UDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates

Page updated 04/21/2020

Visit coronavirus.utah.gov for statewide information.

This page offers general information and UDC-related updates regarding the Coronavirus

UTAH RESPONSE:

The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) is working collaboratively with state partners — including the Lieutenant Governor's task force — to address Coronavirus in Utah.

The safety of incarcerated individuals or those on supervision, along with our staff, volunteers and others who interact directly with our Department, is paramount.

We are continuing to implement strategies for prevention. Actions include posting fliers throughout our facilities on preventative steps and sharing information with staff and offenders. We are also implementing various screening procedures for staff, intake, movement, etc.

***PLEASE NOTE: As Coronavirus cases in Utah continue to increase, please know that we have outbreak strategies in place, which include prompt medical care and testing, and quarantine and isolation for exposed incarcerated individuals. These updates will be shared via this webpage and social media.*

To see recovery and outbreaks worldwide, visit: https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opendashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6

Receive updates from the CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

For more information on the virus, and for state-related updates, please visit the website: https://coronavirus.utah.gov/

THE NUMBERS:

COVID-19 Cases in Utah: 3296

Confirmed Offender Cases in UDC Facilities: 9

- First COVID-19 Case Confirmed at a Utah Corrections Community Correctional Center: A UDC case has been confirmed at the same community correctional center

Deaths in Utah: 32

UTAH CORRECTIONS UPDATES:

04/14/2020: Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new recommendations regarding wearing masks in community-based environments, our Utah Correctional Industries staff and incarcerated individuals who participate in the program, have worked dedicatedly to sew washable, reusable face coverings. Every incarcerated individual at the Utah State Prison and Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison and every staff member have been provided two of these face coverings along with information on how to sanitize their face covering, and when to wear them.

04/09/2020: The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) is making referrals to the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) regarding the early release of some offenders. Originally referrals were being made for those who have a release date within 90 days, but in light of the ongoing spread of COVID-19 throughout the country, this timeline was recently extended to be within the next 180 days. All offenders released early must still have an approved address to release to.

To learn more visit: https://corrections.utah.gov/index.php/home/alerts-2/1229-utah-identifies-early-releases-to-create-additional-capacity-within-correctional-facilities

04/03/2020:

The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) has confirmed its first positive case of COVID-19 within one of its community correctional centers on April 3, 2020.

The offender, who has not been in a state prison since late 2019, is male and between the ages of 45 to 54, and is in stable condition and has been isolated.

UDC is working in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local health departments to ensure that all contact steps are taken, which include but are not limited to isolating the infected offender who will receive frequent health checks; coordinating with public health officials on quarantine procedures and contact tracing; and ensuring that proper cleaning and contact protocols are implemented.

Read more here https://corrections.utah.gov/images/040320_UDC_Confirmed_COVID-19_Case_.pdf

03/31/2020:

The process for picking up inmate property will temporarily change during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can learn more here: https://corrections.utah.gov/images/COVID-19_Property_Pick-up.pdf

03/26/2020:

Due to the evolving situation with COVID-19, visiting will remain on hold through April 26 at which time we will reevaluate. In the meantime, we will continue to offer 10 free 15-minute phone calls per week to each inmate.

Public Information Panels and volunteer activities continue to be postponed until further notice.

03/26/2020:

In collaboration with the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, and support from the Utah Governor's Office, the Utah Department of Corrections is initiating some early releases to create additional non-correctional facilities as confirmed cases of COVID-19 increase throughout the state.

At this time there are no confirmed cases within the UDC facilities among either staff or inmates.

The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) is making referrals to the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) for release of incarcerated individuals, who are already within 180 days of their scheduled release date and have an approved address.

Learn more here: https://corrections.utah.gov/index.php/home/alerts-2/1229-utah-identifies-early-releases-to-create-additional-capacity-within-correctional-facilities

03/24/2020: The April 6 Focus Forum meeting has been cancelled, and will be rescheduled for a later date.

03/20/2020: Starting March 31, the weekly Release Day Fair and Orientation event will temporarily change its operations. Please visit the Release Day Information page for more information.

03/18/2020: All inmates at the Utah State Prison are safe and accounted for after an earthquake this morning.

03/13/2020: Increased Access to Phones

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, inmates at the Utah State Prison and the Central Utah Correctional Facility will have access to 10 free phone calls per week. The free calls will be limited to 15 minutes. Traditional fees will be charged for additional calls and calls exceeding 15 minutes. We are taking this action because visitation has been suspended and we want to be in contact with loved ones while visiting is suspended at our facilities. We'd like to thank CenturyLink for working so quickly in coordination with our Department to get this in motion!

