



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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9-1-1 TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY: FIRST RESPONDERS NEED YOUR HELP

SAPOA calls on San Antonio Retailers to partner with them after First Responders given insufficient protective gear and deficient products to handle COVID-19.

San Antonio, TX, March 18, 2020 - Today, the San Antonio Police Officers Association (SAPOA) is calling on major retailers here in San Antonio to partner with them in an effort to protect our First Responders against the Corona Virus (COVID-19).

As the front line responders to this crisis, it is critical that police officers remain healthy to effectively respond to calls. Unfortunately, the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) is failing to provide them with enough quality protective gear and products. Insufficient numbers of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gear (masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, etc) are being distributed to police shifts, in most cases only enough to supply one-third of the officers on duty. In addition to inadequate quantities being distributed, quality is also insufficient. For example, the hand sanitizer being issued to officers expired in 2011 and many officers are finding many bottles already opened and partially used.

SAPOA calls on retailers to partner with them to provide access to procure protective gear for First Responders.

- Protective gear needed includes items such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, protective eyewear, disinfectant spray and cleaning wipes.
- SAPOA is willing to pay retailers for these products, they only ask for expedited access to procure them.
- SAPOA is seeking easy access from retailers so that we can pick up the protective gear and products and distribute them to our First Responders.
- Businesses that think they can help San Antonio Police Officers should call Mike Helle at (210) 822-4428.

"Our First Responders are being poorly equipped to deal with this crisis. There aren't enough masks and they're being given expired hand sanitizer, probably left over from the Hurricane Katrina response," said Mike Helle, President of the San Antonio Police Officers Association. "I am asking members of the business community to step up and partner with us to provide officers with the means to protect themselves as they do their jobs."

This is an important issue for First Responders. In New York City for example, police officers who have had to respond to calls regarding COVID-19 patients have become sick themselves. In one NYPD precinct, for example, 31 officers are exhibiting flu-like symptoms. It is essential that if San Antonio begins to see a rising number of cases, our officers are not compromised and become unable to do their job: protecting the people of San Antonio.

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