



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



April 1, 2020

The Honorable Kathryn Barger
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
869 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisor Barger:

EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

As you know, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was signed into law on March 18, 2020. The Act provides Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) and emergency leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Both types of leave are available during the period of April 1 through December 31, 2020, but are not retroactive. Under the EPSL, employees are entitled to two weeks of EPSL if they are unable to work, including telework, for specific reasons related to COVID-19. The EPSL benefit is 80 hours of pay that is subject to monetary caps based on the reason for leave.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in Los Angeles County last month, the Sheriff's Department has quarantined 209 employees due to exposures to the Coronavirus. All of these employees have been required to use their own sick leave time during their absence from work. We are aware of at least one instance, where an employee was exposed working patrol and quarantined requiring use of personal sick time that the newer employee had not accrued.

Effective today, and with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), first responders are eligible for the 80 hours of paid sick leave under the EPSL Act; however, this does not address the issue of retroactive pay for those employees who were impacted by the Coronavirus prior to today, or complete compensation for employees impacted going forward.

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The first responders from the Sheriff's Department sacrifice their lives for the residents of Los Angeles County every day, and the difficult challenges they have been facing in an effort to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus throughout this County has subjected these employees and their families to a much greater risk of exposure than most anyone else. The least we can do is fully compensate these men and women for their daily sacrifices by covering their COVID-19-related absence from work prior to April 1, 2020, as paid administrative leave, thereby preventing these employees from having to use their own sick time.

Moving forward, the monetary caps under the EPSL Act prevent our employees from being fully compensated for time off from work for specific reasons related to COVID-19. I would ask that the Board make up the difference in pay to ensure all employees who access the benefits provided under the EPSL Act are fully compensated at 100% of their daily salary. Failure to do so, will jeopardize the well-being of first responders and create the pressure to return to work prematurely in order for their pay to not be affected.

Please join me and the safety unions of Los Angeles County in supporting these requests. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,



ALEX VILLANUEVA
SHERIFF