

# NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT



## COVID-19 Law Enforcement Brief April 16, 2020

*The NYPD is providing this report to raise awareness of the challenges the NYPD has faced in preparing for and policing in the COVID-19 threat environment. We offer some detail on the city we are policing and its experience with COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on our force, and the criminal activity we have seen since the COVID-19 crisis set in. We also offer select observations from other law enforcement agencies who have shared their own experiences to further inform the policing community.*

### The COVID-19 Environment in New York City

#### COVID-19 in New York City

New York City marked its **first COVID-19 case on Sunday, March 1, 2020**.<sup>1</sup> As of April 16, 2020, the New York City Department of Health (DOH) counts **117,565 total cases** in the city with an estimated **30,903 hospitalizations** and 7,563 confirmed deaths. The DOH counts an additional 3,914 deaths as probable COVID-19 fatalities. These are individuals who died in their residence or a nursing facility exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms but who were not tested, bringing the **probable death toll in New York City to 11,477**.<sup>2</sup> On March 20, 2020, in response to the growth of infections in New York City and New York State, **New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the New York State on PAUSE Executive Order (effective March 22)**, requiring every non-essential worker to stay home from work, non-essential businesses to close, bars and restaurants to provide takeout service only, and banning non-essential gatherings of any size for any reason. **At this time the Executive Order has been extended to May 15, 2020.** The order authorizes a maximum fine for violating the social distancing protocol of \$1000, an increase from the previous \$500 maximum.<sup>3</sup> While NYPD has issued summonses using existing charges in relation to social distancing enforcement, it **has not yet issued fines in accordance with the Governor's latest authorization**. Still, the implementation of this order has dramatically reshaped the policing environment in New York City.

#### Background on New York City

New York City consists of five boroughs, each its own county: The Bronx (Bronx County), Brooklyn (Kings County), Manhattan (New York County), Queens (Queens County), and Staten Island (Richmond County). Taken together, the city covers **302 square miles of land**, 165 square miles of water, and a **population of 8.3 million**. The resulting population density of approximately **28,000 residents/square mile** makes it the most densely populated American city. The city's population is exceedingly diverse with about **800 languages spoken in the city**,<sup>1</sup> including 180 spoken in the city's public schools;<sup>1</sup> **about half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home**.<sup>1</sup> The city's density facilitated the spread of COVID-19 while its linguistic diversity demands concerted efforts to ensure effective communication amid the crisis.

The below charts provide a break down by day of the number of new cases in (Chart 1) and deaths (Chart 2) in New York City.

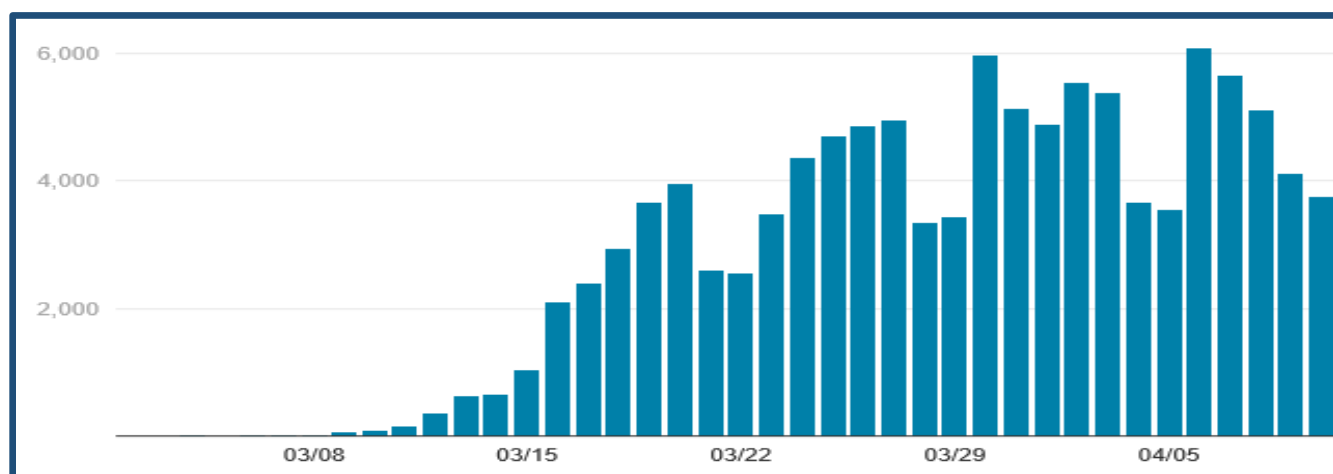


Chart 1: Number of New COVID-19 Cases in NYC by Day (Source: NYC Department of Health)<sup>4</sup>

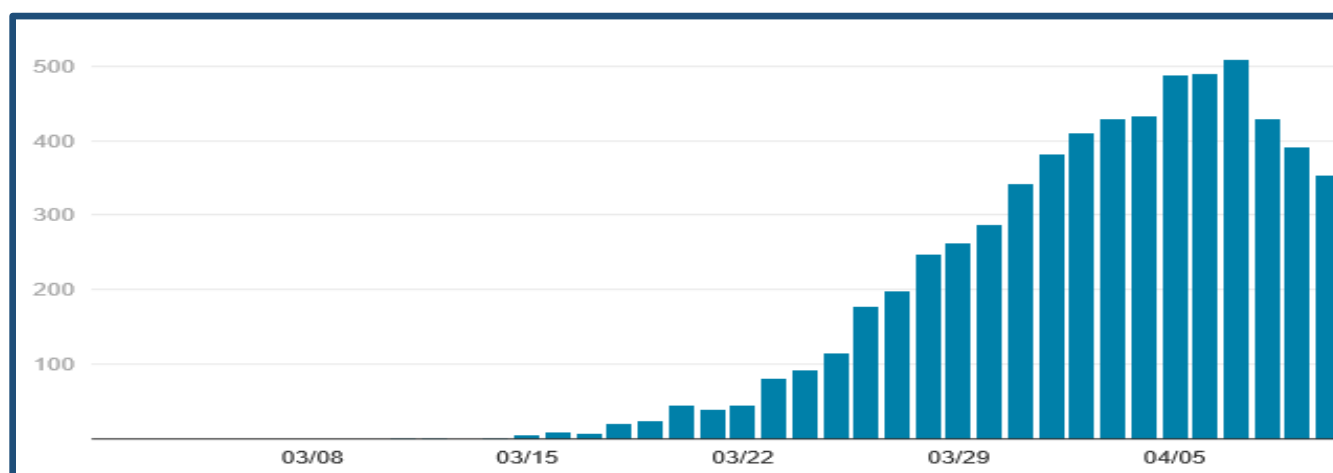


Chart 2: Number of COVID-19 Deaths in NYC by Day (Source: NYC Department of Health)<sup>5</sup>

### COVID-19 and the NYPD

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has approximately 36,000 uniformed officers and 19,000 civilian employees. The **NYPD marked its first COVID-19 case on March 12, 2020.**

