



# Police Robots Are Being Used For Social Distancing Control

If robots are being implemented elsewhere in the world to help police with enforcement of social distancing and face mask compliance, you can bet your bottom dollar that America will soon follow suit. Technocrats have an engineered answer for every conceivable problem.  
□ TN Editor

Covid-19 is accelerating the adoption of police robots in several cities such as Tunis in Tunisia, Guangzhou in China, and Chennai in India.

In south-east Asia, the city-state of Singapore leverages its Smart Nation resources to alleviate shocks from Covid-19. The robot car O-R3 and [robot dog Spot patrol public parks](#) and broadcast messages that remind people to maintain safe-distancing. The police robots “Matar” patrol a migrant worker dormitory and government quarantine facility. Autonomous drones patrol the skies above industrial zones, which are deserted due to the city-state’s lockdown, to deter opportunistic criminals.

Globally, the pandemic is compelling police forces to navigate more challenges. In the United States, inadequate protective gear exposes police officers to the risk of contracting the disease. In Australia, frontline workers, including police officers, encounter incidents of “spitting attacks”. In Singapore, a person knifed an enforcement officer who was performing safe-distancing duties.

The pandemic, which is the first to ravage the world in the Industry 4.0 era, offers an opportunity for police forces to boost smart policing in keeping pace with the changing world. Old methods of policing are insufficient to ease the unprecedented pressures from additional duties to support pandemic controls while concomitantly fighting crime. Across emergency services, Industry 4.0 technologies such as robots are shifting from novelty to necessity.

[The World Economic Forum](#) describes robots as “a game-changer in pandemics” and “can provide contact-free alternatives”. Robots can help enforce quarantines and safe-distancing as they are not susceptible to fatigue and disease. They can ease the physical and mental pressures that police officers face while working extended long hours in high-risk environments. This benefit extends to other government officers who are empowered by public health laws to enforce pandemic controls.

## **Smart policing for new normal**

The challenges that police forces encounter today could evolve and shape the new normal in the post-pandemic reality. Health experts warned that Covid-19 could linger after the pandemic ends. The economic recession that follows could exacerbate socio-political tensions in some cities, hence creating conditions for unrest and terrorism. To address these challenges, it requires more than deploying more robots as boots on the ground.

To fully realise smart policing, police forces should enhance the integration of robots in three areas. Firstly, police forces should review their operational processes to include doctrines that guide the use of robots in frontline duties. Robot operators should coordinate with police intelligence units to ensure real-time analytics of the data that robots

collect while patrolling. They should also be mindful of the legal and ethical issues that could arise from human-robot interactions.

[Read full story here...](#)