



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD**  
OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE  
1/3/18

PAGE NUMBER  
1 of 5

NUMBER  
**DOC 550.100**

**POLICY**

TITLE  
**OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM**

**REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:**

Effective: 3/10/83 DOC 700.100	Revised: 9/22/06 AB 06-010
Revised: 9/1/85	Revised: 3/15/07
Revised: 4/15/89 DOC 550.100	Revised: 3/4/09
Revised: 12/15/89	Revised: 3/1/12
Revised: 12/15/93	Revised: 3/18/13
Revised: 10/28/99	Revised: 1/3/18
Revised: 3/1/05	

**SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:**


Policy Statement II., and Directive III.A. - Removed unnecessary language  
 Added Policy Statement IV. that disabled offenders may request accommodation per DOC 690.400 Offenders with Disabilities  
 Directive I.A., I.B., I.C.1., II.A. & B., II.D.3., IV.A.1., IV.B., and V.B. - Adjusted language for clarification  
 I.C., III.A., and IV.A.2. - Removed unnecessary language  
 Added II.C.1. that Grievance Coordinators will be familiar with and follow expectations listed in the Offender Grievance Manual  
 II.C.2., III.A.1., IV.A., and IV.A.1.a. - Added language for clarification  
 Added II.D.1. that the Grievance Program Manager will be familiar with and follow expectations listed in the Offender Grievance Manual  
 Added V.A. that documents pertaining to grievances will be maintained as confidential and only disclosed on a need to know basis

**APPROVED:**

Signature on file

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**STEPHEN SINCLAIR**, Secretary  
 Department of Corrections

12/11/17  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Signed

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## REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 9A.44.160](#); [WAC 137-08](#); [ACA 4-4284](#); [ACA 4-4394](#); [ACA 4C-01](#); [ACA 6B-03](#); [DOC 310.000 Orientation for Offenders](#); [DOC 490.800 Prison Rape Elimination Act \(PREA\) Prevention and Reporting](#); [DOC 690.400 Offenders with Disabilities](#); [Offender Grievance Program Handout](#); [Offender Grievance Program Manual](#)

## POLICY:

- I. The Department seeks to reduce tension and provide a stable correctional environment by providing a formal mechanism to address conflict through the administrative resolution of complaints.
- II. The Department has established a structured process for responding to offender grievances to provide efficient and timely resolution of a large portion of complaints at the lowest level.
- III. Grievances alleging sexual misconduct will be forwarded to the PREA Coordinator per DOC 490.800 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Prevention and Reporting and will not be reviewed through the grievance process.
- IV. Disabled offenders in need of assistance may request accommodation per DOC 690.400 Offenders with Disabilities.

## DIRECTIVE:

- I. General Requirements
  - A. Guidelines regarding the grievance process will be provided during the orientation process per DOC 310.000 Orientation for Offenders, and Community Corrections Officers (CCOs) will provide the Offender Grievance Program Handout during initial intake.
  - B. The grievance process will not be used as a disciplinary procedure.
  - C. The Offender Grievance Program Manual provides detailed instructions for use of the process and procedural decisions, including definitions of what is and is not grievable, as well as the process for filing complaints and appealing responses.
    1. In Prisons, the Offender Grievance Program Manual will be maintained in the library and law library, if applicable.


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2. In Work Releases, the Offender Grievance Program Manual will be kept in an area accessible to offenders.
3. In Field Offices, the Offender Grievance Program Manual will be available for review in the lobby, upon request.

## II. General Responsibilities

- A. An informal resolution should be attempted before filing a complaint. Offenders are expected to participate in the resolution of their individual grievances.
- B. Each facility will designate an employee as the Grievance Coordinator who, while in the performance of his/her grievance duties, will be directly responsible to the Superintendent/Community Corrections Supervisor (CCS).
  1. The Superintendent/CCS may delegate direct day-to-day supervision of a Grievance Coordinator to his/her immediate subordinate. The designee will not hinder the Grievance Coordinator's access to the Superintendent/CCS regarding grievance matters.
- C. The Grievance Coordinator will:
  1. Be familiar with and follow expectations listed in the Offender Grievance Manual,
  2. Ensure grievances are picked up at least twice a week as posted on the grievance box,
  3. Promote informal resolution of complaints, when appropriate,
  4. Complete appropriate grievance forms,
  5. Ensure the offender is interviewed at least once prior to Level III,
  6. Ensure responses are completed within established timeframes, and
  7. Provide orientation to employees/contract staff and offenders.
- D. [6B-03] The Grievance Program Manager will:
  1. Be familiar with and follow expectations listed in the Offender Grievance Manual,
  2. Evaluate grievance procedures to ensure they are efficient and effective, and
  3. Analyze the quality and nature of offender grievances and document results in an annual report.


## III. Grievable Items

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- A. [4-4284] [4-4394] [4C-01] [6B-03] An offender may grieve his/her place of confinement or conditions of supervision when it relates to:
1. Policies/operational memorandums and/or their application.
  2. Lack of policies, rules, or procedures that directly affect his/her living conditions.
  3. Actions of employees, contract staff, or volunteers over whom the facility or supervising office has jurisdiction, including retaliation against the offender for his/her good faith participation in the grievance program.
  4. Actions of other offenders.
- B. Only incidents, policies, or practices that affect the offender personally and over which the Department has jurisdiction, including health-related issues, are grievable. [4-4394] [4C-01]
- C. The following items are not grievable:
1. State and federal law, including Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
  2. Court decisions.
  3. Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (Board) decisions.
  4. Court-ordered Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI) reports.
  5. Community Corrections Officer (CCO) recommendations/testimony to a Department Hearing Officer, court, and/or the Board.
  6. Special conditions imposed by a CCO per Department policy.
  7. Any Department-approved procedure that has a formal appeal process.

IV. Grievance Program Process [4-4284] [6B-03]

- A. DOC 05-165 Offender Complaint will be used to file a complaint and submitted as follows:
1. In Prison and Work Release, the complaint will be submitted to the Grievance Coordinator.
    - a. DOC 05-165 Offender Complaint is available in the living units, other designated locations, or may be obtained from employees.

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2. Offenders on community supervision will complete the form(s) at the local Field Office and forward to the Grievance Program Manager.
- B. The grievance process contains an appeal system that allows an offender to request review at a higher level, by an employee not assigned to the facility/ office, if s/he is not satisfied with a response. The offender is entitled to a final review by an employee not assigned to the facility or office.
- C. The following forms may also be used in the grievance process:
1. DOC 05-166 Level I - Initial Grievance,
  2. DOC 05-168 Appeal to Level II,
  3. DOC 05-169 Appeal to Level III,
  4. DOC 05-170 Employee Conduct Grievance,
  5. DOC 05-171 Notification of Time Extension,
  6. DOC 05-311 Grievance Investigator Report, and
  7. DOC 20-303 Notification of Employee Conduct/Reprisal Grievance.
- V. Confidentiality
- A. Documents pertaining to grievances will be maintained as confidential and only disclosed on a need to know basis.
  - B. Grievance documents, records, reports, and other information will be subject to public disclosure provisions per WAC 137-08.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**DOC FORMS:**

- [DOC 05-165 Offender Complaint](#)
- [DOC 05-166 Level I - Initial Grievance](#)
- [DOC 05-168 Appeal to Level II](#)
- [DOC 05-169 Appeal to Level III](#)
- [DOC 05-170 Employee Conduct Grievance](#)
- [DOC 05-171 Notification of Time Extension](#)
- [DOC 05-311 Grievance Investigator Report](#)
- [DOC 20-303 Notification of Employee Conduct/Reprisal Grievance](#)