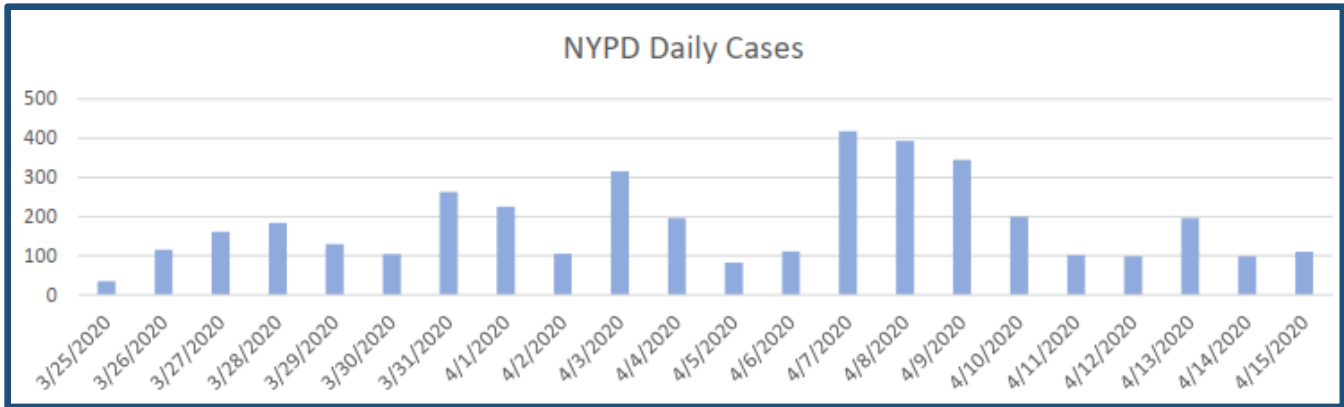
Following that, the **rate of growth in sick reports was far higher than anticipated, rising from an average of 3%** (a daily average of 900-1000 members calling in sick) **to just under 20% of the department by April 9** (with over 7100 out sick). However, **we have recently begun to see sick rates decline and officers return after recovering from COVID-19.** Officers whose symptoms have resolved, or who were treated and are no longer symptomatic, are being telephonically cleared by the NYPD's Medical Division prior to resuming normal duties. It is worth noting that the tracking mechanism for sick civilian employees is not as robust as it is for uniformed members, potentially adversely impacting the accuracy of the overall sick count.

### NYPD COVID-19 Snapshot

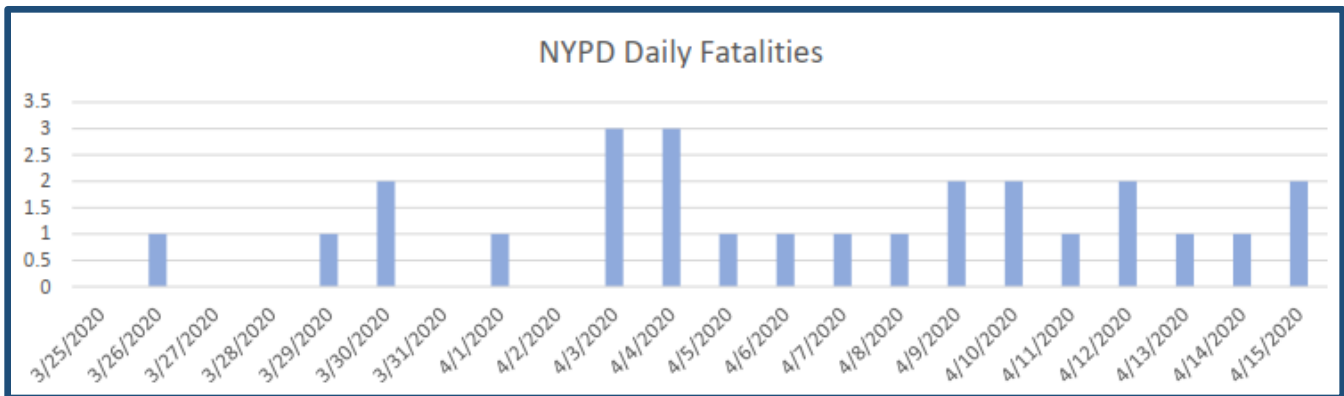
*As of April 15, 2020*

- 6,052 uniformed officers (16.7% of the NYPD) were on sick report
- 3,417 uniformed officers **tested positive** for COVID-19
- 733 civilian employees **tested positive** for COVID-19
- 27 COVID-19 **fatalities** (6 uniform, 16 civilian and 5 auxiliary officers)
- 1,307 uniformed officers **returning full duty** after COVID-19
- 143 civilian employees **returning** after COVID-19

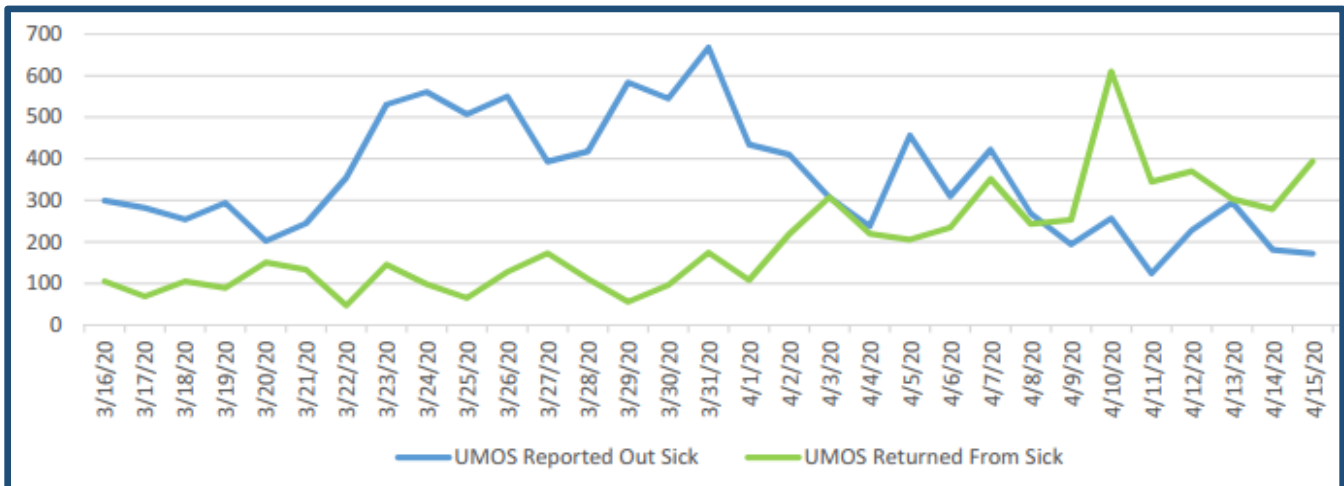
The graphs below and on the next page (Charts 3-6) depict the NYPD experience with COVID-19, including new cases and fatalities by day. Beginning late last week, **the rates of returning employees began to exceed the rate of newly sick**, an encouraging sign that comes **one month after NYPD's first confirmed case**.



