



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE
1/15/25

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NUMBER
DOC 420.320

POLICY

TITLE
SEARCHES OF FACILITIES

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

- Effective: 3/7/01
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- Revised: 12/2/21
- Revised: 1/15/25

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Policy Statement I. & II., Directive I.B., II.A.2., II.B.3., II.E., III.B., IV.A., IV.A.2., IV.D. & E., V.A., V.B.1., VII.A., VIII.A. & B., and IX.A. - Adjusted language for clarification
 Added I.A. that searches may include moving items
 Added I.B.10. that additional attention will be given to access/egress points
 Added II.A.3. that search plans may be developed by specialty teams
 II.B.2., II.D., III.A., IV.D.2., V.B., and V.B.2. - Removed unnecessary language
 Added IV.A.1. that a search report will be given to the individuals residing in the area when an item(s) is removed
 Added VI. that work/program areas will be searched on a quarterly basis
 Added VIII.A.4. that a brief description of contraband found will be documented in the log
 VIII.A.1. and VIII.B.1. - Added clarifying language


APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
 Department of Corrections

12/13/24

 Date Signed

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REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [WAC 137-28-160](#); DOC 410.240 Armory/Firearms Management (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.240 Personal Firearms (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.280 Canine Teams (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.120 Facility Access Searches and Allowable Items; DOC 560.200 Religious Programs; DOC 650.020 Pharmaceutical Management; DOC 850.150 Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace


POLICY:

- I. Searches will be conducted professionally, thoroughly, and frequently on a routine and random basis to:
 - A. Minimize the introduction or flow of contraband, and
 - B. Enhance the security in Department facilities and the safety of employees, incarcerated individuals, and the public.

- II. Explosives, weapons, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, and controlled substances are prohibited on facility grounds except for:
 - A. Controlled substances authorized per DOC 420.280 Canine Teams (RESTRICTED), DOC 650.020 Pharmaceutical Management, and DOC 850.150 Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace.
 - B. Department weapons and related materials per DOC 410.240 Armory/Firearms Management (RESTRICTED) and other applicable Emergency Management System policies.
 - C. Personal weapons per DOC 420.240 Personal Firearms (RESTRICTED).

DIRECTIVE:

- I. General Requirements
 - A. Facility cell/area searches will be a systematic, thorough, and objective visual and physical examination and may include moving items inside the cell/area.
 1. Items, equipment, and fixtures may also be removed.
 - B. Additional attention will be given to areas where contraband control is more critical, including:
 1. The mailroom

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2. The visit room
3. Public access areas
4. Visitor restrooms
5. The property room
6. Perimeter boundaries
7. Vehicle entrance(s)
8. Living units
9. Work/program areas
10. Access/egress points

C. All items brought into a facility will be thoroughly searched for contraband.

D. All lockers/storage containers are subject to search at any time.

E. Searches of employee/contract staff offices and lockers will be conducted per DOC 420.120 Facility Access Searches and Allowable Items.

II. Search Processes

A. Each facility will develop a plan to search the entire facility in an effective and efficient manner applicable in the event of an emergency or critical incident.

1. The plan will include at a minimum:


- a. Estimated time of search
- b. Staffing resources needed
- c. Movement restrictions
- d. Notifications
- e. Documentation requirements

2. Shift Commanders and other necessary employees will be familiar with this search process.

3. Facility search plans may be developed by specialty teams specific to the needs of an emergency or critical incident per DOC 410.250 Specialty Teams.

B. Searching employees will be alert to the possibility of disturbing a crime scene during a cell or activity area search.

1. If a suspected crime scene is discovered, the scene will be secured, and law enforcement notified through the chain of command.

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2. When an individual is suspected of a new crime, only the Superintendent/designee will authorize appropriate searches, unless immediate action is necessary. The Superintendent/designee will be informed as soon as possible following an immediate search.

3. The chain of evidence will be conducted per 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED).

C. All contraband which can be used to escape, or cause serious bodily injury, will be immediately reported via the chain of command to the Superintendent/designee.

D. Employees will not inform individuals of planned searches before they are conducted.

E. Employees will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves) when searching any person or article, or the surface of any item, to lessen the possibility of becoming contaminated with blood, body fluids or other contaminants.

III. Areas Accessible to the Public

A. Areas of the facility that are accessed by the public will be searched before and after each use and before individuals are allowed access to the areas again.

B. Areas outside the secure perimeter will be routinely searched for contraband.

IV. Living Areas


A. A compliance check will be conducted on all cells/dorms/living areas daily to ensure cleanliness and compliance with facility regulations and identify any safety hazards. A compliance check may include the physical examination of items inside the living areas.

1. If an item(s) is removed from the living area a search report will be given to the individuals residing in the area.

2. The compliance check will be documented, and discrepancies that pose a safety hazard will be reported in a timely manner.

