

Memo

Date: 03/23/2026

To: Family, Friends, and Loved Ones of Individuals Who Are Incarcerated

From: Commissioner Paul Schnell

RE: Changes to Visiting & Communicating with your Loved Ones

To help strengthen connections between incarcerated people and their loved ones, the DOC is updating several visiting and communication rules. Many of the changes remove previous barriers for visitors.

Biggest Changes You Should Know About

Indefinite Visiting Bans Are Ending

- Indefinite visiting, video, and phone suspensions are being eliminated.
- All restrictions will now have a **set timeframe**.
- Visitors who were previously banned are encouraged to reapply.

Fewer Automatic Denials

- Some automatic denial reasons (such as Driving Under the Influence) have been removed.
- Criminal history reviews now only look at the **past 3 years**.

Visitors Can Be Listed on More Visiting Lists

- Visitors may now be approved on up to five incarcerated people's visiting lists, in addition to immediate family members.

Extending Time Between Renewals

- Visitor applications and background checks must now be renewed every **3 years** (instead of every 2).

Grace Period for Expired Visiting Permission

- If your application expires, you may still have **one non-contact visit within 180 days** prior to submitting a new application.

- You may continue visiting while your renewal application is pending.

Visiting Restrictions – What’s Changing for Incarcerated People and Visitors

- Visiting will no longer be suspended for violations unrelated to visiting behavior (such as a resident’s positive drug test), except in cases of smuggling.
- In-person visiting violations will no longer automatically suspend video visits unless the violation involved video visiting.
- Incarcerated people with suspensions may request a review once per year.
- Visitors with a suspension may request an annual review from the Warden at the facility where their loved one is housed.
- Visitors only need to reapply if their suspension is **6 months or longer**.

Children and Family Contact

More Family-Friendly Contact

- Children age 10 and under may sit on the incarcerated person’s lap.
- Anyone under 18 may sit next to the incarcerated person.
- Limited contact (side hug or arm around shoulder) is allowed if respectful.
- Staff may stop contact if it becomes unsafe or inappropriate.

Clothing Changes

- Underwire bras are allowed (must clear metal detection).
- Hoodies are allowed. Hoods must remain down and are subject to search.

Prohibited Contact (No-Contact Directives)

- Anyone in the community may request that an incarcerated person not contact them.
- The directives remain in place until the person is released, or the requester asks for removal.
- Contact restrictions cannot be lifted for the first six months.

What Happens Next

- All current abuse codes are being reviewed and moved into a new minor contact restriction process.
- All visiting restrictions for incarcerated people are being reviewed and transitioned into the new grid timelines.

- Visitors who were administratively or indefinitely banned from visiting are encouraged to reapply for visiting privileges.
- Updated visiting room rules will be posted in facilities.
- The DOC will host a Family & Friends Townhall to explain these changes. More details will be shared soon.
- The new policies take effect **March 31, 2026**.
- **DOC expects an increase in visiting applications and processing time. The department will post updates on its visiting website.**

For questions, visitors should contact the facility where their loved one is located. Copies of the full policies and their forms are available on the website visiting page and in the DOC's policy manual.