**Chart 3: NYPD COVID-19 Cases by Day (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives, Personnel Bureau)**



**Chart 4: NYPD COVID-19 Deaths by Day (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives, Personnel Bureau)**



**Chart 5: Uniformed Sick and Return Levels by Day (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives, Personnel Bureau)**

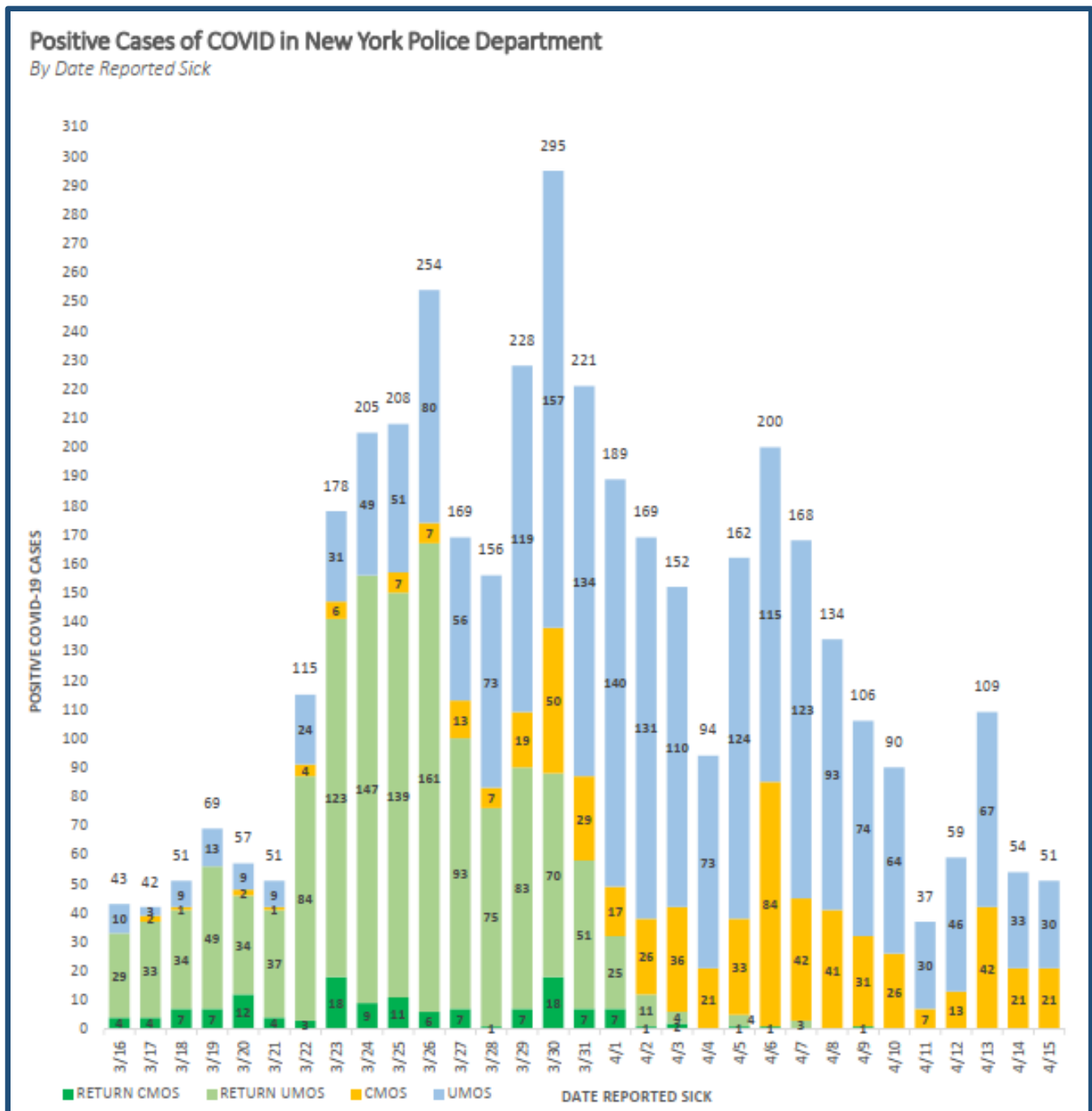


Chart 6: Daily COVID-19 Cases - Uniformed and Civilian (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives, Personnel Bureau)

## Policing in the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has brought with it a number of unique and varied policing challenges such as ideologically and non-ideologically-motivated disinformation related to the virus, intentional spreading of the virus, and the potential proliferation of cyber-enabled crimes and fraud schemes related to personal protective equipment. The NYPD has seen an increase in bias incidents against Asian Americans but a decline in domestic violence calls. The NYPD is seeing an overall decrease in traditional crime across all five boroughs since the start of the pandemic, most likely as a result of heightened social distancing orders.

## Terrorism & Disinformation

**Ideologically-motivated actors have tried to exploit COVID-19 through their messaging and propaganda efforts in order to incite violence.** The NYPD Intelligence Bureau assesses that racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists, Salafi-jihadist extremists inspired by or linked to foreign terrorist organizations, and nation-state adversaries, will continue to leverage public fears associated with the ongoing pandemic in extremist messaging and disinformation. (See Appendix 1 for examples of extremist content related to COVID-19).

**Hospitals are a top security concern**, as extremists may seek to target such facilities to amplify their message.

- As an example, Timothy Wilson of Missouri sought to act on his violent white supremacists beliefs by planning to bomb a Kansas City-area hospital before he was killed in an encounter with the FBI on March 24. Wilson reasoned that bombing the hospital during the COVID-19 crisis would amplify his message.<sup>6</sup>

The NYPD is also concerned about the **potential for conspiracy theories to motivate actors to threaten public safety**. Thus far, COVID-19 conspiracy theories have resulted in an attempted attack on a Navy hospital ship in Los Angeles and the destruction of cell towers in the United Kingdom.

- The QAnon community is spreading allegations that the USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy hospital ships, respectively docked in New York and Los Angeles, are on a secret government mission to rescue children from a “Deep State”-sponsored sex trafficking ring.<sup>7</sup> On Mar 31, a Southern California railway engineer intentionally crashed a train near the USNS Mercy. The individual reportedly believed that the ship “had an alternate purpose related to COVID-19 or a government takeover.”<sup>8</sup>
- Two prominent online conspiracy theories emerged in late January that falsely suggest 5G technology suppresses the immune system and uses radio waves to target victims. These false narratives have resulted in over 30 attacks on 5G towers in the UK.<sup>9</sup>

## Intentional Exposure

**The NYPD has authorized its officers to summons or arrest individuals who claim to have COVID-19 and intentionally or negligently expose others to the virus.** If the target of exposure is an officer, the available arrest charges include violating the health code, obstructing governmental administration (second degree), or, in cases of spitting, harassment (second degree). A summons may be issued in lieu of arrest if the officer is concerned about further exposure. Similarly, individuals intentionally exposing other members of the public to COVID-19 can be summonsed for a health code violation. Acts of intentional exposure have been categorized as terrorist crimes in certain jurisdictions across the United States, and the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has signaled a willingness to charge such incidents under existing terrorism statutes.<sup>10</sup> The NYPD has not pursued such prosecution.

