



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Division of Prisons

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North Carolina House of Representatives Continuing Government Operations Work Group Division of Prisons Briefing

Internal Policies and Procedures

- The Prison Incident Command System is activated to help control and coordinate COVID-19 responses and facilitate prompt reactions as this virus spreads rapidly through the country.
- Aggressive cleaning efforts are occurring at all prisons, both by staff and offenders.
- Ample supplies of disinfectant and soap are located in each facility.
- A non-alcohol-based hand cleanser has been created by Correction Enterprises and is available to staff and offenders at all facilities.
- Coronavirus prevention posters from the CDC are found in all facilities explaining how to reduce exposure to, or transmission of, the virus.
- Staff gatherings of 10 or more are canceled and social distancing is required.
- Staff are being issued PPE, based on circumstances that may warrant exposure, to use during their daily duties.
- Visitation and volunteer visits have been suspended since March 16.
- Legal visitation and pastoral care visits continue, but those visitors are subject to medical screening. Visitors who show symptoms of COVID-19 are denied entry.
- All vendors and contractors doing business with facilities are screened prior to entering a prison. Visitors who show symptoms of COVID-19 are denied entry.
- The Prison work release program was suspended statewide on March 24.
 - This is being done to limit the offenders' public contact and thus limit their potential exposure to the coronavirus and reduce the chances they could transport the virus into a prison.
 - The situation will continue to be evaluated to determine when/if essential job functions may be required on a very limited basis.

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- Educational and other self-improvement programs in the prisons have been limited to reduce the number of outside program providers who enter the prisons.
 - The community colleges have suspended all face-to-face instruction in the prisons.
- Increased recreational opportunities for offenders with social distancing are being instituted, where possible, and all facilities will have access to a movie subscription service.
- All prisons were shipped enough food to have a 14-day supply in case food distribution was interrupted.
 - Correctional Enterprise's food warehouse is currently stocked with a 90-day supply of food for our facilities in case local distributors experience shortages or delay of supply.
- Offenders will be allowed two free five-minute phone calls each week to family and friends. Disinfectant has been made available to clean the phones after use.
- Pre-paid post cards will be provided for offenders in restrictive housing or who have been isolated who do not have phone privileges if they wish to correspond in writing to family and friends.
- Prisons housing offender populations with higher risk for severe illness are taking extra efforts to reduce offender movements within the facilities and to lessen the interaction among offenders from different housing units.
 - This is being done to reduce the chance of potential COVID-19 exposure to medically vulnerable offenders.
- All new offenders coming into the state prison system are medically screened for potential COVID-19 symptoms to prevent the introduction of the virus and are subject to a 14-day routine quarantine.
 - Those who have symptoms are isolated while the source of their medical issue is investigated. COVID-19 tests are being done as necessary, in accordance with public health guidelines.
- Offender transportation is limited to only court-ordered, high priority and health care movements.
- Offenders who are transported are medically screened for potential COVID-19 symptoms.
- All offenders who show respiratory or flu-like symptoms are reviewed by medical staff.
 - This is being done to prevent the spread of the virus if it emerges in the prison population.

- Offenders with symptoms are isolated while the source of their medical issues are investigated.
- COVID-19 tests are being done as necessary, in accordance with public health guidelines.
- All transport buses and vehicles are required to be cleaned thoroughly after each use.
- Non-essential medical appointments for offenders are canceled to reduce transports as the medical staff focus on COVID-19 issues.
- Medical co-pays are waived for offenders with fever, respiratory or flu-like symptoms.
- Staff has been instructed to report anyone who looks ill or feverish to the chain of command.
- On March 13, all overnight-stay basic training classes were suspended and on March 23 basic training resumed for new correctional, probation, parole and juvenile justice officers who commute to class.
 - Continuing to train new officers helps ensure that Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice have adequate staff to carry out critical public safety functions.
 - Additional precautions, such as limiting class sizes and maximizing social distance, have been taken to protect the health and safety of instructors and trainees.
- Telecommuting was approved for non-essential personnel during the State of Emergency authorized by Gov. Roy Cooper's Executive Order 116.
 - Employees are required to sign a Temporary Teleworking agreement form from their immediate supervisor or manager and must provide the same work performance as would take place in the day-to-day workplace.
 - Telecommuting is at the discretion of the warden or facility director to ensure adequate staffing levels to meet safety and security requirements.
 - Adult Correction essential employees are those who are deemed mandatory and essential to public safety.

