

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

January 7, 2026

### NOTICE

1.14

**TO:** All Department Personnel

**FROM:** Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 627 – LAW ENFORCEMENT: MASKS

On September 20, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom signed California Senate Bill (SB) 627, *Law Enforcement: Masks*, into law. Senate Bill 627 aims to increase transparency, accountability, and public trust by ensuring that officers interacting with the community can be clearly identified. The Bill responds to increasing concerns about masked immigration enforcement actions, impersonation of officers, and public confusion and fear caused by unidentified agents.

Effective January 1, 2026, SB 627 prohibits law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings that conceal their identity while performing official duties. The Bill defines facial coverings as any opaque mask, garment, helmet, headgear, or other item that conceals or obscures the facial identity of an individual, including, but not limited to, a baclava, tactical mask, gator, ski mask, and any similar type of facial covering or face shield item. The Bill's definition of facial coverings does not include any of the following items:

- A translucent face shield or clear mask that does not conceal the wearer's facial identity;
- A N95 medical mask or surgical mask;
- Any mask, helmet, or device necessary to protect against exposure to any toxin, gas, smoke, inclement weather, or other hazardous or harmful environmental condition;
- A mask, helmet, or device necessary for underwater use;
- A motorcycle helmet when worn by an officer utilizing a motorcycle or other vehicle that requires a helmet for safe operations while in the performance of their duties; or,
- Eyewear necessary to protect from the use of retinal weapons.

The Bill also provides narrowly tailored set of circumstances which are exempt from the prohibition against wearing facial coverings:

- Active undercover operations or assignments authorized by supervising personnel or court order;
- Tactical operations where protective gear is required for physical safety;
- Applicable law governing occupational health and safety;
- Protection of identity during prosecution; and,
- Applicable law governing reasonable accommodations.

All other use of opaque facial coverings shall only be permitted when no other reasonable alternative exists, and the necessity is properly documented by the authorizing supervisor.

A Special Order and Department Manual Revisions detailing supervisory responsibilities is forthcoming. In the interim, the following guidelines outline officer and supervisor responsibilities in the face of SB 627 violations.

### **Officer's Responsibilities**

When responding to radio calls or incident involving alleged violations related to facial coverings worn by law enforcement officers from **other agencies**, officers shall:

- Immediately request a supervisor to respond if one has not already been dispatched;
- Assess officer and public safety and **avoid interfering with any ongoing enforcement operation** unless immediate action is required to protect life;
- Contact the person reporting (PR), when feasible, and obtain a statement from the PR about what was observed, documenting facial covering use;
- Attempt to identify the identity of the individuals engaged in apparent law enforcement actions while donning facial coverings;
- If necessary, take appropriate crime reports;
- If a crime report is not appropriate, such as allegations of misconduct and/or law enforcement officers wearing facial coverings, provide the PR with a business card containing the agency's website and/or phone number and refer them to the subject agency's procedures for complaints of misconduct;
- Ensure that all obtained information is included in the call disposition summary; and,
- Title and tag all videos in accordance with Department policy.

Officers **shall not**:

- Order personnel from other agencies to remove facial coverings or interfere with their operation(s) based solely on alleged facial-covering violations.
- Detain, arrest, or restrict the movement of officers from another agency solely because they are wearing a facial covering.

### **Supervisor's Responsibilities**

When notified of radio calls or incidents involving alleged violations related to facial coverings worn by law enforcement officers, supervisors shall:

- Confirm that officers have assessed officer and public safety and are not interfering with any ongoing enforcement operation unless immediate action is required to protect life;
- Evaluate whether it is tactically appropriate to approach law enforcement officers alleged to be wearing facial coverings;
- If necessary, ensure appropriate crime reports are taken;

- If necessary, ensure the PR has been provided with business card referral to the appropriate agency;
- Document the encounter in the Sergeant's Daily Report, Form 15.48.00; and,
- Notify the watch commander of the incident and provide all relevant information.

### **Watch Commander's Responsibilities**

When notified of radio calls or incidents involving alleged violations related to facial coverings worn by law enforcement officers, watch commanders shall document the activity and all pertinent information in their Watch Commander's Daily Report, Form 15.80.00, and notify the Area commanding officer.

### **Area Commanding Officer's Responsibilities**

Upon receiving notification of an Area's response to radio calls or incidents involving alleged violations related to facial coverings worn by law enforcement officers, commanding officers shall notify the bureau commanding officer and ensure Area personnel adhere to Department policies and procedures regarding facial coverings, and are compliant with Senate Bill 627, including the guidance contained in this Notice.

Should you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact Constitutional Policing and Policy Bureau, at (213) 486-8730.



JIM McDONNELL  
Chief of Police

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