- **There have been at least two known intentional exposure incidents against law enforcement in New York City.** On March 29, a Brooklyn man coughed on FBI agents while claiming to have COVID-19 as they approached him regarding an investigation into his hoarding of medical supplies.<sup>11</sup> On April 1, a 31 year-old male suffering a gunshot wound to the leg was highly uncooperative with responding NYPD officers, stating he had COVID-19 as he coughed and spat on them.<sup>12</sup>
- Partners including Antwerp, Belgium, and New Zealand have reported similar incidents against law enforcement, and the Antwerp Police Department has deployed their bio-response team to respond to deliberate spitting/coughing incidents. Any deliberate spitting or coughing incident against an officer in Antwerp is viewed as an attempt on the officer’s life and is an immediately arrestable and jailable offense.

- The NYPD received 379 calls related to “spitting” complaints or emergencies between April 1 and April 15.<sup>13</sup> In two of several examples from around the country, a Tennessee man was arrested on state terrorism charges on April 6 for coughing on customers at a Walmart while yelling that he had COVID-19. Two days later, a San Antonio man was arrested by the FBI for claiming he paid somebody to intentionally spread the virus; he faces non-terrorism federal charges.<sup>14</sup>

## Cyber-Enabled Crime

The NYPD is expecting an **uptick in cyber-enabled crimes** as malicious actors exploit the COVID-19 crisis to perpetrate defrauding schemes involving false claims of vaccines, phishing attempts to obtain victims’ personal identification information, and disinformation campaigns related to federal stimulus checks.

- One malicious campaign sends **emails purported to be from the IRS** asking the recipient to verify the account number in an attached document; when opened, the document **installs malware on the victim’s computer** allowing the scammer remote access.<sup>15</sup>
- On March 22, the DOJ filed a civil complaint against the operators of the website **coronavirusmedalkit.com**, which **purports to sell World Health Organization vaccine kits**. The operators of the site allegedly **used victims’ credit card information to conduct wire fraud**.<sup>16</sup>

## PPE Related Scams

**Scams involving personal protective equipment (PPE) are targeting hospitals, health care unions, and government agencies both in and outside the US.** Driven by the need to procure the unusually large amounts of PPE necessary to address the pandemic, buyers are engaging with new, unverified sellers, increasing their exposure to fraud.

- A deal brokered by a California healthcare union that sought to facilitate the sale of 39 million N95 face masks to hospitals in California and New York turned out to be fraudulent. The fraud was detected when one of the buyers complained it had not received its order of six million masks. Federal authorities are investigating a purported Australia-based broker and a supplier in Kuwait who were communicating with a middleman in Pittsburgh; the middleman was unaware of the scam but stood to potentially make \$9 million off the deal.<sup>17</sup>
- In mid-March, Europol and Interpol, in conjunction with authorities and financial institutions in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the UK foiled a scam to sell what turned out to be nonexistent face masks to health agencies for millions of euros. The scam made use of cloned websites and compromised email addresses of legitimate companies to dupe buyers. Over EUR 2 million in transactions were made to facilitate the purchase, with a sizeable portion destined for a Nigerian bank account. The transactions were frozen before the money reached the ultimate destination.<sup>18</sup>

## Drone Activity

**The NYPD has observed a significant amount of drone activity in the vicinity of locations associated with the COVID-19 response**, in particular Hart Island, where New York City is interring unclaimed bodies, and the USNS Comfort. Since April 7, the NYPD Intelligence Bureau has responded to nine such incidents. Where appropriate, the drone operators are summonsed and the vehicle is vouchered as evidence. NYPD is coordinating with neighboring law enforcement agencies to share information relating to drone incidents and to coordinate a response.

## Hate Crimes

While hate crimes in New York City declined in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter of 2019, **NYC is seeing an increase in hate and bias incidents--ranging from harassment to assault--specifically targeting individuals of Asian descent**, reported in all 5 boroughs. Since March 7, the NYPD has received 11 COVID-19 related complaints, and 10 arrests have been made. One incident involved three teenage girls who attacked a 51 year-old woman with an umbrella while riding a bus in the Bronx. The woman sustained injuries to her face that required stitches. The teens were arrested and charged with assault as a hate crime.<sup>19</sup> It is possible the number of such bias incidents is underreported.

## Domestic Violence

New York City has seen major domestic violence crimes **decline 30.8% for the 28-day period running March 16 to April 12 from the same time period last year**. Domestic violence crime categorized as misdemeanors were down 19.7% over the same period. Los Angeles and London Police Departments similarly reported a decrease in domestic violence. These figures may reflect underreporting by victims who do not feel safe reporting.

- Multiple other U.S. cities are having the opposite experience. According to an NBC News national survey, **18 of 22 law enforcement agencies reported an increase in domestic violence activity in March**. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1,765 callers reported in mid-to-late March that their abusive partners were using the pandemic to “further isolate, coerce or increase fear in the relationship.”<sup>20</sup>

