Police training in N.J. continues as departments prepare for possible shortages amid coronavirus outbreak

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New police recruits are continuing to train as departments throughout New Jersey grapple with policing in the midst of a coronavirus pandemic.

"We're trying to get them through in case we do need reinforcements," Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden said.

On Wednesday, Fanwood's mayor announced that a cop was self-isolating after testing positive, raising the specter of more first responders being taken off the front lines.

Departments are limiting face-to-face contact, and the state attorney general recently told police to lean on other towns and "Special Law Enforcement Officers" if quarantines leave patrols in any particular area short-staffed. Special officers are sometimes cops pulled out of retirement, and are often stationed at schools.

Dozens of special officers are currently training outdoors with the Monmouth County Police Academy, Golden said. An additional 18 new recruits are scheduled to graduate in May.

Locker rooms were closed, he said, and all physical training is happening at the end of the day so recruits can shower at home. Everyone has a tablet to learn remotely if necessary, Golden added, and no illnesses had been reported.

Further north, 75 people finished the Essex County Public Safety Academy March 5 and are now on patrol with supervisors, according to Newark police spokesperson Catherine Adams.

The Law and Public Safety Institute in Bergen, the county with the most cases, has new recruits studying remotely.

The institute has suspended all in-service training, according to a spokesperson for the county prosecutor's office, and continuing education for current officers has also ground to a halt at Middlesex's training center.

In Atlantic County, 41 were slated to graduate in June, according to county spokesperson Linda Gilmore, although its training was suspended Thursday.