

Title:

Policing Health Regulations during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Procedural Justice Encounters in Maintaining the Rule of Law and Protecting the Population

Lorraine Mazerolle

Professor of Criminology
University of Queensland, Australia

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly escalated the complexities of policing, creating a range of new responsibilities, tasks and strategies for police as well as raising new accountability questions. In this presentation I examine a number of new health regulations that are now commonplace for police to enforce including: restrictions on the number of people in restaurants, limits on visits to aged care and private homes, maintaining physical distancing between people in public space, and mandated wearing of masks. I explore the application of procedural justice policing to these new tasks, public demands, and strategies. I conclude that the pandemic has created unprecedented access for police into the private lives of citizens creating a new set of opportunities for enhancing citizen perceptions of police legitimacy but only under conditions of procedurally fair approaches to citizen engagement.