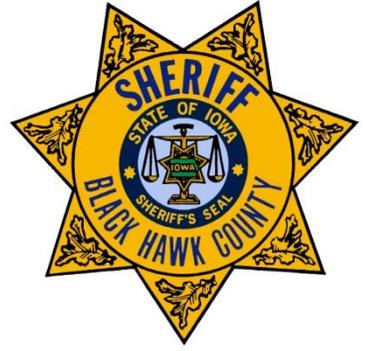


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For Immediate Release

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Coronavirus Preparations and Public Advisement

In an effort to maintain transparency of plans which have been implemented over the last several weeks, the Black Hawk County Sheriff's Office releases the following update as it pertains to their preparations and protocols for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic locally.

Starting several weeks ago, the Black Hawk County Jail started deep cleaning, antimicrobial and disinfection protocols to build a stronger foundation and baseline for defenses against the virus within the inmate population. Beginning immediately, additional medical screenings and evaluations of all arrestees will start being implemented. Additionally, the jail medical staff has identified current inmates who are immunocompromised for projected isolation and distancing protocols. There are also plans in place for isolation of incoming arrestees to protect others during the potential incubation period for those screened as "concerning".

"We are releasing this statement to allow the public to recognize our on-going plans and continuing efforts for addressing the significant issues facing our agency, the public who will interact with our organization, and to ensure that family members of our staff and incarcerated inmates are aware of our extreme efforts and forward thinking and planning for this eventual issue facing our nation." says Sheriff Tony Thompson. For staff, there

A CRIMINAL CHARGE IS MERELY AN ACCUSATION AND THE DEFENDANT IS PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.

are additional PPE (personal protective equipment) and protocols available as the pandemic becomes more prevalent in Eastern Iowa. “Obviously one of our major concerns is the continuity of operations and ensuring that public safety efforts continue. To that end, we have had conversations with our local law enforcement partners to ensure that coverage, cross-coverage, and cooperative efforts will allow for no disruption of emergency services should staffing become compromised as a result of this virus”

Thompson says.

The Black Hawk County Sheriff’s Office continues to work cooperatively with and consult with the Black Hawk County Health Department, Black Hawk County Emergency Management, the Iowa Health Department, the Iowa State Sheriff’s and Deputies Association, the American Corrections Association, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, the National Sheriff’s Association, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police in their preparation, integration of national best practices, and sharing of information and resources in preparation for the arrival of the virus in Eastern Iowa.

More extreme measures, including discontinuation of jail visitation, jail programming, reductions in office hours and curtailing of other situations requiring face-to-face interaction are planned for and anticipated when conditions are considered appropriate for further isolation and distancing. More information will be released as it becomes available and is deemed appropriate.

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