

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



Department of Corrections

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April 6, 2021

Re: REINSTATEMENT OF IN-PERSON VISITATION

Since March 2020 the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) has been engaged in proactive response planning for the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of the people who live and work within our Department is paramount, and RIDOC has taken swift and assertive actions in confronting this public health emergency, including strict adherence to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and RI Department of Health (RIDOH) preventative guidelines, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures and protocols, continued regular COVID-19 testing of staff and inmates, a high rate of vaccinations among staff and inmates, and much more. As a result, our facilities show a significant reduction in positive COVID-19 cases among staff and inmates, ranking RIDOC as one of the safest correctional institutions in the country during this pandemic.

Based on the above, I am announcing that in addition to video visitation, RIDOC will be *re-instating in-person visits at all RIDOC facilities beginning Wednesday, April 14, 2021.*

Since we are still in the middle of a pandemic, visitation will look different than in the past for everyone's safety. The decision to reintroduce in-person visits was not a small one for a congregate setting such as ours, and as we have done with everything else in the past year, RIDOC's approach to this was careful and thoughtful; keeping the health and safety of staff, inmates and visitors at the forefront of every decision. The Department's visitation policies and procedures were carefully reviewed, and in addition to its current Visits Policy, which is still in effect, RIDOC has implemented Temporary COVID-19 In-Person Visitation Guidelines (outlined below).

For in-person visits to succeed, it is crucial that visitors strictly adhere to these guidelines while visiting loved ones at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI). If there is a spike in COVID-19 cases, or the safety of staff or inmates are jeopardized in any way, RIDOC will be forced to discontinue in-person visits until we can safely re-introduce them again.

By and large, both staff and the inmate population have been cooperative and understanding; acknowledging that the decisions made by RIDOC were done so to maintain everyone's health and safety, which has made this re-opening possible. It is our hope that such cooperation and understanding will continue among staff, inmates and the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. Coyne-Fague".

Patricia A. Coyne-Fague, Esq.
Director

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
TEMPORARY COVID-19 IN-PERSON VISITATION GUIDELINES

All facilities will follow these guidelines but may tailor specifications to their respective facility layout and limitations, as necessary.

All visitors must follow the temporary rules outlined below in addition to the most recent version of RIDOC Policy 24.03 DOC, [Visits](#). Refusal to comply will result in the denial of entry into the facility.

- Only visitors ages 18 and older will be permitted to visit in person.
 - It is no longer required that visitors over the age of 60 be vaccinated; however, it is medically recommended.
- Visitors who are **fully vaccinated do not need to test prior to visiting** (visitors are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the 2nd dose of a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or two weeks after a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine).
 - Valid vaccination documentation must be presented from the R.I. Department of Health Portal (or respective state, if applicable) is **preferred**: <https://portal.ri.gov/VaccineRecord/s/>, valid vaccination cards may be shown; however, Facility Superior Officer will make final determination of visitation eligibility.
- **Visitors who are not fully vaccinated must show the facility a valid negative COVID-19 test result, obtained in the community.**
 - PCR tests may be taken **up to 120 hours** (5 days) before the visit. (*Rapid tests* must be taken **within 72 hours** (3 days of the visit.) Negative results must be printed or can be shown on your cell phone from <https://portal.ri.gov/covidtestresults/s/>.
 - Testing may be scheduled at: <https://portal.ri.gov/s/>.
- Out-of-state visitors are permitted with a **valid negative** COVID-19 test result from their respective state. All other RI rules apply.
 - Out-of-state visitors must be on the inmate's visiting list and visits will be conducted with the inmate's regular visitation group. No specialty visit times will be permitted.
- Visitors who have been diagnosed as COVID-19 **POSITIVE** in the last ten (10) days or are awaiting test results will not be permitted to enter.
- All visitors, regardless of vaccination status, **must** wear one (1) surgical-type mask.
 - All masks must be plain (i.e., no prints/patterns, no words/phrases, etc. on them).
 - Cloth masks, gaiter-style and masks with vents or valves are **not permitted**
 - Masks must be [worn appropriately](#) – **covering both the nose and mouth**.
 - All masks will be searched prior to entry.
- All visitors **will** be screened for symptoms and **must** submit to a touchless temperature screening.
 - Anyone with a temperature of 100°F or greater will not be permitted to visit.
- Visitation durations are at the discretion of facility administration.
- Only one (1) visitor per inmate is permitted to enter.
- **Embracing and/or touching during the visitation period is strictly prohibited.**
- Visitors must maintain a social distance of six (6) feet between other visitors, staff and inmates at all times. **Congregating is not allowed.**
- No food or beverages are permitted.
- If for any reason a visitor needs to leave the visitation area, **re-entry is not permitted.**
- Restrooms may be used; however, not every stall may be available.
- Visitors must sanitize their hands, utilizing hand sanitizer provided by RIDOC, upon entering and exiting the facility, and visitors who utilize lockers must disinfect the front of the locker and the key before and after each use (RIDOC will provide visitors with appropriate disinfectant).
- In-person visitation will not take place for inmates on quarantine or medical isolation status.
- A visit may be terminated at any time by facility administration or their designee.
- Facility visitation may be cancelled at any time by the RIDOC Director or her designee.