

Coronavirus and the DOC

Every day, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) will share basic information and statistics about the status of COVID-19 in the state prison system. The DOC is fully compliant with CDC testing guidelines and that inmates have access to robust medical staff/operations at both the local and Central Office levels, including a former chief of clinical services who specializes in public health who has returned to serve as a special advisor to DOC leaders.

Individual-specific information and testing details will not be provided by the DOC.

For all the latest updates on COVID in Pennsylvania, visit the [PA Department of Health's website](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx) , including the [COVID-19 tracker](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/COVID-19-tracker.aspx) .

Here are the DOC's information and statistics:

Quarantines

At 10 p.m. on March 29, the [DOC began a statewide inmate quarantine](https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/corrections_details.aspx?new%3D455) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Quarantining the entire system is in the best interest of our employees and our inmates," DOC Sec. John Wetzel said. "This is essentially forced social distancing. We must take this step to contain the virus to one facility and to keep it from spreading throughout the system. I don't want to wait until we have several cases in our system to act. We're taking this proactive measure now."

Wetzel said that inmates will be fed in their cells, and they will be afforded out-of-cell time for video visits, phone calls, access to the law library, as well as being provided with in-cell programming. All inmate movement will be controlled to conform to social distancing recommendations.

When quarantines happen, individuals housed in those housing units cannot participate in video visitation for the duration of the lockdown.

Also, lockdowns that are unrelated to quarantine may happen due to prison-related incidents. The same is the case for medical care – there are some inmates who require hospitalization that is not related to COVID-19.

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Inmate and Employee Testing

Last updated 2:30pm, April 10, 2020

Location	Employees		Inmates	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Central Office	1			
Albion		5		
Benner Township		4		2
Cambridge Springs				3
Camp Hill	2	3		1
Chester	2			1
Coal Township		4		1
Dallas		2		1
Fayette	2			
Forest		1		3
Frackville		11		1
Greene		4		
Houtzdale		1	0*	3
Huntingdon				1
Laurel Highlands		2		4
Mahanoy		3		6
Mercer		1		1
Muncy		6		
Phoenix	6	5	11**	6
Pine Grove				
Quehanna Boot Camp		1		
Retreat	3	5		
Rockview		1		4
Smithfield	1	1		2
Somerset				1
Waymart	1	16		2
Training Academy				
Parole	1	4		
Total	19	80	11	43

Employee and Inmate Testing

Video Visitation

Daily Population Report

Mitigation Measures

(/Pages/COVID-19.aspx#Mitigation)

Resources

PCI COVID-19 Products Images

(/Pages/PCI-COVID-19-Photos.aspx)

Mental Health Tips During Quarantine

(Documents/Optum-Mental-Health-Tips-Quarantine.pdf)

Awareness Graphics

(https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Social-Media.aspx)

**SCI Houtzdale had a false positive case in early April.*

***There are currently no pending tests at SCI Phoenix.*

The positive column shows number of positive tests received. Due to some testing results taking nearly two weeks to return, some individuals already have recovered. Not all positives shown here are active cases; they were quarantined or isolated in accordance with CDC guidelines while awaiting test results.

All figures are self-reported by employees. The DOC does not have the rights to obtain medical information on staff, so the DOC relies on employees to provide that information.

Employees who tested positive are directed to remain off work until they are cleared by a medical professional to return to work. Employees awaiting results are directed to self-quarantine at their homes. Employees who tested negative may return to work once cleared by a medical professional.

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Video Visitation

While only recently implemented, video visits will be held seven days a week. We have conducted 9,134 video visits between March 19-April 9. There are more than 4,028 video visits scheduled to take place from April 8-May 7. This number will continue to increase due to daily scheduling happening at state prisons.

Officials ask individuals to be patient and schedule dates/times that are at least one month out to give prison staff time to schedule and respond to requestors via email.

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Reducing the Population

To better manage COVID-19 when it enters the DOC, officials have begun reducing the population where they can. Steps taken include:

- Furloughing paroled individuals from centers to home plans
- Working with the parole board to maximize parole releases
- Reviewing parole detainers for individuals in county jails and state prisons
- Expediting the release process for anyone with a pending home plan
- Reviewing inmates within the state prison system who are beyond their minimum sentences

DAILY POPULATION REPORT (4/11/2020)

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INSTITUTION	TODAY'S POPULATION	INCREASE/ DECREASE FROM YESTERDAY	INCREASE/ DECREASE FROM LAST WEEK	INCREASE/ DECREASE FROM LAST MONTH
Albion	2,270	-2	-10	-21
Benner	2,065	-1	-10	-9
Camp Hill	2,875	-2	-33	-52
Cambridge Springs	1,156	-3	5	-2
Chester	1,077	0	-28	-44
Coal Township	2,127	0	-13	-18
Dallas	2,150	-2	-19	-36
Frackville	1,185	0	-17	-18
Forest	2,299	0	-3	0
Fayette	1,992	-5	-21	-38
Greene	1,780	-1	-7	-11
Houtzdale	2,487	-1	-14	-33
Huntingdon	2,010	-2	-17	-24
Laurel Highlands	1,416	-4	-21	-38
Mahanoy	2,339	0	-13	-29
Mercer	1,333	-1	-20	-28
Muncy	1,366	-4	-6	-10
Phoenix	3,130	-9	-40	-68
Pine Grove	1,024	-1	-10	-13
Quehanna	390	0	-6	-22
Retreat	480	20	153	289
Rockview	2,321	-1	-14	-20
Smithfield	1,297	0	-3	-6
Somerset	2,333	0	-15	-33
Waymart	1,357	-2	-18	-29
SCI TOTAL	44,259	-21	-200	-313
CCC/F Eastern Region	1,094	18	20	119
CCC/F Central Region	1,174	-11	-37	42
CCC/F Western Region	849	-2	22	161
CCC/F TOTAL	3,117	5	5	322

