

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19

- 1. Why has isolation for family, friends and visitors been suggested?**
- Out of an abundance of caution and to protect what we consider a vulnerable population, the TDOC made the decision to suspend visitation until further notice. This decision is being re-evaluated daily and based on current updates of the COVID-19 spread in Tennessee.
- 2. How can family and friends maintain contact with their loved ones while isolation is extended?**
- Stephens calls through the inmate phone system all contacts contemplated. TDOC identifies who phone accounts through TDS, will receive two free five-minute phone calls per week through April 15th.
- 3. Are prisoners prohibited due to COVID-19?**
- No. Many regular activities such as educational programs and inmate jobs are continuing.
- 4. Do inmates have access to soap and hand sanitizers?**
- Yes. Soap, water and hand sanitizers are readily available to the entire population. In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Health recommendations, soap and water is the best option for protection.
- 5. What activities can inmates participate in during this time?**
- All facilities are maintaining as many services as possible, including most educational and work programs.
- 6. Are inmates allowed to go out or work outside?**
- Currently, a limited number of inmate work crews are supporting state and local partners without contact with the public. Anyone who works outside is being screened when they return.
- 7. Can limited family members visit from prisons, make or hand mailings?**
- TDOC facilities do not accept packaged mail deliveries for inmates. Letters and correspondence are accepted.
- 8. Will food and laundry services continue inside the facilities?**
- Yes. Mail and laundry questions are continuing.
- 9. How inmates is eligible for release, will they remain in custody?**
- All scheduled releases will occur as planned.
- 10. Are visitors and families still allowed to attend parole hearings?**
- Eligible participants, the Board of Parole will begin conducting parole hearings to the extent possible through electronic means. Visitors and eligible family members may submit statements to the Board of Parole by email or mail.
- 11. Are inmates allowed to meet with their attorneys?**
- Legal visits have been suspended until further notice. Any special request for an legal visit should be addressed to the warden of the facility.
- 12. Are any offenders being released from TDOC prisons early due to the coronavirus?**
- There are no plans for early release from TDOC prisons at this time because of the coronavirus.
- 13. Will people be prohibited from being required to report to?**
- Participants of parolees are to be screened according to the with other contact through electronic platforms. There is limited media reporting which recognizes a non-release screening process for participants. Probationers and parolees with questions about their reporting schedule should contact their supervising officer.
- 14. Are the Day Reporting Centers (DRCs) still operational?**
- Programing is being delivered by electronic means for DRC participants.
- 15. How is the TDOC ensuring the health and welfare of the inmate population?**
- The TDOC is conducting temperature screenings of everyone entering our facilities for symptoms such as fever (over 100.4) and difficulty breathing (due to entry to maintain prevention efforts). Facilities are utilizing all medical care made and screens from COVID-19, medical, and all of the state and Tennessee. Additionally, medical updates for inmates are being posted at the time.
- We have formulated a schedule to ensure cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas multiple times per day.
- Includes the use of a 1:10 bleach solution or other coronavirus effective products.
 - High touch areas include common workspaces, toilet stalls, light switches, door handles, handrails, phones, elevator buttons, handrail扶, security keypads, ID badges, and penicillins.
- 16. What happens in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a TDOC facility?**
- The TDOC has extensive protocols in place to address those who present with symptoms, which will include immediate isolation. Protocols are in place to address concerns where there is potential. The inmate population at facility offenders is closely tracked, as necessary.
- 17. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available for inmates in TDOC custody?**
- We are in the process of distributing masks to all staff and inmates as they are being produced, including those donated by Nelson Akin. We continue to encourage contact handwashing as the best defense against COVID-19.
- 18. When TDOC facility, beginning to be used to house coronavirus-positive inmates?**
- The TDOC has identified at each facility to treat patients.
- 19. Why are offenders currently in TDOC custody not being tested for the coronavirus?**
- Presently, inmates that meet the requirements of testing have been tested. As the guidance changes, TDOC will adjust accordingly.
- 20. Have there been additional tests for inmates or staff connected to a TDOC facility where an employee has tested positive for COVID-19?**
- Consistent with CDC guidelines and in consultation with the Tennessee Department of Health, appropriate monitoring and/or testing has been implemented in the event an inmate or staff member has signs or symptoms of infection. Presently, these inmates have tested positive for COVID-19.
- 21. Why is there a recommended effort taking temperature instead of random medical staff of the facilities? Is this a HIPAA violation?**
- Temperature checks are part of the CDC recommended screening. Staff members are not providing medical care nor are they offering medical advice. Staff are utilizing a tool that is common in many households. If there is a concern, medical staff are alerted to perform an assessment.
- 22. Are Core Clinic facilities following the same policy and guidelines as TDOC facilities to stop the spread of COVID-19?**
- We have issued guidance to CoreClin based on CDC and Department of Health recommendations.
- 23. What are inmates doing to make it the right against COVID-19?**
- Inmate activities are assisting in the development of PPE by 3M distribution at the facilities in partnership with 3MCOE. Surgical masks are being produced at the Morgan County Correctional Complex. Tyeen gloves are being made at the West Tennessee State Penitentiary.
- This is an unstable and fluid situation. Please check back frequently for updates.
- You have additional questions or concerns in regards to COVID-19, complete the form provided below. If you have questions/concerns that are not COVID-19 related, send them to TDOCCommunications.

TDOC COVID-19 Questions/Concerns

Please fill out all the required fields.

First*

Last*

First Name

Last Name

Contact Phone Number*

Inmate no. code

Email*

Are you contacting us in regards to a specific offender or location? If yes, please provide the location and/or the offender's name and TDOC #.

Write a brief description of your concerns and/or questions. *

Submit Form