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COVID-19/Coronavirus Updates

March 23, 2020

Information Updates

There are still no known cases of COVID-19 among offenders and staff in Virginia's prisons. Visitation and volunteer activities remain cancelled until further notice.

Updates can be found on this page or by calling our information line, 804-887-8484.

Testing and Screening

Last updated: 11:40 am, March 20, 2020

- The Virginia DOC is utilizing its COVID-19 Medical Guideline along with an Offender Screening Questionnaire and Medical Evaluation Tool to evaluate and monitor offenders' health.
- If we have an offender in a state correctional facility who appears to meet the criteria for COVID-19 testing, the procedure is to contact the Virginia Department of Health and follow their guidance regarding testing.
- All offenders being released from the VADOC facilities as they finish their sentences are now screened for COVID-19 on the day of their release.
- There is a separate screening tool for employees. All employees must assess their risk on a daily basis prior to reporting to work.

Visitation and Telephone Communication

Last updated: 11:40 am, March 20, 2020

- While visitation at correctional facilities is cancelled for now, off-site video visitation, facilitated through Assisting Families of Inmates (AFOI), remains available. JPay and VADOC have worked together to credit each offender's JPay account with two free JPay stamps per week during this time.
- Virginia DOC has worked with GTL, the offender phone service provider, to provide inmates with two free phone calls per week beginning March 19, 2020 through April 15, 2020. The two free calls will be applied to the first two calls the offender makes each week.
- To assist in preventing the reach of COVID-19 into state correctional facilities, all attorney/authorized attorney representative meetings with offenders will be conducted over the phone until further notice in an attempt to limit the number of persons coming in and out of facilities each day during this pandemic.

These calls will take place through the Offender Telephone System. If an offender's attorney or authorized attorney representative wishes to have a legal visit with an offender, that attorney/authorized attorney representative must contact the facility regarding the requested date and time of the meeting.

Once a meeting date and time is set, just as with in-person meetings, the institution will facilitate the phone meeting between the offender and the attorney or authorized attorney representative. The offender will place the call over the Offender Telephone System. If you are an attorney or authorized attorney representative who needs to set up a phone meeting with an offender, please contact the offender's facility.

Sanitation and Personal Protective Equipment

Last updated: 2:20 pm, March 22, 2020

- The Virginia DOC's extensive Medical Epidemic/Pandemic Sanitation Plan is in place to make certain that all Department facilities ensure accurate sanitation during this pandemic while utilizing appropriate

chemicals and approved personal protective equipment.

- There is plenty of soap and water at the facilities, and that remains the best way to keep hands clean. Each offender is being given two bars of soap per week for their own personal use.
- Like hospitals and other institutions, the VADOC continues to attempt to order more PPEs (personal protective equipment). However, the nationwide shortage is affecting the VADOC just as it affects everyone else.
- Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE), the VADOC's manufacturing division, is now working to manufacture sneeze/cough shield masks for VADOC staff and offenders.
- VCE also manufactures cleaning supplies approved by the EPA for use in combating the coronavirus.
- VCE is working to manufacture sneeze/cough shields for staff and offenders at VADOC facilities. These sneeze/cough shields are being manufactured at four different VCE plants. These are not medical grade masks. They will be distributed to VADOC facilities as soon as possible.

Facility Staffing

Last updated: 11:40 am, March 20, 2020

- There are currently no staffing shortages caused by COVID-19.
- The VADOC continues to plan for every possible contingency. An emergency menu has been developed for use in the event that a corrections facility has food service workers unable to report to work. This menu contains food items that will be centrally ordered.
- The VADOC is working with a temp agency to hire additional nurses for coverage during this pandemic.

Offender Transportation, Intake and Management

Last updated: 8:45 pm, March 22, 2020

- As of the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency, the VADOC suspended offender intake from local jails for 30 days. Offender transfers and movement between VADOC facilities is suspended until further notice.
- Offender medical transports continue as scheduled unless an appointment is cancelled or changed by the outside provider.
- VADOC facilities have moved to modified lockdown in order to minimize contact between groups of offenders from different buildings. Offenders will eat in their pods and go to recreation with their own pod of offenders and will not eat and recreate with offenders from other pods until further notice.

Press Releases

- [Virginia DOC's Correctional Enterprises Manufacturing Sneeze/Cough Guard Masks for Staff and Offenders](#)
- [Virginia DOC's COVID-19 Medical Guideline, Pandemic Sanitation Plan Working to Keep Offenders Safe](#)
- [Visitors and Volunteers to Virginia DOC Facilities Suspended Until Further Notice](#)
- [Virginia DOC Mobilized Against COVID-19, Asks Visitors to Self-Monitor](#)

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