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Coronavirus Update

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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)

NEWS

DOC Implements Health Protocols to Resume Safe In-Person Visits Next Week

Visitation will again be in place across all department facilities beginning on September 28

9/24/2020

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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Milford — The Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) today announced that in-person visits will resume at all facilities on September 28 in a way that balances the benefits of visitation with the need for

vigilance against COVID-19.

As with other reopening strategies across the Commonwealth, DOC's approach is guided by public health data and focused on its responsibility to those living and working in its facilities. In anticipation of this next phase, visitors may schedule a visit with the respective facility their loved one is housed via phone and obtain additional information about health and safety protocols. 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 this change.

In line with public health guidance, DOC remains committed to using public health data, specifically positive test rates within DOC facilities and in the broader community, to create protocols that protect public safety and embrace its responsibility for those in its care. As a result, there have only been four COVID-19 cases in DOC population since July 1, all of which reflect inmates who had contracted the virus prior to entering DOC custody. The Department's testing, screening, and quarantine initiatives continue to safeguard the health of about 6,900 inmates, as well as DOC staff and vendors.

Upon arrival and prior to entering the facility, visitors will participate in a standard screening process where they will answer questions about their health and have their temperatures taken. Visitors will be required to use hand sanitizer before the visiting period and face coverings will be worn at all times, both by visitors and inmates. Visits will take place in designated areas without physical contact, with a physical barrier between the visitor and inmate. At the conclusion of the visit, all visitors will again use hand sanitizer before exiting the facility. In addition to the alcohol-based hand sanitizer, restrooms with soap and running water are fully accessible. All high-touch areas are sanitized between visits and at the end of the visiting period.

General, in-person visitation was suspended temporarily in March to protect the health and safety of inmates and staff from COVID-19. In early July, the DOC started the phased resumption of in-person visitation with health and safety precautions at Northeastern Correctional Center and Pondville Correctional Center. Shortly thereafter, four additional minimum/pre-release facilities began receiving in-person visitors. As of September 22, 2020, these facilities have accommodated more than 1,200 visitors.

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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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