



The Ethical Society of Police – E.S.O.P.

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This is a public safety announcement. Some St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) Officers in the Traffic Safety Division (Accident Reconstruction and Canine) have tested positive, and some have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19. During these uncertain times, leadership from the City of St. Louis and SLMPD has been quiet about these facts for over 18-hours. Each second, they fail to warn officers, and the public can cost lives. The inadequate responses from leaders is very concerning. Lives are at stake.

We understand the difficulty Police Departments have with following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines with social distancing; however, leaders in the Traffic Safety Division failed to follow a modicum of known CDC guidelines with their response to COVID-19, a deadly pandemic. Despite the department-wide directive from the Chief's Office that no police officers should engage in self-initiated police activity unless someone's safety was in jeopardy, the Command Staff in the Traffic Safety Division went with a "business as usual" approach during the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. They directed officers to continue routine traffic stops. Those routine traffic stops placed officers and citizens in jeopardy; now, the Traffic Safety Division is in quarantine. No other division in SLMPD did self-initiated activity but Traffic Safety. This directive was broadcast Department-wide.

The COVID-19 positive test results reported in the news occurred after the Command over Traffic Safety directed Traffic Safety Officers to continue "business as usual" with routine traffic enforcement. At the time of the directive, numerous officers in Traffic Safety

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repeatedly voiced their concerns with the decision of their command with the “business as usual” response. The Command Staff in Traffic Safety ignored officers' concerns. These officers were concerned for themselves, immediate family, fellow employees, and the public.

On March 19, Chief Hayden sent a temporary directive Department-wide that stated, “A Commander has full discretion to allow self-initiated activity when warranted.” Earlier that day, we advised Chief John Hayden on behalf of members that allowing self-initiated activity in Traffic Safety placed officers, other employees, and the public at risk. His decision to send a temporary directive allowing self-initiated activity was also the wrong decision and put officers and citizens in harm's way.

It is also worth noting there was a shortage of some personal protective equipment (PPE), some equipment was not approved PPE, or simply unavailable until recently.

Going forward, we urge the City of St. Louis, the Chief of Police, and all command within SLMPD, to strictly adhere to the CDC rules with social distancing.

To stop the spread of COVID-19, consideration of allowing non-essential employees to work from home should be prioritized. Non-essential officers, immune-compromised employees, officers in investigative divisions should work on-call to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In the age of technology, department employees have access to communication devices that will keep them connected to SLMPD while on-call. Also, all officers have police radios, and some have take-home police vehicles to respond to crimes where their expertise is needed. Be advised, the scenes where their knowledge is required are always dispatched first to frontline responders in district patrol cars.

Again, we urge the City of St. Louis Leadership, the Chief of Police, all Command in SLMPD to adhere to the CDC guidelines with social distancing and warn the

public and employees in SLMPD when an employee has been exposed to COVID-19 or test positive.

We ask that you pray for a speedy recovery for our members and anyone affected by COVID-19.

Link to CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Respectfully,

The Ethical Society of Police

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