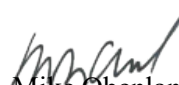





STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

November 19, 2021

TO: All Prisons Staff

FROM: 
Mike Obenland, Assistant Secretary
Men's Prisons Division


Jeannie Darneille, Assistant Secretary
Women's Prisons Division

SUBJECT: Prisons Division Visitation

The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to impact staff and incarcerated individuals in the Prisons Division. It has been a long and exhausting experience and in congregate settings especially, is still a significant concern to health and safety. In the coming months, holidays will present a challenging time as surges occur more around the holidays. We must therefore balance the importance of mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 with the continued importance that visitation has for those in our care and custody.

Since August of 2021, limited in-person visitation resumed. In order to do so safely, mandatory rapid antigen testing has been implemented for all visitors prior to each visit. Along with active screening, masking, hand hygiene, socially distanced reduced capacity of visit rooms and reduced visit party sizes, these measures have been helpful to reduce the risk of transmission.

To balance both the importance of visitation and being mindful of the continued potential of COVID-19 outbreaks and transmission, the Prisons Divisions are increasing the amount of visits per incarcerated individual allowed per month, from one pre-scheduled visit to up to three pre-scheduled visits, depending on each prisons visit schedule. The increase to three visits will start on December 1, 2021.

Approved visitors may begin requesting the three visits now. While each incarcerated individual will be able to receive three visits per month, this can be either with the same visitor or a different approved visitor each time, we recommend individuals and approved visitors discuss how these visits will be allocated. An extended family visit will not count against the three regular visits; meaning an incarcerated individual may have three regular visits and an extended family visit in a month time frame. Visits must continue to follow the unit cohorting schedule.

Approved visitors will need to continue to use the on-line visit request option. Games and cards may be available for check out. Visit sessions will continue to be up to three hours. The three hours may include the time it takes to complete in-processing, which includes check-in, active screening, the rapid antigen testing process, and the search processes. The more people who are scheduled to visit for a particular session the longer it may take to process people in. More information on visitation is [available here](#).