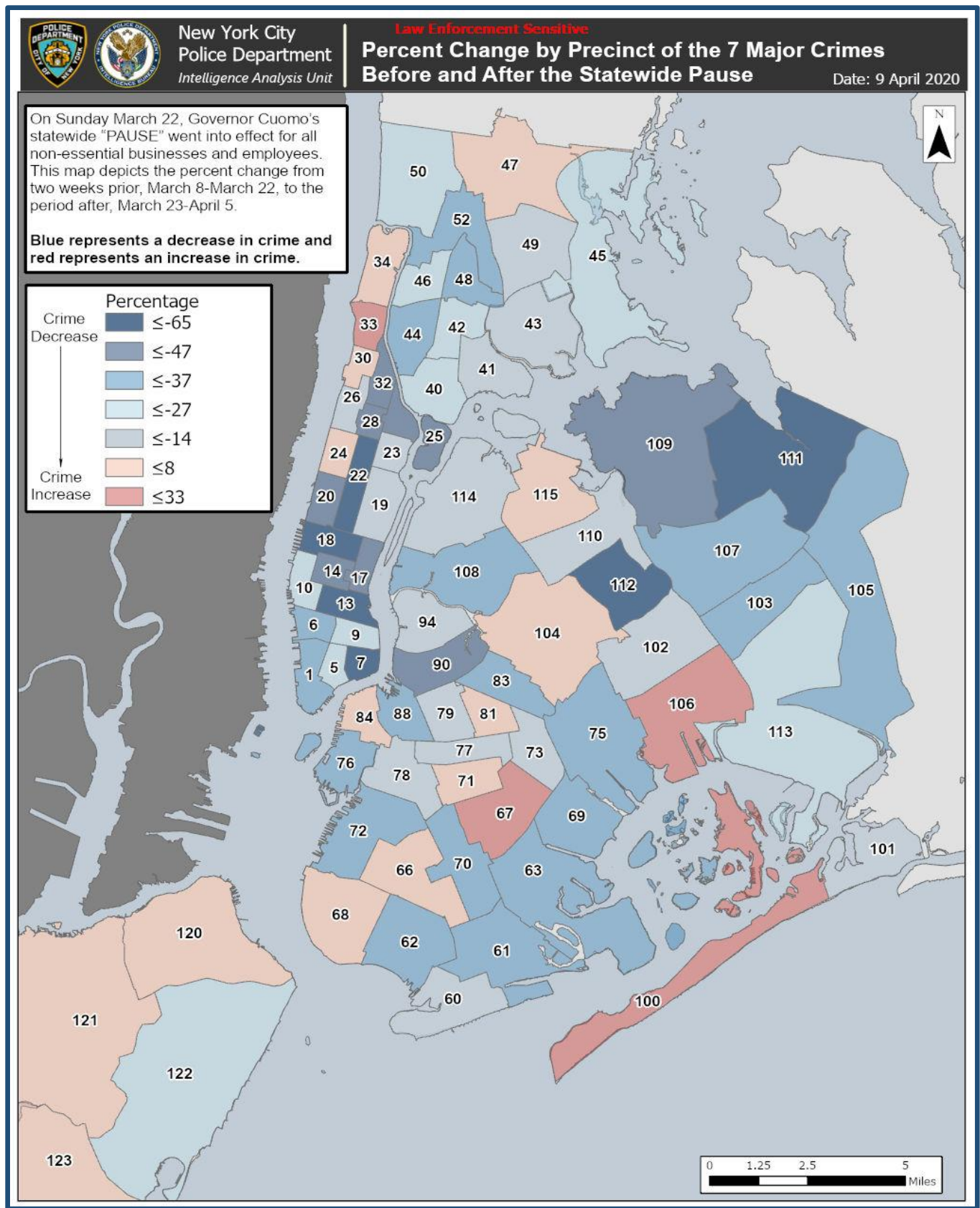
## Traditional Crime

**Aggregate complaints for major crime** (defined as the Seven Majors: murder, rape, robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny, grand larceny auto) **is down 29.5% citywide** from March 22 (the beginning of the PAUSE order) through April 10 as compared to the same date range in 2019. This pattern has also been reported by London, Antwerp, and Los Angeles police departments. In New York City, the only exception to the downward criminal activity trends are the areas of **burglary (up 23.3% for the same time period)** and **grand larceny auto (up 50%)**. There has also been a **consistent and observable decrease in 911 calls** (for example, a 30.5% decrease from 4/15/2019 to 4/15/2020). Of note is how precipitous the decrease in crime has been: Map 1 below shows the percentage change in the seven major crimes two weeks before and two weeks after the NYPD PAUSE order went into effect on March 22.

## Arrest Processing

In New York City, **arrestees who are either confirmed COVID-19 positive or exhibiting suspected symptoms** will go directly from the scene of arrest to Midtown community court in Manhattan or Red Hook community court in Brooklyn to be processed (if immediate hospitalization is not required). These arrestees **will not be taken to a precinct**. Officers effecting arrests on those with COVID-19 or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must place a protective mask on that arrestee's face.





**Map 1: Percentage Change in the Seven Major Crimes, Two Weeks Pre- and Post- NYS PAUSE Order**



## Specialized Enforcement and Support

The public health measures put into place in response to COVID-19 as well as the pressure the crisis has exerted on the city's medical infrastructure have compelled the NYPD to adopt specialized and novel policing functions including social distancing enforcement and medical supply chain management.

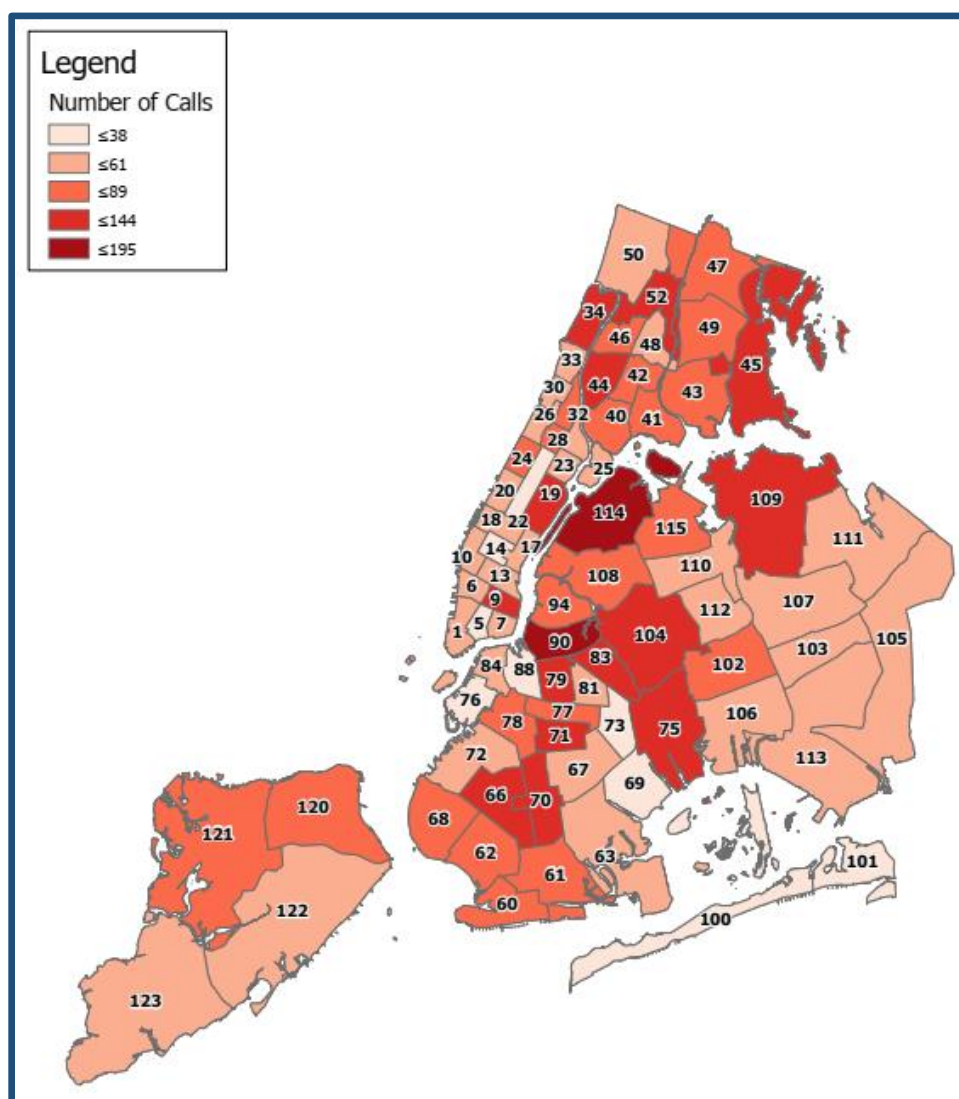
### Social Distancing Enforcement

The NYPD has created a Task Force to monitor and enforce social distancing compliance and the adherence by non-essential businesses and other community centers to the closures mandated by the New York State PAUSE order. **The NYPD is using cameras and aerial footage as well as visits to supermarkets and other essential business to monitor social distancing compliance.** In addition, a New York Governor's Executive Order that went into effect on April 15 has

ordered that these **essential businesses must provide face coverings to their employees free of charge.**

Employees who fail to comply should initially be warned and informed that a **failure to comply may result in a C-summons being issued to the employer, employee, or both**, for failing to comply with a mayoral order.

A particular challenge has involved **congregating by religious communities**, particularly specific sects of Hassidic Jews who have been attending large funerals. Most law enforcement agencies are seeking **voluntary compliance with regulations**, but retain the ability to summons and arrest as needed. Map 2 displays by precinct the number of social-distancing related complaints over a one week period beginning April 6 based on an analysis of 311 calls.