03/12/2020: Visiting and Volunteering Suspended

Based on the most recent recommendations from the CDC and the Utah Coronavirus Task Force to take preventative steps to inhibit the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), we are temporarily suspending all visiting and volunteering to our correctional facilities. These include Utah State Prison in Draper and the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison. Our Department will reevaluate this suspension in two weeks. We will provide an update on our Department's website at that time. We know that visiting is a vital piece of an offender's rehabilitation process, and we will continue to keep you updated over the next few weeks on when those opportunities will be available again. Incarcerated individuals have been notified that visiting is suspended and we are encouraging them to continue utilizing the phone calls and mail.

Attorneys will be permitted to meet with offenders, but only through barrier visits at this time.

03/12/2020: Tours and public awareness panels suspended for the time being.

03/12/2020: The Utah Serving Time Cafe is closed for business until further notice.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What steps is UDC taking to mitigate the potential spread of the virus within facilities?

A. We are proactively working to prevent an outbreak while also preparing for a potential outbreak. Our actions include suspending visits, volunteer and contractor activities, suspending visiting and volunteering, placing strategic signage throughout our facilities for staff and offenders regarding preventative steps and recognizing symptoms; identifying areas for isolation and quarantine for those exposed, symptomatic or confirmed; strategizing on limiting movement between facilities or other outside locations; providing additional cleaning materials; and educating staff and offenders on the use of protective gear and sanitizing.

We are committed to keeping incarcerated individuals informed and updated on COVID-19 within our correctional facilities. Along with interpersonal communication (with appropriate social distancing and PPE) and memos, we have also provided each incarcerated individual with various informative material, which includes a newsletter and information on face coverings and containment procedures.

Q. Are those entering UDC facilities being screened for the Coronavirus?

A. Screening processes are in place, including for offenders, staff and others entering or moving between facilities. Any suspected cases will follow the protocols identified by the Governor's Office, which may include immediate isolation and testing following initial screenings.

Q. Is UDC testing symptomatic offenders or staff?

A. We are in direct contact with the Utah Department of Health, so when an offender is symptomatic for the Coronavirus, we can promptly address their needs and coordinate directly with outside medical providers. Suspected cases will be immediately isolated and tested following initial screenings.

Measures are already in place where any staff member with symptoms has been directed to stay home and to notify the chain of command. We have also notified staff to utilize the Coronavirus hotline if they have symptoms, which will allow our community to better understand when and how to access care if they have symptoms of the virus.

Q. Is UDC equipped for an outbreak within any of its facilities?

A. We are more than adequately prepared with supplies of protective gear and sanitation products. In addition, we are educating staff and offenders on how to utilize these items.

Q. Is the Parole Board still holding public hearings?

A. Public access is currently limited at this time. You can learn more on the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole website here: https://bop.utah.gov/index.php/2-uncategorized/195-bopp-coronavirus-information

Q. How is community supervision being addressed in accordance with the Governor's most recent guidelines?

A. We have implemented some changes to be in accordance with the Governor's recommendations on social distancing, and have commenced these changes to offenders on supervision.

AP&P continues to actively monitor offenders, and work closely with partner law enforcement agencies to ensure public safety.

Q. Are you considering releasing inmates or offenders early?

A. The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) is making referrals to the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) for release of incarcerated individuals, who are already within 180 days of their scheduled release date and have an approved address.

You can learn more here: https://corrections.utah.gov/index.php/home/alerts-2/1229-utah-identifies-early-releases-to-create-additional-capacity-within-correctional-facilities

Q. What programming and educational classes have been cancelled?

A. The following programs have been cancelled by individual school districts and colleges, not by the Department of Corrections

- High School Programming
- University of Utah Classes
- Salt Lake Community College Classes
- Utah State University's WorkOut Dad

Q. My offender is housed at a county jail, are they implementing the same protocols as the UDC?

A. We know that many county jails are taking similar steps toward prevention and containment. We would recommend contacting the county jail directly if you have specific questions.

Q. Will an incarcerated individual be charged a copay for any COVID-19 related medical treatment?

A. Any potential medical treatment provided to an incarcerated individual related to COVID-19 will not be charged a copay.

Q. Can you tell us why there's been an increase in lockdowns over the past few weeks at the Utah State Prison in Draper and the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison?

A. We appreciate your patience as we continue to implement measures to prevent the introduction or spread of COVID-19 within our facilities, and to promptly identify any potential cases of COVID-19. These actions may cause a facility or facilities to temporarily lock down.

In the event that we do have a confirmed case, it's our intent that any individual who is isolated or quarantined will have access to communicate with their families while still following the recommendations of local health officials and the CDC.

Q. How is commissary impacted by COVID-19?

A. At this time there are no considerations being made to discontinue commissary services for incarcerated individuals. We are taking measures to keep incarcerated individuals as safe as possible, which may include an increase in temporary lock downs, but this should not impact commissary. Currently, although there may be times where a facility may see a short delay in delivery of items.

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