



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 10, 2020

San Juan County Sheriff and Prosecutor Announce New Tools to Enforce Governor and County Health Officer Orders

While a majority of San Juan County residents have been doing all they can to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our communities, there are reports of individuals or businesses choosing to ignore the recent orders from the Governor and the San Juan County Health Officer.

In an effort to improve the County's ability to learn of and respond to violations, Sheriff Ron Krebs has rolled out a hotline and dedicated email to receive complaints. "We are ensuring we have an orderly process to receive islanders' concerns and respond in an appropriate and consistent manner," said Sheriff Krebs.

The approach will focus on education first. "I applaud all of those who are complying with the stay at home order of Governor Inslee. Voluntary compliance is our first line of protection against the coronavirus," added Sheriff Krebs.

Please call 360-370-7609 to lodge a complaint for a violation or to seek clarification of the meaning of the Governor's Order or the San Juan County Health Officer order. The Sheriff has also created an email to receive complaints and questions at covid-19tipshotline@sanjuanco.com. People who phone or email should expect a response within 24 hours. Do not call 911 for this purpose.

"Our goal is to contact individuals and businesses to ensure they are aware of the order and to check whether the activity in question is allowable exception. We recognize the rules here are complex and are not always obvious," said Sheriff Krebs.

In addition, the Governor has also set up a complaint form that can be accessed at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/09349a1c56844b539fea1c2cabd16d56>. Those complaints to the state may not be passed along to the local sheriff, unless it is determined that additional action is needed.

Prosecuting Attorney Randall Gaylord has tasked deputy prosecutor Erica Temple with answering questions from the Sheriff's deputies and preparing any applicable court papers to ensure compliance.

"We agree that the objective at this time to inform and educate," said Gaylord. He added that his aim is to reserve the courts for the more serious offenders. A civil "cease and desist" order is one tool that may be considered, it is also possible that businesses could face penalties from state regulators or the Consumer Protection Division of the Washington State Attorney General's Office.

Both Krebs and Gaylord ask residents to understand that the emergency orders were adopted quickly and the list of "essential business" was complicated. It is their sincere hope that those in San Juan County will want to comply, in order to protect themselves and their neighbors.

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