Coordination with Local Government

- The Division of Prisons Incident Command is working closely with the NC State's Emergency Management and Governor's COVID-19 Task force to ensure that we communicate clearly and freely across agencies and share any resources needed.
- Offenders from local jails are being admitted to our prison system on a regular basis.

- We have communicated with the NC Sherriff's Association that we will continue to accept jail admissions and will continue our relationship to ensure the safety of local communities.

Support Provided from Correctional Enterprise

- North Carolina Correction Enterprises (NCCE) has responded to the shortage of hand sanitizer by formulating a non-alcohol dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride-based sanitizer that could be used throughout Prisons and across the state.
- Correctional Enterprise plants have increased their production hours to address the demand of needed items. Work hours have been extended from 40 hours to 56 hours.
- Increased production time allowed for an increase from approximately 400 cases of antibacterial bar soap a week to producing 750 cases a week which is the equivalency to 150,000 (3oz) bars of antibacterial soap. The efforts also increased their production of liquid antibacterial hand soap from about 600 cases a week to 1200 cases a week.
- We are currently producing approximately 1,100 cases a day of ready to use disinfectant; or the equivalency to 13,200 (32oz.) bottles daily.
 - The increased production has supplied Prisons, as well as assisted Emergency Management, DMV, Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Treasury, Schools, Jails, and License Plate Agency's across the state of North Carolina. Products such as their Health Services Disinfectant have also assisted several agencies.
- Re-usable surgical-style face masks went into production at three of the five NCCE sewing plants.
 - This mask is a 80%polyester/ 20% cotton mix.
 - 3,500 re-usable masks were delivered to Prisons on March 27, 2020 for general purpose and emergency safety use.
 - NCCE plans to manufacture 6,000+ re-usable masks a week as long as the need presents itself.
 - This will be accompanied by hospital gowns produced by NCCE. The rate of production on the gowns will be approximately 250-350 per week.
- NCCE also created a face shield at the sign plant in Franklinton.
 - This product was produced from acetate film, often used for highway sign sheeting, and an adjustable hand band made from signage sheeting.

- Acetate film is approved worldwide for indirect and direct food and medical applications.
- The shield provides glass like clarity, while protecting the eyes and face.
- NCCE has the ability to produce 60 shields per hour using existing equipment and raw materials.

Future Considerations

- The Division of Prisons currently has extensive in-depth contingency plans dedicated to addressing this pandemic.
- We have communicated and are coordinating with state-level government agencies to ensure the continuity of operations at our prison facilities in case conditions become worse.
- We are asking for your legislative consideration to allow for private security firms to assist us in augmenting our staffing levels.
 - In light of continued vacancy issues and in conjunction with the potential impact on staffing due to COVID-19 exposure, expedient legislative action is needed on Chapter 74C, Article 1, (6), sub-section e that would enable security contractors with the Division of Prisons to use lethal force during the course of their job duties.
 - Recent suggested wording was: “Security services related to entry and exit, direction and movement of individuals at entry and exit, security working towers, and perimeter security patrols at State Prison facilities. For the purposes of this section only, security guards and patrol professionals are authorized to detain and use force necessary within prisons policies to prevent contraband entry and to prevent an inmate escape.”
- NCCE currently has a bid out for 5,000 gallons of 99% Isopropyl alcohol.
 - As soon as this product is secured the organization will start to manufacture alcohol-based sanitizer, highly recommended by the CDC for protection against the Coronavirus.
 - This will increase existing production of their line of disinfectants by 40%.
 - The organization has submitted their Emergency FDA paperwork for their sanitizers and validated it with FDA. In the next month the organization will submit for full approval through FDA for the normal sale of the products as part of their product line.
- Our agency is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the communities in NC, our staff and the offenders we supervise.