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## PRESS RELEASE

**March 18, 2020**  
**11:50 a.m.**  
**(SPD Response to COVID-19)**

As COVID-19 continues to impact our day to day lives the Salisbury Police Department will begin to screen incoming calls for service in order to take reports of certain crimes over the phone. This is an effort to create additional levels of social distancing for our community members and our officers as we do our part to slow the spread of the virus and continue to provide police services.

Our goal during this pandemic as a police department is to ensure the safety of all of our community members and our police officers and support staff who provide policing services on a daily basis. Starting on March 18, 2020, telephone calls for service received by the Salisbury Police Department will be closely analyzed by our communications officers and police officers. We will work with callers to determine whether an officer should respond to the scene of the call or whether we can take the report over the telephone. By making this decision and when the call comes in, we hope to reduce community transition of the virus, slow the spread of the virus among both police officers and community members, and continue to meet the law enforcement needs of our community.

During the pandemic and upon receiving a telephone complaint, our communications officers will immediately obtain all necessary reporting information from the caller as it relates to the crime or law enforcement need. Our communications officers will then ask the caller questions about the common symptoms related to COVID-19. Please expect questions such as, but not limited to: Do you have a fever? Do you have a cough? Are you short of breath? Have you been exposed to COVID-19? Have you been officially diagnosed with COVID-19? These are simply an example of what you may be asked during your telephone conversation with the police department so that we can continue to provide essential police services during the pandemic.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data indicates that COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. CDC data suggests that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms can include, fever, cough, difficulty breathing and shortness of breath. COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person via respiratory droplets among close contacts. Respiratory droplets are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and droplets can land in the mouths or noses, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs, by people who are nearby.

Upon asking and receiving answers to very specific health questions related to COVID-19, there may be times in which a police report can be taken over the telephone. Crimes such as, but not limited to: theft, fraud, identify theft and malicious destruction of property may be taken over the telephone and an incident report number will be provided to the caller.

As we begin to take reports of certain crimes and events over the telephone, we want to assure the community that we will continue to quickly respond to crimes of violence, or when a victim is in harm's way. By moving to a telephone reporting system we can direct essential services where they are needed most while slowing transmission of COVID-19.

For non-emergency type reports, the Salisbury Police Department can be reached at (833)SBY-CITY (833-729-2489) and for emergencies we ask that you call 911.

For up to date information follow us on [Twitter@SalisburyPD](#) and [Facebook.com/SalisburysFinest](#).

Capt. Rich Kaiser