» May 26, 2021: Inmate Visitation Program Updates

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NDCS prepares for visits to resume; online forms now available

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NDCS prepares for visits to resume; online forms now available

July 2, 2020 (Lincoln, Neb.) Forms are now being accepted online by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) so that scheduling of visits can begin. The visitation program is being relaunched with some changes, designed to protect the health of those living in the facilities, staff members and anyone coming in.

“NDCS is reopening visitation in phases and this first step is certainly the most restrictive. Activities are going to be prohibited in order to ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent introduction of the virus into our facilities,” said Diane Sabatka-Rine, chief of operations for NDCS.

Visitors will be required to schedule all visits in advance, by completing the necessary form online. Sabatka-Rine said the move was necessary to ensure that the number of participants did not exceed capacity in each facility visiting room during specified times. “Each warden has established a schedule based on available space and the need to socially distance. As a result, the visitation schedules for our facilities have changed, compared to the schedules utilized before COVID-19.”

The effort to stem transmission of the coronavirus has led to other modifications to the visitation program as well. For instance, children under the age of 18 will not be permitted. Two adults will be allowed to visit, as long as they both complete the online application. Approved visitors will also be expected to arrive early, so they can undergo the necessary health and security screenings. Masks will be required at all times. Visiting rooms will be sanitized between visits.

“People who are visiting for the first time will want to be sure to go to the agency’s website in order to review what has changed as well as our existing requirements,” advised Sabatka-Rine. “Now that we have added some additional steps, we want people to be well-prepared before they arrive at the facility for their visit.”

During visits, participants will be prohibited from having any physical contact, including hugging, kissing and holding hands. “We recognize those are the things participants will likely have the hardest time with,” said Sabatka-Rine. “As things progress, we may be able to lift those limitations.”

Should circumstances warrant, the agency is prepared to take a step back and close visitation again.

“That would not be an ideal situation, but it could be necessary, depending on how things play out with this pandemic,” stated Sabatka-Rine. “At this point we are ready to forge ahead, knowing that we continue to utilize all of the strategies that we put into place months ago, to keep COVID-19 out.”

Anyone seeking information about the inmate visitation program can find it on the NDCS website: corrections.nebraska.gov/. There, prospective visitors will also find links to each facility page and the necessary visitation forms.

The first day that visits will be permitted in NDCS facilities is July 15, 2020.

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FACILITIES:
Work Ethic CampTecumseh State Correctional InstitutionOmaha Correctional CenterNebraska State PenitentiaryNebraska Correctional Youth FacilityNebraska Correctional Center for WomenLincoln Correctional CenterDiagnostic & Evaluation CenterCommunity Corrections Center - OmahaCommunity Corrections Center - Lincoln