

NEW ORLEANS COMPANY

Visitor Safety Statement - Revised January 12, 2023

Overview

Our number one priority is the safety and wellbeing of our visitors, residents and those who work in the hospitality industry. As one of the world's most celebrated and iconic destinations for global meetings and conventions, leisure visitors, major cultural festivals and national sporting championships, New Orleans welcomes millions of travelers and countless corporations and organizations each year. Our cultural authenticity and the fact that we are organically Built to Host result in an unequalled success and travel experience in New Orleans like nowhere else, with every trip and gathering producing a world class memory.

New Orleans & Company has a strong partnership with New Orleans Police Department, the best police force in the world at managing citywide, logistically complex events such as Super Bowls, Final Fours, Major Festivals and Mardi Gras. The 2023 Carnival Season is underway and will culminate on Mardi Gras Day, February 21. Together with NOPD, we ask visitors to use the same personal safety precautions and to stay vigilant as they would at home or in any metropolitan destination.

The city is making rapid strides to make New Orleans safer for all. For example:

Violent Crime Reduction Task Force

On January 11th, Mayor Latoya Cantrell signed an executive order to establish a Violent Crime Reduction Task Force. Task force members will work daily with senior leadership and agency directors to deploy resources to help the New Orleans Police Department in addressing crime. The task force will also meet with stakeholders, including community groups and members of the New Orleans City Council. The group is under the command of Orleans Parish Communications District (OPCD) Executive Director Tyrell Morris.

The Violent Crime Task Force's priorities include:

- Preventing of acts of violence by embedding themselves in the community and orchestrating a “full government response” to detect, deter and intervene before a criminal act happens
- Assisting the interim NOPD superintendent, the brave men and women of the NOPD and all other law enforcement partners to apprehend violent offenders
 - This includes constantly evaluating internal policies, providing legislative recommendations to both Mayor Cantrell and the City Council and removing any barriers between a need and a resource
- Ensuring that comprehensive wraparound services are brought to bear

New NOPD Leadership

On December 20th, Captain Michelle Woodfork was named Interim Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and the first woman to ever lead the department, effective December 22nd. She takes over for Superintendent Sean Ferguson upon his retirement after 24 years of dedicated service. NOPD Interim Superintendent Michelle Woodfork has already promoted multiple officers to higher rank, including three deputy superintendents, four captains, three lieutenants and two sergeants.

Captain Woodfork is a native New Orleanian and life-long resident of New Orleans East. She has a long family history of law enforcement careers, including her father, who joined the force in 1968 as a cadet, and her uncle Warren G. Woodfork Sr., who was appointed as the first African American Superintendent of the NOPD.

Captain Woodfork is a 32-year veteran of the department and has been assigned to five of the NOPD's eight districts at the rank of Patrol Officer, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. She served 12 years as a Detective and later as a Sergeant in the department's Sex Crimes/Child Abuse Unit. In 2012, Woodfork was selected by former Superintendent Ronal Serpas to

launch the Alternative Police Response Unit, where she served as Commander. In 2016, she was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, initially assigned to the 7th District before moving to the 2nd District under the supervision of then Commander Shaun Ferguson. She was then assigned as a Lieutenant in the 1st District before being promoted to the rank of Captain in Nov. of 2021. Woodfork currently serves as the Captain of the NOPD Management Services Bureau.

We anticipate that a national search will be conducted to find a permanent police chief. New Orleans & Company is extremely grateful to Superintendent Ferguson for his partnership and looks forward to partnering with Interim Superintendent Woodfork.

2023 City Budget Prioritizes Public Safety

In December, the City of New Orleans adopted a \$1.4 billion budget for the 2023 fiscal year that addresses public safety and public health, enhanced technology and equipment, quality of life, infrastructure improvements and expanded youth programming. This budget includes funding for police recruitment and retention plan which invests \$32.5 million to keep our dedicated officers on the job that will place the department among the most competitive on a national stage. The plan has already been supported by the Civil Service Commission, as well as business and community leaders across the city and has yielded tremendous progress and results on the streets of New Orleans. An additional allocation of \$3.2 million was also approved to provide additional resources and enhanced technology for NOPD.

More Patrol Cars

Since 2021, New Orleans & Company has funded four security patrol vehicles to supplement NOPD patrols in the French Quarter. We now have invested in an additional four vehicles, bringing the total to eight.

More Police Officers Now on the Street

Effective September 26, 2022, there are 75 additional police officers patrolling the streets of New Orleans. The change comes as dozens of officers were reassigned from administrative roles.

