



COVID-19 FAQ

Revised 6.15.20

1) Does your incarcerated population have access to soap and water?

Answer- Yes. Each housing unit has soap and water and inmates are able to wash their hands as often as they need.

2) Are volunteers still allowed into the jails?

Answer- No, not for the time being. MCSO is limiting non-employee access to legal or essential operational personnel only.

3) Are family and friends allowed into the jails for video visitation?

Answer- No. Our jail system uses inmate tablet technology for communication with family, friends and other community members.

4) Are legal visits allowed into the jails?

Answer- Yes, legal visits are still taking place through glass partitioned rooms, however, attorneys and/or inmates can request a video visitation instead using inmate tablet technology.

5) Are you cleaning your jail facilities more than usual?

Answer- Yes. MCSO is addressing the appropriate "high-touch" areas with our cleaning staff and vendor.

6) Are there currently any coronavirus cases in the jails?

Answer- Please reach out to Correctional Health Services (CHS).

7) Are you testing inmates and staff for COVID-19?

Answer- Please reach out to Correctional Health Services (CHS), they provide health services to our inmate population. As far as our staff, all MCSO employees have been instructed to stay home if they are sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing and contact their healthcare provider. Additionally, if an employee shows up to work with symptoms or develops symptoms while at work, supervisors have been instructed to send them home. Should an employee test positive, MCSO works with the employee to determine all close contacts and inform those close contacts directly. All employees have been provided with masks and are required to wear those masks while at work. As of June 15, 2020, 383 MCSO employees have been tested for COVID-19, 276 have tested negative, 47 have tested positive, and 60 are pending.

8) Are you keeping inmates up to date with COVID-19?

Answer- Yes. Printed advisories regarding the virus, symptoms and personal hygiene are posted in each housing area. Additionally, inmate tablet technology is used to provide them with information.

9) What is your plan of action if an inmate presents COVID-19 symptoms?

Answer- Special administrative housing is provided along with medical assessment and treatment by CHS personnel.

10) Do you plan to release inmates in efforts to try to reduce the risks of COVID-19 in the county's jails?

Answer- On 03/23/2020 the Work Release population was 81 work release inmates. We (MCSO) have not technically released anyone, we followed a court order regarding the program. Those in the program have left at their normal check-out time without the expectation of return during the period of time outlined in the order, and all were instructed to contact the court that issued the work release order regarding their status. We no longer have any individuals participating in this program. Further developments regarding the work release program will be at the direction of The Superior Court. In addition, we have taken aggressive steps within our control and in collaboration with the judicial system to reduce our daily population from approximately 7,100 to about 4,380 as of today. We have done this while prioritizing public safety. We will continue to develop the most proactive strategies available to mitigate COVID-19 exposure in our jail population and for the well-being of our employees.

11) Are you asking patrol deputies to issue citations and release offenders for minor crimes in an effort to reduce COVID-19 risks?

Answer- Many local law enforcement leaders, including Sheriff Penzone, have empowered their patrol divisions to use discretion in circumstances when the offense is a non-violent misdemeanor offense. A citation or long form report is an option as we try to minimize exposure for our Deputies while effectively reducing the jail population.

12) What kind of measures are being taken to protect patrol deputies from COVID-19?

Answer- MCSO dispatch center has started to ask additional questions to provide more information to responding deputies to identify if additional personal protection equipment will be needed. When appropriate, community contact or reports will be taken by phone. Commanders have identified staff to ensure all high touch areas are cleaned with frequency and deputies are instructed to clean and wipe down patrol vehicles at the beginning and end of shift and as needed throughout the shift if a transport has been made. District lobbies will be closed, and the ride-along program is suspended.

13) Is MCSO working with other law enforcement agencies to determine best practices during this pandemic?

Answer- Sheriff Penzone and Command Staff have been in direct communication with state, local and federal enforcement officials. In addition, Sheriff Penzone has constructed a working group with the Arizona Department of Corrections, the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as staff member representation at emergency operation centers, public safety briefings and all remaining 14 county Sheriffs to share recommendations, best practices and operational responses to COVID-19.

14) Does a person still need to report to self-surrender?

Answer- Self-surrenders for sentences from Maricopa County Superior Court resumed June 1st. Visit <https://www.mcso.org/InmateInfo/SelfSurrender> for more details.