



Corrections and Community Supervision

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ANTHONY J. ANNUCCI
Acting Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: All Facility Employees

From: Anthony J. Annucci, Acting Commissioner

Date: March 14, 2020

Subject: Visitation Restrictions in Response to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Effective March 14, 2020 until April 11, 2020

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses. Recently, community-wide transmission of COVID-19 has occurred in the United States, including New York where the number of both persons under investigation and confirmed cases are rapidly increasing.

The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) is responsible for the safety, health, rehabilitation, and supervision of nearly 44,000 incarcerated individuals and over 35,000 individuals on community supervision through the tireless efforts of nearly 30,000 employees. The Department's greatest concern is the safety and well-being of our employees and individuals within our care, custody, and supervision, particularly during this developing public health emergency. To that end, the Department must swiftly impose restrictions and precautions to prevent additional spread of infectious viral transmission of COVID-19 in both correctional facilities and the community writ large.

Effective Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 5:00PM, visitation at all correctional facilities is suspended until April 11, 2020.

As this public health emergency rapidly develops, the Department will closely monitor the situation and extend these restrictions as necessary.

Visitation Suspended at All Correctional Facilities. While this suspension of visitation will be temporary, the Department recognizes the immediate impact on incarcerated individuals throughout the correctional system. However, the current situation demands this significant action to safeguard the health and safety of all incarcerated individuals, employees, as well as their families and communities. While in-person visitation will be impossible to replace, the Department will provide the following benefits to encourage individuals to keep in contact with their family and friends during this temporary suspension:

- Five (5) free stamps per week for use in accordance with Directive #4422, "Inmate Correspondence Program,"

- Two (2) free secure messages per week via electronic tablet, and
- One (1) free phone call per week in accordance with Directive #4423 “Inmate Telephone Calls.”

This suspended visitation also applies to family reunion programs. However, legal visits will not be impacted by this visitation suspension. Legal visits will be conducted as non-contact (i.e. no physical contact allowed), as requests are submitted, and that option remains available within the facilities.

The Department takes seriously its duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those that work, visit and live in our correctional facilities, as well as those who supervise or are supervised in the greater community of New York. During this difficult time, the Department is appreciative of everyone’s patience and understanding as we continue to face this virus together.

For further information on COVID-19 and New York’s response, please visit:

New York State Department of Health’s COVID-19 Webpage
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

Listing of Local Health Departments:
https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Webpage:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>