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NOTICE

IN-PERSON VISITATION TO RESUME DEPARTMENT-WIDE ON JUNE 1, 2021

(/news/doc-to-resume-in-person-visits-next-week-with-continued-health-safety-protocols)

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PRESS RELEASE

Personal Visits Resume at Some DOC Facilities in Line with Public Health Guidance

Personal Visits Resumed at Two Facilities Last Week and Two More This Week; Attorney Visits Remain Ongoing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

7/17/2020

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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MILFORD — In-person visitation has resumed at four Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) facilities, and more are expected to follow suit as health and security precautions allow, officials said today.

General visitation was temporarily suspended at DOC facilities in March to protect the health and safety of inmates and staff from the transmission and spread of COVID-19, but resumed on July 8 at Northeastern Correctional Center in West Concord and July 9 at Pondville Correctional Center in Norfolk with proper health and safety precautions. This week, inmates at South Middlesex Correctional Center in Framingham and Boston Pre-Release Center in Roslindale also began receiving visitors. All are minimum-security and/or pre-release facilities and in total have received around 90 visitors so far.

The phased resumption of visitation will be specific to each individual facility and is contingent upon testing data and positivity rates within that facility and the broader community.

The change reflects an effort to balance the benefits of visitation with the risk that COVID-19 exposure, introduction, and transmission pose to incarcerated populations. To minimize that possibility, visits at NECC and Pondville are conducted in designated outdoor areas. Visitors will be surveyed for risk factors and have their temperatures taken prior to entry into the facility, and must utilize hand sanitizer before and after the visiting period. Masks or face coverings must be worn at all times by both visitors and inmates. Visits are non-contact with a physical barrier between the visitor and inmate, and all individuals must remain in their assigned areas to maintain social distancing.

As specific facilities resume personal visits, visitors may call those respective facilities to schedule a visit and obtain additional information regarding visitation. Personal visits are limited during this phase to one visit per inmate per week, with up to two visitors at a time, and must be scheduled 24 hours in advance; attorney visits remain ongoing and unaffected by the change.

Elevated health and safety protocols are already in place at all 16 DOC facilities and include visitation areas. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available, high-touch areas are sanitized between each visit and at the completion of the visiting period, and restrooms with soap and running water are fully accessible.

The DOC currently has no active COVID-19 cases, and testing and screening are ongoing throughout the agency. All facilities have designated spaces for quarantine if necessary. The DOC continues to relax internal movement restrictions and will continue to allow more out of cell time as appropriate and as safely as possible, including outdoor “fresh air time” at each facility. The Department remains focused on maintaining the safety and security of its population, its staff, and the public.

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The Department of Correction oversees the state prison system, managing inmates at 16 institutions across the state.

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