**Map 2: Social Distancing Related 311 Calls, 4/6/2020 - 4/12/2020 (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives)**

## Medical Supply Chain Management

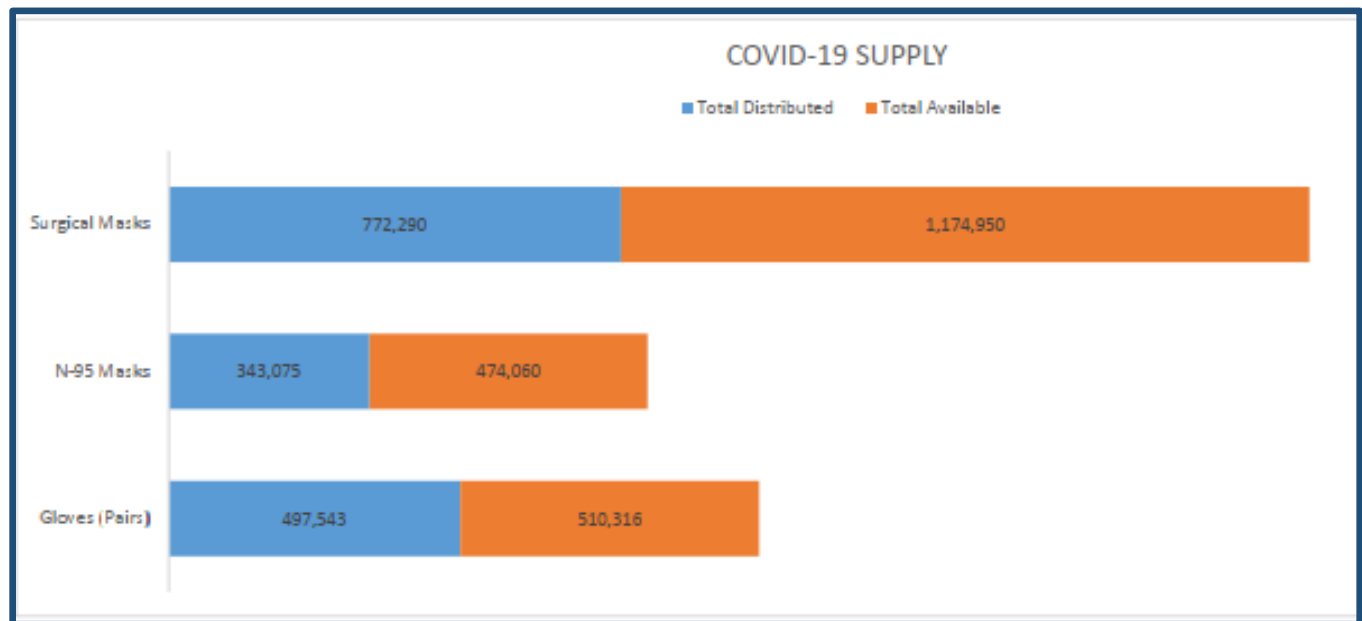
NYPD has established a Task Force to coordinate with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and hospitals around the city to help smooth supply-chain issues. NYPD personnel will deliver equipment and medical supplies to where they are most needed and help provide relief to overburdened health care facilities.

## Force Management

The Department has been required to take unprecedented actions to protect its personnel while maintaining operational continuity and public safety during the COVID-19 outbreak. The rate and volume of attrition due to illness have put considerable strain on the Department's resources and required implementation of significant measures to redress personnel shortfalls. Minimizing exposure, tracking sick numbers, augmenting personnel where needed, and providing support to families of NYPD members have proved a considerable challenge.

## Minimizing Exposure

The NYPD, like other law enforcement agencies, has **implemented stringent policies relating to the use of PPE** including requiring all officers to wear face masks in dealings with the public or when riding together in patrol vehicles. Further, the NYPD has created a Task Force to augment the Quartermaster in order to provide PPE on an ongoing basis (see Chart 7). NYPD has been able to procure sufficient PPE to protect its officers. Departments globally are ensuring their officers are supplied with PPE.



**Chart 7: NYPD PPE Supplies as of 4/15/2020 (Source: NYPD Strategic Initiatives)**

Other measures taken by NYPD and other departments to minimize exposure include the following:

- Many agencies are implementing policies to minimize interaction between staff. The NYPD, among others, is **minimizing the staffing at department facilities** and **staggering tours** for those reporting to those facilities to limit overlap between personnel. This is particularly important for leadership in any given unit: the commanding and executive officers should not report to the same facility at the same time. NYPD supervisors are also ensuring that **officers are working with the same partner throughout the work week** to limit the opportunity for community exposure.

- As of April 15, NYPD has initiated a pilot program requiring any individual (NYPD member, arrestee, or member of public) entering one of eight designated precincts to have their **temperature screened** prior to being allowed entry. Officers assigned to those commands are only required to be screened once per day upon reporting for duty. Other agencies, such as LAPD and DC Metropolitan Police, have also implemented **temperature monitoring** for officers at the beginning of their tours.
- For officer awareness, the NYPD **has marked 911 calls that involve potential COVID-19 exposure risk**. The NYPD Domain Awareness System (DAS) app, available to all officers on their job-issued phones, now features an icon that will allow officers to see at a glance if a 911 job has been associated with COVID-19.
- NYPD has **hired 100 additional cleaners** to help disinfect department facilities. Officers have been directed to completely disinfect department vehicles at the beginning and end of their tours, when the operator and recorder switch assignments, or any time another person is in the vehicle. **Clean Teams** operated by the NYPD medical division **are dispatched to sanitize the work areas of those who have tested positive for COVID-19**.
- Other agencies have **modified uniform policies** to minimize exposure risk. Members of the DC Metropolitan Police are reporting to duty in uniform to avoid locker rooms. The LAPD has relaxed its uniform policy to allow officers to wear machine washable uniforms.
- Antwerp police have set up **decontamination rooms** throughout the department to limit coronavirus exposure. They also place a standard protective mask on arrestees out of an abundance of caution regardless of whether or not they are symptomatic.

## Working from Home

Like several other agencies, NYPD has permitted **non-essential and certain essential employees to work from home**. The NYPD has provided laptops, phones, and tablets to facilitate this. NYPD has established a centralized information repository and email address to provide guidance for telework policy and practices to members of the service. Overtime accrual is not permitted for those working from home. **Reasonable accommodations are also extended to employees at higher risk of complications from COVID-19**.

## Tracking Sick

The NYPD **implemented a panel of medical experts to review instances of officers' potential exposure to COVID-19** to determine the best recourse on a case-by-case basis.

- When a member reports sick, the NYPD's Medical Division determines the best course of action for the individual member, utilizing telecare as much as possible. Members who have not been tested but who are experiencing a fever, a cough, or shortness of breath are instructed to stay home.
- The Medical Division has expanded its telephone line capacity to ensure members attempting to call in sick or receive medical recommendations don't experience undue delays.

