



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

Washington, D.C. 20534

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

FROM: 
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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PHASE TWO ACTION PLAN

The BOP has been planning for coronavirus since January 2020. Phase One activities included guidance from the Health Services Division regarding description of the disease, where the infection was occurring and best practices to mitigate transmission. An agency task force was working in conjunction with subject matter experts in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and reviewing guidance from the World Health Organization. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP), after coordination with the Department of Justice and the White House, is implementing Phase Two of our COVID-19 response.

Effective immediately, the following measures are being deployed by the BOP for institution operations in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, acknowledging the country will have more confirmed cases in the coming weeks. Due to the high population density of prisons, the BOP is vulnerable to higher rates of infection and transmission within prisons and communities where staff live. These measures are also being put in place to ensure staff remain healthy and available for duty. (Specific guidance for non-institution BOP offices (e.g. Central and Regional Offices and BOP training centers) will be issued for those locations.)

HIRING: Staff hiring initiatives will continue.

LOGISTICS: All institutions should assess their inventories of food, medicines, cleaning supplies, and sanitation supplies. Institutions and regions should also update their pandemic plans and institutions should establish quarantine areas within their facilities, should they be needed.

SOCIAL VISITS: Social visits will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated.

To ensure that inmates maintain community ties, inmate telephone system minutes will be increased to 500 minutes per calendar month Bureau-wide by the Trust Fund Branch.

INMATE MOVEMENT: All inmate internal movement will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Exceptions to this suspension are transfers related to forensic studies, writs, Interstate Agreements on Detainers (IAD), medical or mental health reasons, and RRC placements. Admission of newly-committed inmates will continue. Other case-by-case exceptions for judicial proceedings may be brought to the attention of the appropriate Regional Counsel for consideration.

All intra-agency movements are suspended. Local medical trips should still continue, as necessary.

LEGAL VISITS: Legal visits will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Case-by-case approval at the local level and confidential legal calls will be allowed in order to ensure access to counsel.

Access to legal counsel remains a paramount requirement and should be accommodated to the maximum extent practicable. Although legal visits are generally suspended for 30-days, case-by-case accommodation should be made at the local level. Attorneys should be encouraged to make requests through the main email address for each facility located on bop.gov, telephonically or by contacting the appropriate Consolidated Legal Center (CLC). The CEO must designate staff at the institution to monitor the email box on an ongoing, regular basis.

If approved for an in-person visit, the attorney will need to undergo screening using the same procedures as staff. The overall authority to approve legal visits lies with the Warden.

OFFICIAL STAFF TRAVEL: Official staff travel, with the exception of relocation travel, will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Any exceptions must be approved by the BOP Deputy Director.

TRAINING: All staff training is suspended for 30 days, (to include conferences and meetings), with the exception of ICT1 and ICT2, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Any exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Director.

Larger training facilities should be used for ICT1, where practicable, to accomplish social distancing.

CONTRACTORS: Contractors performing essential services or necessary maintenance on essential systems will continue, and will be screened using the same procedures as for staff prior to entry.

Essential services include, for example, medical services, mental health services, religious services and critical infrastructure repairs.

VOLUNTEERS: Volunteer visits will be suspended for 30 days, unless approved by the Deputy Director of the BOP. The suspension will be reevaluated in 30 days. Alternate means of communication will be considered for inmates who request to speak with a religious advisor.

Alternate means of communication should include telephone calls, video conferences and other appropriate forms of communication. If approved for an in-person visit, the volunteer will need to undergo screening using the same procedures as staff

SCREENING OF STAFF: Enhanced health screening of staff will be implemented in areas with “sustained community transmission” and at medical referral centers. “Sustained community transmission” is determined by the CDC and will be indicated on the map on this resource page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html> where state community transmission indicates “Yes”. Such screening includes self-reporting and temperature checks for the next 30 days, at which time the process will be reevaluated.

An updated screening tool will be distributed to institutions in “sustained community transmission” areas and to medical referral centers. CEOs in those areas should work with their Health Services Administrator to designate a qualified health care professional to be available on all shifts to administer the temperature checks and record it on the screening form. Employees performing the screening must have appropriate PPE, to include the N-95 respirator, face shield/goggles, gloves and a gown.