This step is part of a bold initiative to bolster the New Orleans Police Department in September 2022. The plan includes:

- A former leader of the New York Police Department Fausto Pichardo has been hired for six months as Consulting Chief of Operations for the New Orleans Police Department. Pichardo was the head of the patrol division at NYPD, which includes more than 22,000 officers. Pichardo brings an 88-page plan and a team of consultants, including a former NYPD Crime Prevention Unit commander, to New Orleans.
- An \$80 million proposal for the NOPD that includes new benefits and investments in technology. It includes bonuses for new and existing officers, more police technology and a goal to recruit 200 officers to the city.
- The pay package – which includes \$30,000 bonuses for recruits who make a starting salary of \$42,411– represents a strong investment of funding over the next three years into an organization with a \$215 million annual budget.

The NOLA Coalition

Formed in 2022, the NOLA Coalition is a diverse collection of over 430 local nonprofits, civic organizations, and businesses with an acute interest in helping to address public safety. The mission of the NOLA Coalition is to harness our collective resources to create a safer and more prosperous New Orleans for all residents. The NOLA Coalition supports near-term actions to reduce violence, paired with investment in youth services to drive generational change. We stand ready to invest – our time, our people, our expertise, and our money – to help make a difference for New Orleans. A report on the coalition's progress to date can be found at nolacoalition.info/report.

NOPD Partnership

New Orleans & Company and its hospitality partners flourish with great relationships with the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). New Orleans & Company partners with and engages the top leadership of the NOPD on all elements, locations and activities of every gathering and convention so they may be available not only to meet and discuss all of a group's priorities and requirements, but to ensure coverage around convention venues and all areas where specific events are occurring. NOPD creates a deployment plan designed specifically for the needs of that group.

The NOPD has enhanced its Violent Crimes Abatement Investigations Team (VCAIT) unit initiatives to sustain the earlier successes with similar programs. The enhancement includes a stronger more intentional partnership with the Louisiana State Police (LSP) and federal partners.

Additional Security Protocols Underway

- Police patrol on foot as well as motorcycles and Smart Cars throughout the French Quarter, with special attention to Bourbon Street, Royal Street, Chartres Street, Jackson Square and parks
- Police patrol Convention Center Boulevard via patrol cars and Polaris carts
- NOPD officers dressed in fluorescent vests when directing traffic
- Mounted officers on horseback, when needed
- Additional portable light boxes on major cross streets
- Sky Watch towers to increase visibility, observation and police presence during special events
- Enhanced Blue Light Patrol – proactive patrols with off-duty NOPD officers to increase police presence
- All eight (8) districts are on 12-hour shifts

Downtown Public Safety Rangers

The Downtown Development District (DDD) created the Public Safety Ranger program as an integral element of Downtown's public safety network. The Public Safety Rangers are a non-commissioned force of safety professionals who patrol Downtown on foot and on bicycle. They act as extra eyes and ears for the police and the DDD. Rangers are customer-friendly and provide visible coverage throughout Downtown.

Visitors Downtown also can utilize the DDD Public Safety Rangers, who are on duty seven days a week from 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Downtown SafeWalk escorts are offered free of charge within the Downtown DDD boundaries. Call or text 504-415-1730 to check availability.

Common Sense Tips for Visitors to Any Major City

- Travel in groups and avoid walking alone on unlit streets at night.
- Pay attention when walking and using your smart phone as these devices have been the target of thieves nationwide.
- Do not leave your purse, backpack or briefcase unattended, especially not on the back of your chair.
- Be on the lookout for pickpockets. Consolidate your wallet. Don't bring every credit card and move it to your front pocket or/and wear a cross-body bag rather than a shoulder strap to keep your purse in front of you. Do not display large amounts of cash in public places.
- Consider removing your convention badge when leaving your hotel or meeting venue.
- When hailing a ride via a mobile app, confirm the identity of your driver before getting into the car.
- If you are intoxicated, please take a taxi, Uber or Lyft instead of walking or driving.
- Trust your gut instincts. If someone or something seems suspicious, leave the area, alert a police officer or Safety Ranger.
- If approached by strangers for con games, such as, "I bet I can tell you where you got your shoes," do not participate. Simply smile and walk past them.
- Lock car doors. Stow valuables out of sight in your vehicle.
- Ensure that your hotel room door is fully closed and locked at all times.
- Do not leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from strangers.
- Remember that most laws enforced in your city are enforced here as well.