



# NEWS RELEASE

Bill Gore, Sheriff

## COVID-19 Testing at County Jails

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department is committed to the safety, security, health and well-being of people in our custody.

Our Detention Services Bureau took immediate actions and placed a lot of safeguards at intake to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to identify any potential case at the door. If you're booked into jail, you are automatically placed in quarantine for seven days and monitored for symptoms.

It is now part of our booking process to test every person who arrives in our jails. In June, we partnered with County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to offer free COVID-19 testing in housing units. Even if they were not showing symptoms, inmates were offered every opportunity to be tested without regard to their charges or sentence. To download video of COVID-19 testing for broadcast, visit <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/7gyi748xh9>.

As of July 2nd, 898 out of 3,403 inmates in housing units at seven county jails participated in the voluntary testing. That's 26% of the jail population. Another 562 have been tested at either intake or as ordered by a medical provider for a total of 1,460 inmates. Only 24 tested positive for COVID-19 since February. 20 of the positive cases were identified during the intake process, further limiting exposure because of quarantine protocols. There are seven inmates in custody who are currently positive for COVID-19. This represents only 0.2% of the total inmate population and shows safeguards put in place have reduced the exposure of the virus to other inmates and staff. The remaining inmates who tested positive have either fully recovered or been released. Inmates released who were still positive were connected with HHSA. To date, no inmates have required hospitalization due to COVID-19.

It should be noted our facilities have always had isolation measures to stem the spread of contagious diseases. Our medical wards have isolation rooms that use negative air pressure. We take temperature checks at employee and visitor entrances. We isolate any person in custody who is symptomatic, use appropriate protective equipment and follow infection control measures to reduce the risk of transmission. Effectively separating patients by cell, floor, ward and building to reduce the potential of spread. To increase social distancing, we previously cancelled all social visits, group classes and reentry programs. We also modified our booking criteria and released qualifying inmates who have 60 days or less left in their sentences. When we started this process, our average daily inmate population was 5,600. Four months later, we house fewer than 3,400 inmates.

To watch videos of our safety precautions in our jails visit:

COVID-19 Safety Protocols - <https://vimeo.com/411633126>

Keeping our Jails Clean - <https://vimeo.com/411632442>

Issued on July 2, 2020



[www.sdsheriff.net/newsroom](http://www.sdsheriff.net/newsroom)  
[mediarelations@sdsheriff.org](mailto:mediarelations@sdsheriff.org)  
(858) 974-2259



**STAY CONNECTED** @SDSheriff