



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Kevin A. Carr

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

April 14, 2020

The Department of Corrections (DOC) is committed to reporting accurate information related to the COVID-19 pandemic and our response to the health emergency. Below three areas of public concern are outlined and addressed:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

DOC continues to provide PPE as resources allow to staff and persons in our care, prioritizing identified areas where COVID-19 has been confirmed to be present. Due to global supply shortages and demands, the DOC has so far provided PPE to certain categories of individuals i.e. sick patients in our care, healthcare staff, transportation staff, and others as determined by the appointing authority. Based on new research and guidance provided by the CDC on April 3, 2020, the DOC issued updated guidance that encourages all staff to bring and wear their own PPE, whenever possible. Since then, the DOC has provided and continues to provide more PPE to staff and persons in our care outside to the aforementioned categories as resources become available. Several DOC facilities have also begun to create and distribute cloth masks to staff and persons in our care as resources allow. This includes the Bureau of Correctional Enterprises Textile Shop at GBCI, which is currently producing over 200 cloth masks per day. Additionally, the DOC has made hand sanitizer available to staff and persons in our care in common areas.

Leadership

On March 11, 2020, the DOC activated the Department Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate resources and internal information sharing on planning progress, staffing numbers and medical surveillance agency-wide. Each facility has daily contact with the EOC, and maintains detailed pandemic plans that outline protocols, precautionary measures, and isolation procedures in the case of a potential infection. While pandemic plans vary by facility and take into account the individualized nature of each institution, all share common procedures regarding sanitation and cleaning, isolation and quarantines, and medical responses as determined by leadership, and guidance from the Department of Health Services and other State and Federal partner agencies. DOC executive leadership meets twice daily with the EOC to stay informed on information as it changes, and guide the decision making process where necessary.

Suspension of Administrative Rules

The Department of Corrections as a whole has taken various steps to limit and modify operations at each correctional facility around the state. Upon notice of a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 amongst staff or persons in our care at a facility, the Warden suspends administrative rules at the facility pursuant to DOC Administrative Code DOC Section 306.22 as a precautionary measure to mitigate and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Such suspension limits the operations of the facility and the movement of persons in our care at the facility. Persons in our care at all facilities will continue to have access to showers, meals and canteen delivery, as operations allow. Despite functioning under modified operational plans, we continue to support persons in our care by providing two free phone calls per week, increasing canteen spending limits, and expanding access to additional movies, cable channels and digital TV, wherever possible.

The Department of Corrections takes the responsibility to protect staff and persons in our care very seriously, and we continue to take the steps necessary to manage the exposure and spread of COVID-19 in our facilities. Several of these steps are outlined on our public website, with information updated daily at doc.wi.gov/COVID19.