B. Searches of general population cells will occur, at a minimum, once every 60 days.

C. Searches of restricted housing cells will occur, at a minimum, once every 7 days.

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- D. Correctional employees may enter and search living areas at any time without prior notice or an individual's approval and without the individual's presence.
1. Cell searches should be conducted with a minimum of 2 employees.
 2. The individual will be instructed to exit the cell, pat searched, and directed to the waiting area so that the individual does not interfere with search activities.
 3. Reasonable effort will be made to restore the area to its original condition. Bedding will be left folded on the bunk.

V. Common Areas


- A. Common areas (e.g., dayroom, gymnasium, recreation yard, walkways) will be searched at the beginning and end of daily activities to ensure no individuals, weapons, and/or contraband are present.
1. Search results will be documented per local procedures to include, at a minimum, a log entry, search report, or electronic log.
 2. A schedule for an electronic search of the yard will be established to ensure weapons are not buried in the ground.

VI. Work/Program Areas


- A. Areas used for individual programming (e.g., gymnasium, chapel, health services, Correctional Industries) will be searched on a quarterly basis.

VII. Property Searches

- A. Individual property searches may be conducted by one employee if in a visible area outside the cell. However, the preference is for at least 2 employees to conduct searches.
- B. Documents marked and identified as personal legal documents/papers may be examined but will not be read, except as necessary to confirm:
1. They are generally legal in nature,
 2. They do not create a threat to facility order and security, and
 3. Contraband is not concealed in the materials.
- C. Personal religious items identified as requiring special handling per DOC 560.200 Religious Programs will be searched with respect.

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1. Authorized items stored in a religious items box will be listed on a copy of the individual's property record stored inside the box. The box and the form do not require special handling. Items which require special handling may be searched by lifting the box cover and conducting a visual search (i.e., tier checks) without touching the items.
 - a. If an employee believes an adequate search cannot be conducted in this manner and a more detailed search is necessary, the individual should be present during the search.
 - 1) Employees may empty the entire contents of the religious items box and spread them on a flat, clean surface so the items requiring special handling can be easily observed and searched without being touched.
 - 2) The individual may be directed to show a specific item(s) to an employee for closer inspection.
 - 3) If the individual refuses to comply with the instructions of an employee during the search process, the contents will be sealed in the box, and the individual will be provided with a copy of DOC 05-384 Search Report as a receipt. With the approval of the Shift Commander or higher authority, the contents will be inspected by an employee with a Religious Coordinator present.
 - b. If an employee believes there is an immediate threat to facility security, safety, or health involving explosives, weapons, or illegal drugs, a search may be conducted by an employee without the individual present. Prior authorization for the search must be obtained from the Shift Commander/Correctional Unit Supervisor.
2. If contraband or an item(s) not listed on the individual's property record is discovered in the box:
 - a. The item(s) will be returned to the box which will be sealed with tape, signed and dated by the employee, and stored in the evidence room.
 - b. The Religious Coordinator, Correctional Unit Supervisor, or Shift Commander will review the item and approve or recommend necessary action.


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- c. The individual will be provided a copy of DOC 05-384 Search Report as a receipt for confiscated property.
- 3. Individuals with a medicine bag will, as instructed by employees, present its contents for view. If an illegal item(s) is found, the medicine bag and illegal item(s) will be confiscated, and the individual will receive a copy of DOC 05-384 Search Report as a receipt.
- 4. Tarot cards will be removed from their wrap or bag by the individual and displayed for the search.
- D. Identifying individual ownership of confiscated property should be attempted in multiple occupancy cells/dorms, if possible.
 - 1. If employees are unable to identify individual ownership of confiscated property/contraband or other discovered violation(s), all individuals assigned to the area will be issued the infraction(s). Individuals will be given an opportunity to contest ownership at the disciplinary hearing.

VIII. Documentation

- A. All searches must be documented in the unit/area post log, search log, or approved electronic log indicating:
 - 1. Cells and/or areas searched
 - 2. Date and time of search
 - 3. Names of employees involved, and
 - 4. A brief description of contraband found.
- B. DOC 05-384 Search Report or other authorized electronic form approved by the Chief of Security/Security Management Unit, will be completed each time an area of the facility is searched, or property is confiscated, describing all items confiscated from the cell or search area.
 - 1. A copy of the completed form will be left in the cell or handed directly to the individual as a receipt. Each individual in the search location may request a single, additional copy of the search report.
 - 2. Evidence for infractions will be handled per DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED).

IX. X-ray and Electronic Searches

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- A. An x-ray/imaging/electronic search of all packages or inanimate objects entering the secure perimeter will be conducted with devices engineered for this purpose.
1. Packages may also be physically searched.

DEFINITIONS:

The following words/terms are important to this policy and are defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual: Contraband. Other words/terms appearing in this policy may also be defined in the glossary.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

DOC 05-384 Search Report