

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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In-person visitation to restart [March 16](#)

Dover, DE – The Delaware Department of Correction announced today that in-person inmate visitation will restart [on Tuesday, March 16](#).

“With just a few remaining inmates recovering from COVID-19 at one correctional facility, and with community spread declining, we are prepared to allow in-person visitation to resume,” **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said**. “Video visits have proven to be a safe, effective way to keep families connected during this pandemic, but we know in-person visits are important for inmates and their loved ones.”

Prison facilities will begin taking registrations for in-person visitation appointments **this coming Monday, March 8**. Visitation procedures and instructions [are posted online HERE](#) and on the inmate visitation webpage at https://doc.delaware.gov/views/visit_inmate.blade.shtml.

[In-person visitation was suspended in mid-November](#) amid rapidly increasing numbers of positive COVID-19 test results among the general population outside of the correctional system and indications of significant community spread of the disease. That community spike led to elevated numbers of COVID-19 cases among the inmate population and prompted the activation of specially-designed COVID-19 treatment centers. Through round-the-clock treatment and monitoring of COVID-positive inmates by healthcare professionals, aggressive proactive COVID-19 testing and quarantine, continued screening and cleaning, and other mitigation measures, the number of active inmate cases dropped steadily over the first several weeks of 2021 and fell into the single digits by mid-February.

Recent DOC COVID-19 mitigation highlights:

- The DOC has administered **11,954 inmate COVID-19 tests**, mostly proactive tests of asymptomatic inmates in order to quickly identify and respond to infection and to reduce the spread of the illness.
- The number of **staff and inmates who have received COVID-19 vaccinations is approaching 1,200**, including 1,056 staff and 137 inmates from vaccine distribution priority category 1B who have received at least one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines through March 3.

- [Cutting-edge air quality improvement equipment designed to remediate against COVID-19 is being installed in Delaware's correctional facilities.](#) All DOC HVAC systems have been set to circulate 100% outside air in March, 2020 as part of COVID-19 mitigation efforts.
- DOC has continued to enhance its DOC's COVID-related screening and cleaning operations. [Contactless wrist thermometer scanners were deployed to every correctional facility](#) in January, replacing handheld forehead thermometers used during the screening process. Additionally, more than a dozen **portable electrostatic decontaminating sprayers** have been in operation since January. Unlike chemical mist fogging machines - which have been used by DOC since last spring - these backpack electrostatic sprayers can be used to quickly and safely disinfect targeted areas, including individual work spaces and cells.

The restart of in-person visitation comes as DOC has already begun to resume in-person inmate programming for substance use disorder treatment services and mental health counseling.

Education programs are being provided in DOC facilities through live video instruction. Last year the DOC produced and deployed more than 60 mobile technology stations into inmate housing units, which has facilitated expanded video education, programming, and medical and behavioral health telemedicine services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Click HERE to review a current tracking chart of active inmate and staff COVID-19 cases and recoveries.](#)

The DOC continues to employ a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus, including:

- All persons who enter any DOC facility or office are screened for COVID-19, including a series of questions and a forehead temperature check with a thermometer.
- Staff who present with symptoms are sent home to self-quarantine and directed to contact their health care provider.
- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days, during which they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- Inmates who present symptoms of COVID-19 are immediately isolated and tested, including through rapid COVID-19 test capabilities available at JTVCC and SCI. Inmates who test positive are transferred to a COVID-19 Treatment Center designed to hospital standards that is staffed around the clock by security and medical staff.
- Extra daily cleanings take place in all facilities, including the use of specialized fogging machines to disinfect entire rooms of common areas, housing units and workspaces.
- Face masks are being worn by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers. Face masks have been provided to every inmate.

Get updated information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.

