

Updated: April 2, 2020

COVID-19 Response policy

West Virginia's Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) has developed a comprehensive COVID-19 response policy that embraces the latest information and best practices to provide the necessary guidance and direction. The goal remains to ensure superintendents, other administrators and staff can make the best decisions for the health and safety of everyone in their facilities.

This DCR policy:

- educates employees and inmates about COVID-19
- explains proper health, hygiene, and sanitation practices
- emphasizes frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas;
- provides CDC-standardized screening protocols for inmates, employees, and contractors
- outlines procedures for use of personal protective equipment, the movement of affected inmates and other relevant topics
- details practices for sick employees; and
- covers quarantine and isolation options

This information is being updated whenever warranted.

Additional details:

- As part of the screening protocol, the temperature of anyone entering a DCR facility or building is taken including of inmates at booking as well as of both inmates and employees before and after transports.

- Inmate medical co-pays have been suspended.

- All video kiosks and tablets display COVID-19 information at startup, and cover the same topics found on the CDC and WVDHHR resource pages including guidance on personal hygiene. This information appears before inmates can use the devices.

- Volunteers and state Dept. of Education personnel are no longer entering DCR facilities.

- DCR continues to work with the judiciary to utilize video court appearances whenever possible.

- Until non-attorney visitation can resume at facilities, DCR will continue to ensure electronic visitation and phone call access.

- The vendors providing DCR's phone, kiosk and tablet services have all agreed to provide weekly allotments of free phone calls and video visits (repairs have been ongoing of kiosks at several facilities).

- Inmates can continue to send and receive letters by U.S. mail, while the kiosks and tablets also allow for email

DCR leadership monitors facility conditions daily to determine any additional steps or actions.

Release of inmates

The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has asked circuit judges and county magistrates statewide to enlist their local prosecutors to identify any pre-trial inmates who do not pose a risk to public safety risk and could be released on a personal recognizance or reduced bond.

The Supreme Court issued the request on March 27 as part of its ongoing coordination with DCR and the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DCR is weighing all release options within its authority under state law, with a particular focus on decreasing population density.

As a result of this review, DCR has released:

- Parolees who were serving short jail terms for parole-related sanctions
- Work-release inmates already eligible for weekend furloughs because of good behavior, whose furloughs have been extended to two weeks.