Other emergency service entities are doing twice-a-day **symptom checks** via a **virtual questionnaire**, with direct medical follow-up as needed. Santa Monica PD is collecting health data prior to tours via a **phone-based app** to minimize unnecessary presence at department facilities. Houston PD has developed a **self-assessment tool** for its members.

## Augmenting Personnel

The NYPD initially established a COVID-19 Task Force consisting of **over 600 officers in administrative support roles re-assigned throughout the city to supplement commands** with depleted staffing and to help ensure public compliance with social distancing measures. That was followed by **a second surge of 538 officers assigned to backfill various commands** beginning on April 13, 2020.

- In London, the Metropolitan Police **contacted members who are eligible to retire, and those who have recently retired**, to ask them to either consider delaying their retirement, or to return to service if they are eligible. The recently retired members would be utilized in an auxiliary capacity.

## Supporting Department Staff

To ensure that members of service have the appropriate support for themselves and their families as they serve during the COVID-19 crisis:

- The Police Foundation, a non-profit entity, has arranged for free, expedited testing to members of the NYPD who are displaying COVID-19 symptoms. **Approximately 70 testing locations have been made available through partnerships with three private healthcare systems.** Appointments are all made through the Medical Division Sick Desk. The testing turn-around time is now down to 24 hours in most cases.
- The NYPD has compiled a list of **child care solutions** available to members of the service living within and outside the confines of New York City. Schools in New York City are providing day care and meals for children of essential city employees, including NYPD members. London has a similar initiative in place.
- The NYPD is collaborating with external partners to **provide housing accommodations to members who share a residence with someone at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19**, as defined by the CDC. This minimizes the chances these NYPD members infect their loved ones.
- NYPD is providing free mental health services 24/7 for its members, using a telehealth model and referrals for in person visits where necessary.

## Contingency Plans

The NYPD developed contingency plans in the event of a large-scale outbreak or interruption to essential services.

- The NYPD has **established “sister” commands for each Precinct, PSA and Transit District:** In the event that any of these entities face an outbreak in their facility, they will move their operations to these “sister commands.”
- In the event of significant interruptions to mass transit, the **NYPD will shuttle 911 staff to their call centers** from designated park & ride locations throughout the city.

## Additional Resources

- The Police Executive Research Forum: Responding to the COVID-19 Coronavirus - Features **up-to-date resources for law enforcement officials on how agencies are responding to the threat posed by COVID-19:** <https://www.policeforum.org/coronavirus>

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- The National Police Foundation in Washington, DC is maintaining a **real-time COVID-19 Law Enforcement Impact Dashboard of agencies' COVID-19 exposure and response**: <https://www.policefoundation.org/covid-19/>
- ESRI made their **GIS mapping products** free for law enforcement: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/home>
- **CDC – COVID-19: What Law Enforcement Needs to Know**: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/guidance-law-enforcement.pdf>
- **CDC – Strategies to Optimize Supply of PPE and Equipment**: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>
- **CDC – PPE Burn-Rate Calculator**: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/hcp/PPE-Burn-Rate-Calculator.xlsx>

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## Appendix 1: COVID-19 Related Extremist Propaganda

### Extremists Across Ideological Spectrum Continue to Exploit COVID-19 in Propaganda Messaging Campaigns Aimed at Inciting Violence

Since late January 2020, the NYPD Intelligence Bureau observed at least 45 propaganda graphics and simple memes disseminated by extremists across the ideological spectrum that were aimed at exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic to incite violence. The themes espoused in these graphics—which circulate throughout extremist online communities on Telegram, RocketChat, and other social media platforms—varied significantly based on ideology. While Salafi-jihadist extremists embraced COVID-19 as a form of divine retribution, racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists (REMVEs) spread fear through misinformation and encouraged supporters to turn COVID-19 into a bioweapon through deliberate contact with goods, infrastructure, or individuals. In contrast, the majority of Shi'a violent extremist propaganda perpetuated a broader conspiracy theory that the disease was deployed by the U.S. government. IAU assesses that while these propaganda graphics are increasingly common and not indicative of any specific or credible attack planning, they may resonate with extremist supporters in the West or contribute to plot acceleration as the global health crisis escalates.

### Salafi-Jihadist Extremist Propaganda

Image					
Group	Quraysh Media	Al-Morhafat Media	Bunat Alamjad Media	Halummu English translation of al-Naba	Abdullah al-Muhaynsini
Date	27 January 2020	9 February 2020	2 March 2020	12 March 2020	17 March 2020
Info	This poster describes COVID-19 as a punishment for China, likely referring to China's persecution of Uighurs	This graphic is consistent with initial reactions by ISIS supporters as the pandemic spread mainly through China	This graphic mocks various countries over their inability to benefit from scientific progress to stop COVID-19	This infographic outlines safety measures for supporters to abide by, positioning them as religious directives	This poster, released by a prominent Syria-based extremist cleric, criticized restrictions on large gatherings
Image					
Group	Thabat News Agency	Greenbirds RocketChat channel	Sarha al-Khilafah Media Foundation	ISIS-Linked Media Outlet	Pro-ISIS Supporter on Social Media
Date	19 March 2020	20 March 2020	23 March 2020	25 March 2020	2 April 2020
Info	The accompanying article described COVID-19 as a "soldier" unleashed by Allah on the "sects of the disbelief"	This text mirrors calls for attacks during times of crisis and uses ideological justifications to exploit the epidemic	This graphic describes COVID-19 as divine retribution for Muslims, echoing ISIS's stance from issue 226 of al-Naba	This article reiterates that COVID-19 was a divine punishment for enemies and urges supporters to wage attacks	This image encourages supporters to leverage preoccupation with COVID-19 to conduct attacks in London



<b>Image</b>					
<b>Group</b>	Pro-ISIS Supporter on Social Media	Ribat Media	Murhafat Media	Ribat Media	Hadim al-Aswar Media Foundation
<b>Date</b>	2 April 2020	4 April 2020	5 April 2020	8 April 2020	11 April 2020
<b>Info</b>	This graphic exploits easily obtainable open-source images of Chicago in order to resonate with homegrown violent extremists in the West	The poster highlights COVID-19's damage to Western economies and identifies the global health crisis as an opportunity to expand activities	This graphic encourages supporters worldwide to pray for COVID-19's continued affliction against its enemies	Citing the one year anniversary of ISIS's losses in Baghuz, Syria, this image portrays COVID-19 as divine retribution against enemies	The title and content of the narration in this video was taken from issue 226 of al-Naba, which urges supporters to launch attacks during the pandemic

### Racially and Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist Propaganda







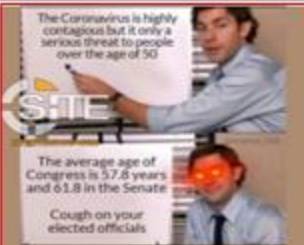








<b>Image</b>					
<b>Group</b>	Telegram Channel "Coronawaffen"	Telegram Channel "@Privsecgoy"	REMVE Channel "Panther Den Video Archive"	REMVE Telegram Channel	Telegram Channel "Coronawaffen"
<b>Date</b>	March 2020	March 2020	March 2020	March 2020	March 2020
<b>Info</b>	The poster highlights that that one can easily target perceived enemies by exploiting a naturally occurring disaster, such as the COVID-19 pandemic	This anti-establishment graphic intends to spread panic by spreading rumors about government control, likely hoping to undermine public trust and contribute to societal collapse	Neo-Nazis have previously appropriated similar youth cartoons to attract younger demographics	This online chat advice encourages the spread of COVID-19 to specific religious groups	These four targets are consistent with REMVE messaging to target perceived enemies in order to bring about the downfall of society

