




STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

March 25, 2021

**TO:** All Incarcerated Individuals

**FROM:**   
Robert Herzog, Assistant Secretary, Prisons Division

**SUBJECT:** Re-opening of Programs and Activities

Starting March 29, 2021, the Prisons Division will begin to reduce the restrictions on some programs and activities.

Prison facilities have developed plans for preventative cohorting of individuals when they are moving to and within program and work areas, enhanced social distancing, and other COVID-19 response protocols. Facilities are currently allowing movement to medical, religious and food services. In the coming days, facilities will begin to expand movement to additional services, to include:

- Barbershop services,
- Cosmetology services,
- Department of Natural Resource Crews,
- Community Service Crews,
- Education, and
- Programs that are not volunteer facilitated

As movement to services, work and program areas increases, there will be an increase in searches of selected areas. Facilities are responsible for identifying service availability, timeline for reopening and communicating plans to staff and the incarcerated population.

At this time, statewide visitation will not be opening, however re-opening plans are being assessed to determine feasibility with consideration for the safety of staff, incarcerated individuals and the community in relation to the status of the current COVID-19 variants. The re-opening of volunteer services is also being reviewed and assessed.

A conservative approach to COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines is necessary due to the congregate settings within corrections. As such, the mandatory wearing of surgical masks for all department staff, contract staff, persons entering all department locations, and incarcerated individuals will remain in effect until further notice and applies to all people in our facilities, regardless of vaccination or COVID-19 recovered status.

Providing a healthy and safe environment remains our priority. You are encouraged to receive the

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vaccine when eligible and as supply allows. Vaccinations are part of the solution and will be considered in assessing future changes to agency COVID-19 protocols and guidelines. The agency and our medical team remain committed to the systematic resumption of operations while protecting the health and safety of our staff and incarcerated populations. Future changes to protocols, to include any reduction of requirements, will be shared as the agency moves forward in our response.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the health and safety of everyone in our facilities. Remember to continue to socially distance, mask up, maintain hand hygiene, and get vaccinated when available.

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cc: Julie Martin, Deputy Secretary  
All Prisons Deputy Directors  
All Superintendents