

STEVE BIZZELL
SHERIFF

Johnston County

Sheriff's Office

120 SOUTH THIRD STREET
P.O. BOX 1809
SMITHFIELD, NC 27577
(919) 989-5010
FAX: (919) 989-5039

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Message from the Sheriff:

Regarding enforcement of the Governor's Executive Order #147, extension of Phase II (face coverings) that goes into effect today at 5:00 p.m., our deputies will NOT be enforcing the requirements to wear face coverings against individuals. There is no provision in this order to charge a person for simply failing to wear the face covering in public.

The order states under Enforcement: (1) "Citations under this section shall be written only to businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the requirement to wear face coverings." (2) "Law enforcement personnel are not authorized to criminally enforce the face covering requirements of this executive order against individual workers, customers, or patrons."

A business owner or manager has the right to refuse entry to a customer or patron that refuses to wear a face covering, and if that person enters the premises or refuses to leave the premises when asked, law enforcement officers may be called, and we have a duty to enforce the criminal trespassing laws if required.

I respectfully ask our citizens not to call 911 to report the failure of individuals to wear a face covering in public, as this line is designated for emergency calls.

As Sheriff, the deputies and I will continue to use common sense in applying the law, including the Governor's order, and we strongly encourage our citizens to take precautions such as wearing face coverings and social distancing to protect themselves, their families, and others.