Image					
Group	REMOVE Social Media Account	Telegram Channel "Coronawaffen"	Whatsapp "NS Regime"	Whatsapp "NS Regime"	Whatsapp "NS Regime"
Date	March 2020	13 March 2020	15 March 2020	16 March 2020	16 March 2020
Info	Many REMOVE supporters with xenophobic beliefs blame Asians for spreading COVID-19 and as a result, provoke followers to use violence against them	The comment uses legitimate medical information about how certain demographics are more vulnerable to complications from the virus and then issues targeting advice	This image of Hitler raising his hand as if he has a solution for COVID-19 suggests genocide and socialism as solutions to the pandemic	The image depicts the airplane dropping a "virus bomb," implying that COVID-19 was created by the U.S. and is being used as a biological weapon	By exploiting COVID-19 to harass Germany's Chancellor Merkel, users believe they will speed up the overthrow of the government
Image					
Group	Telegram Channel "SSS"	Telegram Channel "Terrorwave Refined or TR"	Telegram Channel "TR"	Telegram Channel "Coronawaffen"	Neo-Nazi Telegram Channel
Date	16 March 2020	16 March 2020	19 March 2020	23 March 2020	4 April 2020
Info	While the infographic says not to mix these ingredients, the poster likely intends for users to actually mix these cleaning products for targets to inhale and create false symptoms to overload the hospitals and cause unrest	The accompanying text advises individuals to target minorities, houses of worship, and other locations by carrying out mischievous acts (i.e. shoot a gun into the air, cough on someone) to incite panic during the pandemic and start a race war	This post encourages subscribers to spread disinformation (i.e. neighbor gets killed for resources) and spread panic to exacerbate social unrest	The misleading poster highlights potential targets and ways to further spread COVID-19. The illegitimate use of official government agency logos is an attempt to falsely validate the information	The FEMA conspiracy theory, which first surfaced in the 1990s, claims that FEMA wants to relocate and separate Americans, and that COVID-19 is the catalyst to set this plan into action



## Shi'a Violent Extremist Propaganda











Image	 <p>President Trump holding a "COVID-19" gun, with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's weapon"</p>	 <p>President Trump, an image of COVID-19, and a banner highlighting that COVID-19 was "made in USA"</p>	 <p>A doctor holding a COVID-19 sign and a militant with a firearm holding a sign stating that ISIS and COVID-19 were made by the C.I.A.</p>	 <p>A sketch of the U.S. Capitol Building, with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's weapon"</p>	 <p>Former ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, with a sign stating that ISIS and COVID-19 were made by the C.I.A.</p>
Group	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users
Date	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020
Info	This graphic is part of a media campaign aimed at promoting a broader conspiracy theory that COVID-19 was deployed as a bioweapon by President Trump	This image similarly accuses President Trump of creating and deploying COVID-19	This graphic perpetuated the conspiracy theory that ISIS – in addition to COVID-19 – was a creation of the U.S. intelligence community	One of the many images disseminated by Shi'a social media users that uses a common hashtag – "Corona is Trump's weapon" – to highlight the alleged crimes of the U.S. and President Trump	This poster utilizes a common open-source graphic of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to allege that the U.S. intelligence community created both ISIS and COVID-19
Image	 <p>Images of COVID-19 and a sign stating that ISIS and COVID-19 were made by the C.I.A.</p>	 <p>President Trump holding the disease, along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's weapon"</p>	 <p>President Trump superimposed over images of COVID-19, along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's Weapon"</p>	 <p>A ripped American flag, along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's Weapon"</p>	 <p>President Trump interwoven with an image of COVID-19</p>
Group	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users
Date	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020
Info	This graphic identifies both COVID-19 and ISIS as U.S. and C.I.A. inventions	By depicting President Trump holding COVID-19, this image deliberately highlights the U.S. government's involvement with the disease	Arabic text accompanying this graphic alleges that President Trump used COVID-19 to destroy domestic rivals in states affiliated with the Democratic Party and people of color	One of the many images disseminated by Shi'a extremists that uses a common hashtag – "Corona is Trump's weapon" – to highlight the alleged crimes of the U.S. and President Trump	By merging an image of President Trump with a graphic of COVID-19, this poster highlights the President's involvement in the pandemic

Image					
	President Trump firing a "COVID-19 gun," along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's Weapon"	President Trump wearing a mask with the U.S. flag	President Trump observing COVID-19, along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's Weapon"	President Trump superimposed over a COVID-19 graphic, along with an Arabic hashtag that translates in English to "Corona is Trump's Weapon"	An ISIS flag, image of COVID-19, and the C.I.A. insignia, which claims that ISIS and COVID-19 were made by the C.I.A.
Group	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users	Shi'a Extremist Social Media Users
Date	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020	10 March 2020
Info	Text accompanying this graphic accuses President Trump of using COVID-19 as a bioweapon to destroy international rivals, such as China, Iran, and Italy	This image likely suggests that President Trump receives protection while the rest of the world continues to suffer from COVID-19	One of the many images disseminated by Shi'a extremist social media users that uses a common hashtag – "Corona is Trump's weapon" – to highlight the alleged crimes of the U.S.	One of the many images disseminated by Shi'a extremist social media users that uses a common hashtag – "Corona is Trump's weapon" – to highlight the alleged crimes of the U.S.	This image is aimed at accusing the U.S., President Trump, and the broader U.S. intelligence community of deploying COVID-19 as a bioweapon and creating ISIS

*\*This NYPD Intelligence Bureau analytic assessment is the result of several months of extensive open-source threat monitoring. The quantitative figures included should be treated as a conservative estimate of total propaganda output and may not be fully reflective of the totality of all extremist postings.*



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Kopecki, Dawn, "New York City confirms first coronavirus case," CNBC, March 1, 2020, <<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/01/first-coronavirus-case-confirmed-in-new-york-city.html>> (accessed April 13, 2020).
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- <sup>5</sup> NYC Health: COVID-19 Data, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page> (accessed April 16, 2020)
- <sup>6</sup> Williams, Pete, "Missouri man planned to bomb hospital during pandemic to get attention for white supremacist views," NBC News, March 30, 2020, <<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/missouri-man-planned-bomb-hospital-during-pandemic-get-attention-white-n1172346>> (accessed April 12, 2020).
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- <sup>8</sup> Culver, Jordan, "California engineer ran train 'off the end of rail tracks' in attempted attack on USNS Mercy in Los Angeles, DOJ says," USA Today, April 2, 2020, < <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/04/01/doj-engineer-derailed-train-usns-mercy-los-angeles-government-takeover/5110021002/>> (accessed April 15, 2020).
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- <sup>12</sup> NYPD Aided Report #: 00620.
- <sup>13</sup> Based on a search of the NYPD Domain Awareness System (DAS) executed on April 9 searching those dates using the keyword "spitting."
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