



August 2021

COVID-19 Delta Variant Considerations for Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement Bulletin 2021-6

There were 369 line of duty deaths in 2020, with 240 of such deaths being attributed to COVID-19, according to the [Officer Down Memorial Page](#). It is being widely reported that the COVID-19 Delta variant is highly contagious and present in the majority of COVID infections in the United States.¹ Law Enforcement leaders should continue to monitor this rapidly evolving situation, continually review the latest available information, and discuss their options with their legal counsel so that they can further protect their officers, employees, and communities.

Some considerations:

- On July 28, 2021, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued new recommendations for masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 due to the Delta variant. In light of the number of line of duty deaths suffered by law enforcement last year, ongoing reports of infections amongst law enforcement officers and their families in New Jersey, and the high frequency in which police employees are exposed to the general public, leaders should review the latest CDC guidance regarding the wearing of masks [here](#).
- The CDC has advised that “getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalization, and death.”² The CDC has also produced [The Key Things to Know About COVID Vaccines](#) which may be helpful while considering vaccination measures. Law enforcement leaders may also wish to have their officers watch the three-minute video of [Las Vegas Metro Police Department SWAT Sgt. Tom Jenkins](#). Sgt. Jenkins speaks about his own experience with COVID-19 and how he suffered because he chose not to be vaccinated.
- Law enforcement leaders should also be familiar with the [MEL Bulletin](#), which details considerations regarding the mandatory vaccination of employees.
- Police personnel should be made aware that as of July 3, 2021, the burden of proof for establishing Worker’s Compensation reverted to the higher standard of establishing “work-related.” This change may have some impact on first responders who have chosen not to be vaccinated. Further details regarding this standard can be viewed [here](#).
- Law enforcement leaders may also wish to re-visit guidance from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, including:

[Mandating COVID-19 Vaccinations for U.S. Law Enforcement Personnel](#)

[Law Enforcement Information on COVID-19](#)

¹(2021, June 25). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html>

²Holcomb, M., & Waldrop, T. (2021, July 20). *CNN*. Retrieved from More infectious Delta variant makes up 83% of new coronavirus cases as vaccine hesitancy persists: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/20/health/us-coronavirus-tuesday/index.html>