

A Message to the Walnut Creek CERT community:

We hope this note finds you and your loved ones healthy. In the past week we have received inquiries from Walnut Creek CERTs and have been considering how we can help assist with the ongoing response to the spreading Coronavirus crisis.

At this time our program is not organizing volunteers, but we wanted to share with you ways that we can help.

The immediate concern: If the illness hits many all at once, our health care system will be impacted hard and face potential shortages of beds and other resources. Hence the shelter-in-place orders throughout the state and country. This is a coordinated attempt to ***slow*** the spread of the virus and lessen the impact to the healthcare systems. (i.e. “flatten the curve”)

The State of California; Contra Costa County and Walnut Creek are taking every step possible to do our part in “flattening the infection rate curve”. We are attempting to buy time through the "Shelter at your place of residence" orders so the 6 hospitals within the Contra Costa County healthcare system can manage the predicted increase of COVID-19 cases.

How Can You Help?

Our message to you follows the basic CERT motto: “Do the greatest good for the greatest number.” Simply stated – ***Do your part to SLOW the infection rate down.***

What does this mean for us at home and within our neighborhoods?

- **Keep your situational awareness current.**
 - Get your information from reliable sources.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
 - Avoid the misinformation that is so prevalent on social media and in the press.
 -
- **Prevent yourself from getting the virus. (Take care of YOURSELF first)**
 - Shelter in place.
 - Keep 6’ distance from everyone outside of your home at all times.
 - Keep hands in pockets as much as possible to avoid touching your face or surfaces.
 - Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water often.
 - Use hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available.
 - If you go out, change your clothes and wash your “outside clothes” upon your return.

- **If you do get sick – Contact your Healthcare Provider**
 - Going to the doctor’s office or emergency department unnecessarily may inadvertently expose you or your family member to COVID-19 or other infections and likewise expose other people to whatever illness you may have.
 - Call your Healthcare Provider for a phone evaluation to determine if you need testing or treatment.
 - Many people with mild symptoms can recover from COVID-19 at home.
 - Seek immediate help if:
 - You have difficulty breathing (shortness of breath).
 - You feel like symptoms (such as fever and cough) are getting worse rapidly.
 - You are unable to care for symptoms at home.
 - If you need to go to the hospital, call ahead so they can prepare for your arrival.
 - If you need to call 911, tell the 911 operator you’re experiencing coronavirus symptoms so the first responders can prepare to treat you safely.
 -
- **Prevent the spread of virus within your home (Take care of your FAMILY second)**
 - If you have a family member who is in a high-risk group, do not expose yourself any more than you would expose them!
 - Be prepared to take care of your family members.
 - If you have PPE supplies at home, know where they are in the event temporary home care is needed.
 - Have an isolation/quarantine plan in place – setup rooms in advance.
 - Utilize your entire family network of quarantine/isolation housing options.
 -
- **Prevent the spread of virus within your neighborhood (Take care of your NEIGHBORS third)**
 - Avoid large gatherings – but promote healthy communication and prevention within.
 - Utilize the self-protection steps listed above.
 - It’s OK to get out and about. Simply use social distancing and hand and clothes washing prevention techniques.
 -
- **Protect/Assist the high-risk populations within your neighborhoods/block level (CERT Actions)**
 - Encourage those in high-risk categories to religiously isolate themselves from everyone.
 - **If you are in a high-risk group - STAY HOME and isolate.**
 - Without endangering yourself, assist high-risk neighbors with shopping needs and other errands whenever possible.

- Encourage them to stay isolated – offer to accommodate their needs whenever possible to support this strategy.

The time is now to implement our community-based system and strategies.

Public safety currently has its hands full. We need your CERT spirit to help lessen the burden by following the recommended steps listed above.

You • Your Family • Your Neighborhood – need to be as self-sufficient as possible during this outbreak.

NOTE: This is NOT a request for CERT deployment action. This is simply a neighborhood preparedness recommendation.

If you would like to do something individually to help, please note that California Volunteers has set up a great website with ways to help.

<https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/get-involved/covid-19/>

Also, please continue to monitor the Walnut Creek COVID-19 resource page:

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/public-safety/coronavirus>

Finally, following is an excellent video about the Covid19:

<https://www.vectorsolutions.com/how-we-serve/vector-cares-2/>

We continue to have conversations with our CERT area coordinators as the situation evolves. We will keep you apprised of any changes.

Thank you for all your ongoing care and concern for our Walnut Creek community.

Sincerely,

Captain Steve Gorski
CERT Program Manager
Walnut Creek Police Department