

Capitolwire: PA State Police begin enforcing Gov. Wolf's 'stay at home' order, indicate hope people will voluntarily comply.

By [Chris Comisac](#)

Bureau Chief

Capitolwire

HARRISBURG (April 8) - The Pennsylvania State Police this week started reporting their enforcement efforts with regard to Gov. Tom Wolf's April 1 statewide COVID-19 ["stay at home" order](#), similar to their reports about their enforcement of the Governor's order for "nonessential businesses" to close their physical locations.

During the first few days of the statewide order enforcement, the police [report](#) they have issued six warnings and two citations, with the latter as the result of officers reacting to primary offenses and then issuing a "stay at home" order citation for what, according to the State Police, right now amounts to a secondary offense.

"In Pennsylvania, troopers don't stop cars simply to determine what someone's reason might be for traveling," said Lieutenant Colonel Scott Price, deputy commissioner of operations for the State Police, during a conference call with reported on Tuesday afternoon.

"We're relying on all Pennsylvanians to look out for one another to help us meet the mandate of our public safety mission," Price explained, noting "stay at home" order enforcement is "an unconventional" public safety mission on which "we're learning every day, and we hope we're getting better every day to keep the folks of the commonwealth safe."

Price reiterated that whether warnings or citations are issued is up to the discretion of each trooper, based on the facts and circumstances of each particular situation ([CLICK HERE](#) to read the guidance issued to the State Police by the Wolf administration about enforcing the Governor's COVID-19 mitigation orders).

With Tuesday being the first day of Trout Fishing Season, and that activity permitted under the order ([CLICK HERE](#) for the Wolf administration's guidance to the public with regard to the order), Price said if someone is on the road to go fishing, you won't run into a problem with a trooper, though he said they're urging people to engage in approved activities as close to home as possible.

Price said the State Police has always worked on, and prided itself on, developing and improving community relations and ties, and working just as much in an educational role within the community as an enforcement one.

However, he acknowledged, "It is a delicate balance ... we would prefer voluntary compliance, whether it be in this pandemic response or even on the criminal investigatory side – we prefer that people just comply, but different here."

"If we begin to see greater degrees of noncompliance, certainly that takes us into an enforcement mode, because that's a public safety issue – then individuals who are noncompliant are endangering us all as this pandemic progresses," cautioned Price. "We hope it doesn't get to that, but we're prepared to take a more – I don't want to say aggressive posture in terms of enforcement – but certainly to enhance our enforcement efforts, if need be, to keep the community safe."

-30-