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N.J. police training shuts down as coronavirus spreads

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New Jersey's attorney general has ordered police recruits to stop training as coronavirus cases mount across the state.

The State Police closed its academy Friday, according to Peter Aseltine, a spokesman for state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal. Training in Cape May, Ocean, Monmouth and Atlantic counties — as well as for the corrections department — also shut down, Aseltine wrote in a message.

The academies will be closed until April 6, although the moratorium may be extended.

Training had soldiered on earlier in the week, in an effort to bolster departments on the front lines of the fast-moving viral outbreak. At least six officers have tested positive for COVID-19 and 20 more are self-quarantined, the state's largest police union said Thursday.

Grewal has told departments to lean on other towns in the face of staff shortages.

The Monmouth County Police Academy had planned to graduate 18 new recruits in May, and Atlantic County slated 41 new officers for June. Those and other classes will likely now not finish until later.

The Law and Public Safety Institute in Bergen has new recruits studying remotely, a spokesperson for the prosecutor's office said Thursday, and 75 people had already finished the Essex County Public Safety Academy earlier in the month.

Ongoing training for current officers has also stopped in many places.