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Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 8:27 PM

To: VPD All Sworn Staff - DL <SwornStaff@vpd.ca>; VPD All Civilian Staff - DL <CivilianStaff@vpd.ca>

Subject: COVID-19 Message from the Chief

Good evening, all VPD members:

We are living in a very unique and unprecedented time in modern history as we navigate through the challenges and uncertainty of the worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic. As of today, we have both a *Provincial State of Emergency* and a City of Vancouver *State of Local Emergency* in effect.

We all have concerns about COVID-19 and it's natural to feel various levels of stress or anxiety as we think about our own well-being and that of our family, friends and loved ones. Many people in Canada will be under additional stress due to financial pressures as businesses temporarily close and people are laid off. We also see people in our community over-buying and hoarding various staples in this time of crisis and confusion. Others are very less-fortunate and don't have the proper supports at the best of times.

We are in a unique profession, like many other emergency personnel, and are required to work through the worst situations that society or nature can throw at us. We have all the same personal pressures as the general public, but in addition, we have to leave our families to come to work and keep total strangers safe during the worst of times – often at personal risk to our own well-being.

This is one of those times that will test our personal and collective resolve to persevere during very demanding and uncertain times. The collective VPD family is responsible for providing public safety in Vancouver – keeping people safe when they are scared – and we won't let them down. We are going to pull together as members of the VPD and take care of business, just as we always have in our proud 134 year history. In order to do that, we need to take care of ourselves, our families and each other. We need to look after our brothers and sisters so we can look after others.

While many Canadians have the ability to work from home, only a portion of our members will have this ability as we have an obvious and unique responsibility as an *essential service* to keep Vancouver safe – crime, disturbances, k-files, missing kids, people in mental health crisis and the dangerous calls we respond to every day will continue despite the current situation. I want to extend a special thank you to our frontline operational members who are working 24/7 and often can't avoid touching people during times of disturbance or arrest, and are sometimes exposed to bodily fluids, violence and people who may be sick for a variety of reasons.

Moving forward it will be important for all deployable officers, regardless of Division, to ensure your operational uniform and equipment is ready to go in case we need to redeploy members to frontline duties. All our members, sworn and civilian, need to be nimble and prepared to possibly work in other areas of the Department outside of their regular work assignment. We

have no intention to do this in the immediate future; however, this situation is evolving rapidly and we are planning various staffing models and scenarios in the event that redeployment is required. We are working with the VPU, VPOA and Teamsters on this – and they have all been great to work with. Our community is dependent on us to maintain order and safety during this global health crisis and I know we have the experience and right people to carry this out. Extraordinary times will require us to adapt and do extraordinary things.

Please note that we have a substantial team of experienced and very capable sworn and civilian members working full time in our 'VPD Pandemic Working Group' and our Department Operations Centre (DOC) in EOPS is operating seven days per week. We have a Gold-Silver-Bronze command structure in place being operationally led by co-Silver Commanders: Inspector Andrew Chan and Inspector Ian Upton, who are both very competent and experienced leaders in the VPD. The team is working hard behind-the-scenes on very complex operational, investigative, administrative, legal and employee wellness considerations with internal and external experts (locally, nationally and internationally) to ensure we are well-positioned to deal with this pandemic. They currently have approximately 100 tasks assigned to cover-off both urgent and future planning considerations – you may not see them physically as they are located in the DOC and other offices at Graveley, but they are on it full time.

I also want you to know we are receiving great support from Mayor Kennedy Stewart, our Police Board, City Council, the City of Vancouver and Provincial authorities we engage with on a daily basis. As issues arise we are working through them in a coordinated and collaborative manner.

You have seen detailed daily COVID-19 updates from our DOC Commanders and the following Intranet page has been established to answer many of your questions. I have heard several stories and assumptions through the VPD grapevine, which are false. I encourage you to trust official VPD sources such as this and to review this website on a regular basis for current factual updates: <http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/COVID19/default.aspx>

You can also send questions, concerns or ideas that may not be covered on our website to: VPDPandemicWorkingGroup@vpd.ca

Please remember that if you're feeling anxious or need to talk to someone – that's OK – we will help you through this together. We have a number of resources available:

Sworn CISM team and Peer Support Unit:

You can reach out to Ali Gailus (778-847-5452), Michele McKnight (778-227-0789), Dave Moe (604-404-9303) or any other team member. Their names and contact information can be accessed here:

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/PeerSupport/Lists/Contacts/AllItems.aspx>

Civilian CISM team:

You can reach out to Amanda Vetter (604-349-5713) or any other Civilian CISM team member. Their names and contact information can be accessed here:

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/CISMCivilian/default.aspx>

We will get through this. You have my word that I will do everything I can to keep you safe as we keep Vancouver safe together. Thank you for your service – as always, you make me proud every day to be your Chief!

CHIEF ADAM PALMER

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