Given the public health emergency, staff who refuse the enhanced health screening will be denied entry and may be subject to disciplinary action.

If staff register an oral temperature of greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees (Fahrenheit), they will be denied entry to the facility and put on sick leave. If an employee comes to work with any symptoms of illness, please refer to the [OPM guidance issued on Saturday, March 7th](#) (Section F).

SCREENING OF INMATES: Field sites should continue to screen inmates for COVID-19 following previously indicated practices:

- All newly-arriving BOP inmates are screened for COVID-19 exposure risk factors and symptoms.
- Asymptomatic inmates with exposure risk factors are to be quarantined.
- Symptomatic inmates with exposure risk factors are to be isolated and tested for COVID-19 per local health authority protocols
- **To-date, no inmates have tested positive for COVID-19 in the BOP.**

TOURS: Tours will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Any exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Director.

Requests should be routed through the appropriate Regional Director to the applicable Assistant Director (for example, judicial requests through OGC, legislative requests through IPPA, etc.). If approved, participants will need to undergo screening using the same procedures as staff

MODIFIED OPERATIONS: For the next 30 days, Wardens should implement modified operations to maximize social distancing in our facilities, as much as practicable. The suspension will be reevaluated in 30 days. In recognition of First Step Act requirements, programs should continue to be operated when feasible. CEOs and UNICOR staff should endeavor to maintain operations of UNICOR factories as long as practicable, with consideration of this guidance.

All Program Reviews and ACA/PREA audits will be rescheduled once normal operations are resumed.

CEOs should consider staggered meal times and staggered recreation times, for example, in order to limit congregate gatherings. All community service projects should also be suspended for 30 days.

PRIVATE CONTRACTORS: This COVID-19 guidance will be shared with private prisons and Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs) for dissemination to staff and inmates in these facilities, so that similar protocols can be implemented.

Questions: If staff have questions about COVID-19, they may reach out to the agency through COVID19Questions@bop.gov.

We appreciate your assistance and cooperation in this important matter.

ATTACHMENT A – SAMPLE WARDEN MEMO TO INMATES

MEMORANDUM FROM WARDEN

SUBJECT: BOP CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PROTECTIVE MEASURES

As you may be aware in talking to persons in the community, the United States is seeing an increase in the number of confirmed cases of infected persons. Effective immediately, the following actions are being taken by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in order to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19.

SCREENING OF INMATES: The BOP is screening inmates for COVID-19 using established practices:

- All newly-arriving BOP inmates are screened for COVID-19 exposure risk factors and symptoms.
- Asymptomatic inmates with exposure risk factors are being quarantined.
- Symptomatic inmates with exposure risk factors are to be isolated and tested for COVID-19 per local health authority protocols
- **To-date, no inmates have tested positive for COVID-19 in the BOP.**

SOCIAL VISITS: Social visits are suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated.

To ensure that inmates maintain community ties, inmate telephone system minutes will be increased nationally to 500 minutes per calendar month.

INMATE MOVEMENT: Inmate movement between facilities is suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. BOP will make exceptions for special cases such as writs for prosecution on pending charges, Interstate Agreements on Detainers (IAD), medical or mental health reasons, and RRC placements. The BOP will also continue to process and admit new inmates. Other case-by-case exceptions for judicial proceedings may also be made.

Local medical trips will be made, as necessary.

LEGAL VISITS: Legal visits will be suspended for 30 days, at which time the suspension will be reevaluated. Case-by-case approval at the local level and confidential legal calls will be allowed in order to ensure access to counsel.

Access to legal counsel will be accommodated to the maximum extent practicable. Although legal visits are generally suspended for 30-days, you may make a request to your Unit Team, who will forward it to the institution's Legal Department for review and final approval by the Warden. Attorneys will be screened prior to being admitted to the facility.

VOLUNTEERS: Volunteer visits will be suspended for 30 days, with limited exceptions. The suspension will be reevaluated in 30 days. Inmates who wish to speak with a religious advisor should make a request through their Unit Team.

MODIFIED OPERATIONS: For the next 30 days, the facility will operate on a modified basis to limit inmate group contact, as much as possible. This action is necessary to limit the transmission of the disease if anyone becomes infected. The suspension will be reevaluated in 30 days.

We appreciate your assistance and cooperation in this important matter.