



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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April 27, 2021

TO: All DOC Prisons Staff

FROM: Robert Herzog, Assistant Secretary
Prisons Division

SUBJECT: Resuming Routine Searches under Safe Start Corrections

Effective immediately, April 27, 2021, the Prisons Division will resume routine searches including pat searches, strip searches, cell searches and staff searches, not only based on suspicion, but focused towards objectives which enhance the safety of our facilities.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements:

- Staff are always required to wear surgical masks and gloves while conducting searches, the short duration of a pat search is within guidelines for close proximity with proper PPE. The [department's COVID-19 PPE Matrix](#) identifies department issued surgical masks are required to wear during searches. The PPE Matrix also defines what PPE staff should wear while searching individuals in general population, for transports, and those on isolation/quarantine.
- Staff are not required to wear any additional PPE to conduct a pat search, other than what is noted in the department's COVID-19 PPE Matrix, as the individual being searched will have their back to the correctional officer during the search.
- The department's Clinical Team has indicated there is no medical reason for a requirement to change gloves between searching individuals. Staff are required to apply hand sanitizer to gloves between searches if you are not donning/doffing PPE between each pat search.
- Staff members who choose to don/doff gloves between each pat search must clean hands before putting on and after removing gloves. Please refer to the most recent [COVID-19 PPE Matrix](#) and [WA State DOC COVID-19 Screening, Testing and Infection Control Guideline](#).

The Department of Corrections Emergency Operations Center will continue monitoring conditions within our facilities and send out notifications if any changes occur.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we continue to work through this in as safe a manner as possible.