Mitigation Measures

The DOC is taking new measures at its facilities to mitigate COVID-19 including:

Inmates

- All visitation was suspended effective March 13. Visits are suspended through April 10.
 - Attorneys and select members of the PA Prison Society are permitted access if they pass the enhanced screening.
- Authorized visitors and inmates can participate in a new video visitation program that allows visitors to participate from home
 - For complete details, including how to schedule a video visit, [read the Video Visitation Visitor Guide](#)
(/family-and-friends/Documents/Video-Visitation-Visitor-Guide.pdf) . ((/family-and-friends/Documents/Video-Visitation-Visito
En Españolr-Guide-Espanol.pdf))
- All inmates will receive 5 free 15-minute phone calls and 5 free emails per week.
- Effective April 1, all inmates will receive free cable TV in their cells. Inmates without a TV can still buy one from the commissary.
- Each inmate will be permitted (without cost) to mail 12, one-ounce first class letters per month.
- Activities departments have increased activity opportunities.
- Commissary caps have increased from \$70 per week to \$100 per week.
- Town Hall meetings are being held to educate inmates on COVID-19
- Secretary Wetzel recorded an informational video to be posted on the inmate channel for all inmates.
- All inmates are being screened coming in and going out.
- All new inmates are being screened before being admitted into prison. We are not releasing any inmates without screening for symptoms.
- Inmates who have flu-like symptoms from counties will not be accepted. All inmates leaving our facilities (parolees, max outs, movements, etc.) will be screened.
- Medical co-pays have been waived for any inmate with influenza like illness (ILI).
- Inmates have been provided with disposable masks and are strongly encouraged to utilize them.
- Inmates are being provided materials to clean their cell daily. Materials will be provided to them on a daily basis.

Staff

- Each facility is conducting enhanced screening for all individuals entering a facility. No one will be permitted to enter a facility who has a fever over 100.4 or exhibits signs of cold or flu.
- Masks are required for all staff and institutions have provided each staff member with a cloth mask for use. Employees are permitted to provide their own mask similar to the ones the facility is handing out.
- Daily updates are emailed to ALL staff to mitigate rumors and provide up-to-date information.
- Personal Protection Equipment is provided to all staff. Masks are being manufactured by Correctional Industries. All CDC and DOH protocols are being followed in reference to masking.

Sanitation

- Institutions are holding town hall meetings with their inmate population to review sanitation guidelines and COVID-19 information for awareness. These meetings are conducted with institutions safety manager and infectious control nurse. Inmates are being educated on prevention/ mitigation efforts.
- Sanitation has increased all throughout the SCI, including housing units and cells.
- Provided all staff with a vehicle sanitation plan explaining how to clean all vehicles.
- Correctional Industries increased production of anti-bacterial soap to ensure all inmates and staff have sufficient supply throughout the institution. Soap is provided free of charge to inmates.
- Directed all equipment (radios, OC, etc.) to be cleaned after each shift and throughout the day.

SCIs

- Every SCI has plans in place for quarantine if an inmate tests positive
- SCILaurel Highlands and SCIWalmart will not be accepting new inmates. This has been expanded to include SCIFayette, which houses oncology.
- Parole violators should be returned to only 3 pre-determined SCIs
- Institutions will continue food services, groups, religious services, and activities. We will evaluate each institution on a case-by-case basis on whether this needs to change.
- All SCIs will identify vulnerable population to keep them isolated.
- Monitoring sick-call and staff health and advising employees to stay home if they are sick.
- Postponing audits, inspections and reentry job fairs that were scheduled for March and April.
- All training at the DOC Training Academy—outside of basic training and the inmate culinary academy—has ceased as of March 16.
- Pennsylvania Correctional Industries is increasing manufacturing capabilities.
 - PCI is manufacturing anti-bacterial soap and masks.
- All gyms and barber shops/cosmetology are closed until further notice.
- The general libraries will be closed for inmates, but they can request books and have books delivered to them. The legal libraries will remain open as normal. Legal libraries will be prioritized based on most critical need.

Parole/Field/Reentry

- All parole hearings will continue as scheduled and follow the existing process.
- Bureau of Community Corrections is furloughing eligible reentrants.
- Community Corrections has implemented additional sanitation efforts.
- Community Corrections staff and reentrants are undergoing enhanced screening.
- Field agents have increased contacts via technology.
- Agents are equipped with PPE to use if necessary.

New measures will be enacted when the need arises and as the situation develops. For the most accurate and up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Pennsylvania,

[follow the PA Department of Health](#)

(https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx)