



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

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April 15, 2020

An inmate at the Jameson Annex to the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been placed in isolation. He indicated that he was in close contact with someone who may have been positive. He remains in isolation and has not had contact with other inmates. This is the second inmate in the SD DOC system to test positive. The SD DOC remains focused on protecting all inmates and staff at every one of our facilities. When an inmate becomes symptomatic, we will follow the proper protocols from guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Health.

April 9, 2020

Included in Governor Noem's [Executive Order 2020-14](#) is a temporary suspension of South Dakota Codified Law 16-22-28, which is the statutory provision requiring the Department of Corrections to impose certain sanctions for parole violations regarding a positive urinalysis test for a controlled substance. This will allow the department to institute a policy which may include an alternative sanction or deferment of the sanction. Parole is still responding to positive UAs through another high-level sanction and working with community treatment providers. Other high-level sanctions include referrals to drug/alcohol treatment, cognitive based therapy, increased contacts with agent, house arrest, continuous/increased drug testing, electronic monitoring, and placement in the Community Transition Program or Halfway House (if assessed as needing that placement). When parole agents are informed of use of illicit substances, they also contact the offender's current CD counselor so the offender can receive guidance from the CD professional and to determine if the offender needs a higher level of treatment. The detainment can also be deferred to a later date as well.

April 8, 2020

While the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has changed their guidance to the general public to wear cloth masks while in public places, their guidance for correctional facilities has not been changed to recommend wholesale issuance and wearing of face masks in the prison setting. However, out of an abundance of caution, we will be implementing a phased approach to the issuance and use of cloth face masks by employees of DOC. Staff will be issued cloth masks made by Pheasantland Industries. Each employee will be required to wear the mask anytime they are inside a facility. The greatest risk to introducing the virus into our facilities is from people coming in from the outside, which is why staff will be wearing them.

April 7, 2020

The inmate at the Women's Prison that tested positive has recovered. The other inmates at the Pierre Community Work Center have been released from quarantine.

April 3, 2020

State prison inmates are producing utility personal protective equipment (PPE) for Department of Corrections and Correctional Health staff members.

Inmates in the Pheasantland Industries (PI) Garment Shop at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield are producing cotton jersey face masks and nylon gowns. Inmates in several PI shops at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls are producing reusable and disposable face shields. Inmates in the Print Shop laser cut clear plastic sheets to size for the face shields, the Upholstery Shop inmates make the elastic bands with foam and the Metal Shop workers apply the metal and rivets to the shields.

PI ordered enough materials to produce approximately 3,000 gowns, 6,000 masks, 300 reusable face shields and 1,000 disposable face shields, Production has begun on the masks and face shields. The material for the gowns is expected to arrive soon.

While PI is not classified as a producer of medical equipment and the masks are not approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the items can be utilized for emergency situations when no other option is available. While the DOC has supplies of equipment for staff, there are national shortages of personal protective equipment, which makes acquiring additional items difficult. Medical grade equipment needs to be reserved for medical staff for treatment and emergencies.

Utility PPE items produced by Pheasantland Industries will also be made available to other governmental agencies.

Photos and a video of the items being produced are available on our social media accounts: Twitter: @SouthDakotaDOC and Instagram: sdcorrections

April 1, 2020

GTL, our phone service and video visit provider, has extended their free offerings to inmates because of the suspension of in-person visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each inmate receives two free, 5-minute phone calls per week and one free video visit each week through April 30.

March 26, 2020

The inmate at the Women's Prison who tested positive for COVID-19 remains in isolation. No additional inmates in the state prison system have tested positive. We continue to work closely with DOH to ensure proper protocols are being followed to ensure the health and safety of our staff and the men and women in custody.

Because of potential exposure to the inmate who tested positive for COVID-19, there are 155 inmates in the Pierre Community Work Center who are under observation. We have suspended all transfers and parole releases from PCWC at this time.

DOC is following the Department of Health directives and Center for Disease Control guidelines for protecting inmates and staff. The DOC has also:
instituted staff screening, including answering questions and taking temperature;
provided educational materials on precautions and prevention measures to staff and inmates;
added extra handwashing stations in our facilities;

waived inmate co-pays for medical review;
reduced dental services;
increased our order for essential medications so that we have enough to treat the inmates;
developed isolation and quarantine plans for all of our facilities;
continued a restriction on sending inmates into the community in response to COVID-19 (this impacts community service and work release inmates and Community Transition Program parolees);
adjusted schedules to reduce contacts;
increased disinfecting efforts around the facilities and increased laundry services;
limiting the size of inmate groups for meals and other activities as possible;
and suspended visitation and volunteer activities.

The Parole Board has scheduled their April hearings. A weekly schedule and agenda are posted on the Boards and Commission portal (<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>). If you plan on attending any of these hearings, please contact the Parole Board Office at 605.367.5040 for the most current information and instructions.

March 23, 2020

An inmate at the Women's Prison in Pierre has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been placed in isolation. This is the first inmate in the SD DOC system to test positive. The SD DOC is focused on protecting all inmates and staff at every one of our facilities. If an inmate becomes symptomatic, we will follow the proper protocols from guidelines outlined by the CDC.

March 20, 2020

In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 2020-06, DOC offices will remain closed to the public through Saturday, March 28 at 11:59 p.m. Non-essential employees will continue to work remotely as it is possible. Essential staff shall report to work as scheduled and as directed by their supervisor. All work-related, out-of-state travel is prohibited.

DOC Operations staff continue to process vouchers and invoices, correspondence and inmate banking system matters. Staff are working remotely where possible. In cases where work must be completed in our offices, staff members are working in rotating shifts so as to limit the number of people in the office at a given time.

Parole and Juvenile field service staff are continuing to provide case management of parolees and juveniles. Staff in our field services offices are working remotely. In cases where work must be completed in our field services offices, staff members are working in rotating shifts so as to limit the number of people in the offices at a given time.

The DOC is continuing its restriction on sending inmates into the community in response to COVID-19. This impacts community service and work release inmates and Community Transition Program parolees. When the restriction is lifted, DOC will contact providers and employers.

The DOC continues to accept new inmates from county jails. New inmates continue to go through the Admissions and Orientation (A & O) process, including medical and other assessments and evaluations.

Inmates are being transferred between DOC facilities only if necessary and after appropriate medical screening.

DOC and the Bureau of Human Resources are continuing recruiting efforts and accepting applications for employment. Interviews will be conducted with the focus on security, food service, Correctional Health and Behavioral Health staff. Interviews may be conducted electronically when possible.

Staff members at the Board of Pardons and Paroles office are finalizing a schedule for the April Board hearings. Board hearings will remain open to the public, but telephonic or written testimony is preferred for those who wish to provide input.

March 19, 2020

Medical co-pay charges are being waived for any inmate attending sick call for respiratory complaints.

At this time, DOC has no plans to change inmate release dates due to COVID-19. Should something change, the offenders will be notified. Scheduled individual inmate releases are proceeding as usual. The Board of Pardons and Paroles held their March meeting last week and made decisions on parole violations, suspended sentence violations, non-compliance, discretionary parole, earned discharge, and rescission cases as prescribed by South Dakota Codified Law. A list of Board actions is available on the Boards and Commissions portal. There are state statutes and DOC policies in place that provide a means of early release for seriously ill or infirm inmates and aged inmates prior to their original parole eligibility date. Information on compassionate parole is available in SDCL 24-15A (55-68).

March 18, 2020

Because the situation with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) remains fluid, the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) is continuing to review and identify strategies to deal with the potential emergence of COVID-19 and ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and offenders in our custody and under our supervision.

We are following the guidance of the South Dakota Department of Health, our medical provider, in regard to precautions, practices and prevention methods for COVID-19.

The DOC has activated our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), which establishes direct response and management ensuring that critical functions continue within our department. Our agency divisions and facilities have identified essential function staff and operations, with the primary focus on safety, sanitation, security and supervision. Essential services such as food, laundry, medical, behavioral health, and maintenance continue in our facilities.

DOC policies on inmate admission, assessments and releases remain in effect. DOC policies are accessible on the home page of the agency website at doc.sd.gov/ under the Resources heading.

As we have previously suspended in-person visitation, the DOC has worked with our phone service provider, GTL, who is offering two free, 5-minute phone calls per inmate each week from March 17-April 13.

March 17, 2020

As of March 17, work release inmates and Community Transition Program parolees housed in the various DOC community work centers (Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Pierre, Yankton) are no longer being allowed to leave the prison to work in the community.

Work release inmates will retain their work release status provided they do not forfeit that status due to disciplinary action. If the employer terminates employment, the impacted inmates will be allowed to return to job search once the restriction is lifted. If an inmate is retained by the employer, the inmate will be allowed to return to work once the restriction is lifted.

March 12, 2020

Memo

To: All SDDOC staff and inmates

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

While there are no known cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) among staff members or inmates in our facilities at this time, the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) is continuing to monitor and prepare for the potential emergence of COVID-19.

Information on signs, symptoms and prevention measures for COVID-19 have been included on educational materials that are posted throughout our facilities and available to inmates on their tablets.

As of today, the DOC is suspending all in-person visitation within our facilities. Inmates can still access their family and friends via phone calls and video visits.

All volunteer activities within our facilities have been suspended as well.

The DOC will continue to work closely with DOH and others to monitor COVID-19 and take any additional precautions deemed necessary to keep our staff and inmate population safe.

Mike Leidholt

Cabinet Secretary

South Dakota Department of Corrections