

Frequently Asked Questions

Visitation

Q. Is the ND DOCR allowing visitors at this time?

A. No, effective March 12, 2020, the ND DOCR has suspended all in-person visiting of residents. The ND DOCR is currently subject to limitations to minimize the introduction of and limit the spread of COVID-19. Outside volunteers and other tours and groups are also not allowed at this time. However, phone calls, video, and email visitation are still encouraged.

Q. Do you know when the visitation suspension will be lifted?

A. Not at this time. The ND DOCR will monitor the situation to determine when visits will be restored.

Q. Since there is no in-person visitation, is the ND DOCR offering enhanced communication services?

A. During the time when in-person visits are suspended, the ND DOCR has worked with our service providers to provide enhanced services for residents to communicate with family and friends. Detailed information has been relayed to the resident population. We are offering residents two free 15-minute phone calls each week and one free video communication per month.

Q. Are attorney visits allowed at ND DOCR facilities?

A. At this time, attorneys will need to communicate with their clients through email, video, or phone visitation. However, attorneys may call the ND DOCR facility at which the resident is housed to discuss unique circumstances. The ND DOCR may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Does the suspension of in-person visitation apply to my local county jail?

A. The ND DOCR does not operate county correctional facilities. Please contact your local county correctional facility or sheriff's office for more information on current procedures.

Q. Who do I contact if I have questions regarding the women's population?

A. The Director of Women's Services, Cathleen Schweitzer, may be contacted regarding any questions at cajschweitzer@nd.gov.



Facility Transfers, Releases, and Transitions

Q. Will COVID-19 disrupt or delay the transfer of residents between facilities?

A. Currently, the ND DOCR is closed to new admissions, pursuant to Executive Order from Governor Burgum restricting access into state facilities until April 6, 2020. The ND DOCR is also limiting movement between ND DOCR facilities and interaction among residents within facilities. The purpose of these restrictions is to keep the health, safety, and well-being of our staff and residents as our top priority. The ND DOCR is only completing intra-system transfers for emergent cases.

Q. Are you going to release or transition residents to the community early?

A. Given the ND DOCR's physical structures and staffing levels, ND DOCR's prior maximum operational capacity levels are not suitable during a pandemic. The State Correctional Health Authority has determined the ND DOCR needs separate areas at each facility for testing, quarantine, individual isolation, and group isolation. Additionally, space is needed for social distancing and emergency medical care for other health issues. To minimize the introduction of and limit the spread of COVID-19, the ND DOCR is working to create opportunities to transition eligible residents with upcoming release dates and/or serious medical conditions to the community. Some of the residents are being released through parole and others are being transitioned to approved locations to finish their sentence in the community.

Q. Am I still allowed to pick up a resident with a scheduled release date at a ND DOCR facility? Can I bring clothes for the resident to wear?

A. Yes, family and friends of residents who are being released may still pick them up at the facility. Please remain in the parking lot until the resident comes out. You may enter the facility briefly to leave a change of clothing with the front desk officer.

Parole Board

Q. Will the ND DOCR continue to process paroles and release residents as scheduled?

A. The ND DOCR will continue to process paroles and release residents as scheduled at this time. Each resident is screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to release or transition to the community.

Q. Is the Parole Board still having public hearings?

A. Parole Board meetings are being held. The meetings are conducted at the ND DOCR's Central Office. According to an Executive Order by Governor Burgum, the ND DOCR Central Office is not open to the public at this time. However, arrangements will be made to allow participation in the open meetings



through telephonic or electronic means. All Parole Board results, schedules, and information will be available to the public by visiting docr.nd.gov/parole-pardon-boards.

Q. Is the Parole Board still conducting parole interviews?

A. The Parole Board will continue to conduct parole interviews via video conference or telephonically as scheduled at this time.

Cleanliness and Supplies

Q. Are deliveries of food and cleaning supplies still being accepted at the facilities? Are there shortages of food or sanitation supplies?

A. Yes, deliveries continue as scheduled. The ND DOCR currently has adequate supplies of food and sanitation items and is monitoring levels and availability of supplies continually.

Q. What precautions is the ND DOCR implementing regarding residents washing their hands longer?

A. All residents have access to soap and water. CDC poster detailing proper hygiene practices have been posted in ND DOCR facilities and the Wardens have been sending detailed messages through JPAY.

Q. Is extra care going into cleaning facilities and sanitizing cells?

A. ND DOCR facilities are increasing the frequency, intensity, and scope of cleaning.

Medical Care

Q. Are residents being tested for COVID-19?

A. Residents with symptoms are screened and evaluated by the Medical Department, including COVID-19 testing when indicated and in keeping with the ND Department of Health guidance.

Q. Do residents have to pay to get tested?

A. Co-pays will be waived for medical care related to COVID-19 symptoms, screening, and testing.

Q. What happens in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a ND DOCR facility?

A. The ND DOCR has extensive protocols in place to address those who show symptoms, including immediate quarantine. Protocols are in place to address scenarios when illness is present. Directors meet daily to keep a pulse on the issue and pandemic response team meets weekly to ensure our plans are up-to-date.



Programming and Services

Q. Are the classes that residents take also cancelled?

A. All classes for education are currently live within mobility plans for each facility. Education programming is happening on the housing unit floors of each of the DAS facilities. Core programming and classes taught by ND DOCR staff will continue with appropriate social distancing measures in place.

Community Supervision

Q. Can people on community supervision, including probation and parole, report to Parole and Probation Officers via email or phone?

A. Yes, individuals on community supervision can contact their Parole or Probation Officer via email or telephone for reporting instructions. Parole and Probation Officers are conducting business through office curbside meetings, email, text, or phone and technology portals, such as Skype and FaceTime. Individuals, newly sentenced or released from a ND DOCR facility or jail, should call their local office for reporting information. Signs are posted on office doors with instructions. Anyone who fails to contact his or her Officer will be considered in violation of reporting. Contact must be made on or before the scheduled report day. In addition to changes in reporting, travel permits are restricted.

Staff

Q. What actions are being taken to protect staff?

A. All staff are asked a series of screening questions. Those with a temperature of 100.4 will not be allowed to work. Information on prevention and detection has been provided to residents and ND DOCR staff. Facilities have undergone more frequent and intensive cleaning. ND DOCR staff members who are able to perform the essential duties of their job remotely are working from home and from vehicles. Staff members are practicing social distancing and have been provided masks, gloves, and eye protection.



Q. I'm a staff member and I had training and/or out of state travel scheduled. Is it cancelled?

A. No out-of-state business travel will be allowed at this time. All in-state business travel should be for essential matters only. The ND DOCR transitioned large meetings to conference calls. If you had any travel or training scheduled, please speak with your immediate supervisor.

Q. Is the ND DOCR still hiring?

A. Yes, the ND DOCR is still hiring. You may find up-to-date positions by going to docr.nd.gov/careers.

