



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Question *Updated April 8, 2020*

What precautions are DOC taking to protect inmates and staff from COVID-19?

In January, 2020 the DOC initiated screening of symptoms of respiratory illness for inmates, staff and volunteers as a precaution during the annual flu season. At that time, the DOC also began screening inmates at intake for recent travel outside the continental US in recognition of the spread of coronavirus in China. In late February, even as incidents of the flu trended downward within its facilities, the DOC expanded these screening measures to all visitors as an early precaution against coronavirus.

Inmates who arrive at our facilities receive a medical screening to assess their healthcare needs and to learn about any potential exposure to COVID-19. Since mid-March, all inmates who have arrived at our facilities are being carefully monitored every day by medical staff for 14 days to look for signs of illness.

We are thoroughly screening every single person who enters our prisons, work release and violation of probation centers, and probation and parole offices. They are asked specific questions about their medical condition and whether they have had any direct or indirect contact with someone who has been tested for COVID-19 or is in quarantine. And they receive a forehead temperature check with a thermometer. Anyone who exhibits signs of illness is turned away and directed to consult with a doctor.

Additional cleaning of all DOC facilities is occurring as much as two times each day, including sanitizing work spaces and disinfecting of hard surfaces that can retain germs. Surfaces in high traffic areas are sanitized even more frequently. Additionally, inmates are provided cleaning supplies to sanitize and disinfect cell areas. The DOC is enlisting all staff, contractors and inmates to take individual action to prevent infection and the spread of Covid-19 through good personal hygiene, including frequent hand washing with soap and water. The attached flyer has been distributed to inmates this week as part of that effort. Inmates have wide access to soap and water, which public health officials have indicated is the preferred method of handwashing (see <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html>). Additionally,

DOC provides wall-mounted hand sanitizers throughout its facilities. These hand sanitizers are primarily for the use of staff, but hand sanitizers mounted on the walls in hallways and prison infirmaries are frequently used by inmates. Finally, DOC has ordered additional hand soap stations that will be wall-mounted in recreational areas and facility lobbies. These hand soap stations will be available to staff (lobbies) and inmates (recreation areas).

How can I stay in touch with my loved one in DOC custody?

The health and safety of our staff, visitors and the individuals under our supervision is the DOC's first priority, and on March 12th the DOC temporarily suspended inmate visitation as a necessary step to reduce the risk of Covid-19 entering and spreading within our facilities. The DOC currently offers a variety of phone and video visitation to inmates in order to facilitate family and community support that is important to their wellbeing.

While visitation is suspended, the DOC will increase the use of video visitation as available in its facilities. On March 16 the DOC began providing two free five-minute phone calls per week to all inmates at every Level V prison and Level IV Violation of Probation and Work Release facility facilitate communication between individuals in DOC custody and their families.

Do probationers still need to check in to their Probation Officers as scheduled?

Case plans and reporting instructions are developed on an individual basis based on risk and needs. The individual should call his/her Officer for specific reporting instructions. If the assigned Officer is not available, the individual should ask to speak with the Duty Officer or Duty Supervisor.

Are probationers required to report to Probation and Parole "Weekly" group meetings?

Effective immediately, all treatment programs at the Probation & Parole District Offices will be suspended for two weeks (beginning March 24, 2020 and ending April 5, 2020) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes Aftercare, Mental Edge sex offender treatment, and Gateway substance abuse treatment and programming. This protective protocol will be reevaluated at the end of the second week to determine best steps moving forward. Treatment staff will be asked to make contact with offenders via telephone as a "check-in" and report any concerns or inability to contact an offender to the assigned Officer and Supervisor immediately. Treatment providers are expected to report "check-in" updates to the assigned officer on a weekly basis.

Do inmates continue to have access to their lawyers?

Yes. The temporary restriction on visitation does not apply to inmate meetings with their attorneys. The DOC is working to accommodate video meetings for attorneys who prefer to meet with their clients remotely.

Have any Officers, other DOC employees, or offenders tested positive for COVID-19?

[Click HERE to review Confirmed DOC COVID-19 Cases](#)

What specific screening measures are in place?

Anyone who enters a DOC facility are asked specific questions about their medical condition and whether they have had any direct or indirect contact with someone who has been tested for Covid-19 or is in quarantine, and they receive a forehead temperature check with a thermometer.

Are pre-trial detainees and newly-sentenced offenders tested for COVID-19?

In January, we began enhanced medical screenings for individuals held in pre-trial detention and sentenced offenders in our facilities during the flu season. In February, we stepped it up these screenings for Covid-19 as it spread to the United States. Inmates who arrive at our facilities receive a medical screening to assess their healthcare needs and to learn about any potential exposure to the virus. Since mid-March, all inmates who have arrived at our facilities are being carefully monitored every day by medical staff for 14 days to look for signs of illness.

If an offender shows symptoms for COVID-19 is he or she isolated?

Yes.

Will the family and public be notified if an offender tests positive for COVID-19?

Yes, a press release will be drafted and the public will be notified.

If an officer tests positive for COVID-19, will the public and correctional facility be notified?

Yes. [Click HERE to read those announcements.](#)

If there is a large outbreak of COVID-19 in a DOC facility, where will inmates be housed?

Each facility has a contingency plan in place in the event that an offender contracts COVID-19.

Is DOC considering early release for offenders?

No, not at this time.

How has COVID-19 impacted the Key, Crest, and Reflections Substance Use Disorder programs?

DOC and its behavioral healthcare provider, Centurion, have developed a temporary alternative treatment plan so that inmates in the Key, Crest, and Reflections Substance Use Disorder treatment programs can continue to make progress toward completing these programs. It is designed to keep participants on course to complete programming without significant delay and to continue to apply meritorious good time for program participation and meritorious bonus good time for program completion. The Transitions treatment program is continuing with its normal structure, but is using video.

This temporary alternate treatment plan for Key, Crest, and Reflections focuses on self-study and journaling, increased use of program peers, and use of phone and video conferencing technology. Centurion program staff are evaluating each participant's progress to determine their advancement to the next phase of the program and graduation.

Program participants who have questions about their specific treatment plan or how this temporary program plan will affect their progress or graduation date have been directed to write a letter to the program staff.

Who is wearing face masks in DOC facilities?

The risk of transmission remains greatest from individuals coming into our correctional facilities from the community. That's why, in addition to DOC's aggressive screening and cleaning efforts, the following measures are being taken:

- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days and are closely monitored for signs of illness, including daily temperature check.
- In-person programming and visitation have been temporarily suspended to reduce the number of people coming into DOC facilities from the community and to reduce movement of individuals within DOC facilities.
- DOC facilities, including housing areas, undergo twice-daily cleanings and more frequent disinfecting of commonly-touched surfaces. DOC also employs specialized equipment to disinfect targeted areas. Additionally, inmates are provided with supplies to clean cells.
- Face masks are being worn in prison, work release, and violation of probation facilities by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers as an added layer of protection for inmates and staff, on top of DOC's rigorous screening and cleaning measures.
- Face masks are being provided to inmates who are in infirmaries, those with compromised immune systems, and certain inmates with institutional jobs, including food service workers. For security reasons, the DOC does not permit face masks to be worn by other inmates.