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San Diego County Sheriff's Department – Media Relations

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Sheriff Bill Gore Statement on Firearm Retailers

On March 19th, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued EXECUTIVE ORDER N-33-20 with the goal of protecting public health through staying home and social distancing. The Governor's order recognizes that people will have to venture into public spaces and as such contains exceptions for those participating in federal critical infrastructure sectors as identified by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

The federal government has identified 16 critical infrastructure sectors whose assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, are considered so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, economic security, public health or safety, or any combination thereof. Please see the following link for details: <https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA-Guidance-on-Essential-Critical-Infrastructure-Workers-1-20-508c.pdf>.

Individuals participating in these 16 critical infrastructure sectors may continue because of the importance of these sectors to California's health and well-being.

Firearm retail shops are not listed specifically in one of the CISA designated sectors. The Sheriff's Department recognizes the importance of licensed firearm retailers given the heightened concern for public security. Licensed firearm retailers provide a valuable public service by conducting registrations, backgrounds, and ensuring waiting periods are complied with. We do not want to drive lawful sales of firearms to an underground or off the books black market during these difficult times.

ALL BUSINESSES have an obligation to do everything they can to help accomplish the Governor's Executive order and the County of San Diego Public Health order. They are aimed at saving lives, not public health recommendations to be disregarded if they are inconvenient. We are awaiting further guidance from the Governor on how his order affects retail firearm establishments.

In the meantime, we will continue to enforce the County's order, which specifically states that "[a]ll businesses shall enact social distancing..." We have seen many grocery stores, food service, and CISA establishments limiting the numbers of persons that are allowed in their establishments to enforce social distancing.

Several firearm retailers in the county have already closed or are conducting sales by appointment only. The key here is to limit the number of people that gather in any one location to less than ten (10).

We cannot have groups of persons gathering in, outside or near any business. It is counterintuitive to the Governor's Executive Order and the County Public Health Order. Firearm retailers are no exception. We



encourage them to find alternative ways to conduct business while complying with these orders.

Voluntary compliance is essential to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our community. The Sheriff's Department does not have enough resources to police every business to ensure that they are complying with the health orders. Where deputies can gain compliance and cooperation we will. Where that is not the case, deputies will employ additional enforcement options as necessary in order to gain compliance and protect public health and safety.

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