



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON/REENTRY
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE
7/17/23

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NUMBER
DOC 420.310

POLICY

TITLE
SEARCHES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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- Revised: 3/7/01
- Revised: 6/6/06
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- Revised: 6/25/12
- Revised: 12/1/12
- Revised: 6/1/13
- Revised: 1/1/14
- Revised: 7/17/23

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Major changes to include applicability and updated terminology, processes, and responsibilities throughout. Read carefully!

APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

6/23/23

Date Signed

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REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; DOC 310.000 Orientation; DOC 420.311 Dry Cell Search/Watch; DOC 420.312 Body Cavity Search; DOC 420.360 Searches by Canines; DOC 420.365 Evidence Management for Work/Training Release; DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED)

POLICY:

- I. The Department has established procedures to search incarcerated individuals to control contraband and provide for its proper disposition.
- II. All searches will be conducted in a professional, sensitive, respectful, and humane manner, while recognizing privacy needs and avoiding unnecessary force, embarrassment, or indignity to the individual being searched in the least intrusive manner as much as possible.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. General Requirements
 - A. Incarcerated individuals will be provided information on searches during orientation per DOC 310.000 Orientation.
 - B. Searches will be conducted by trained employees/contract staff as directed and/or required and may include:
 1. Electronic searches (e.g., metal detector/body scanner)
 2. Pat searches
 3. Using a canine per DOC 420.360 Searches by Canines
 - a. Reentry Center Manager (RCM) approval is required to conduct a canine search.
 4. The safe recovery of internally concealed contraband per DOC 420.311 Dry Cell Search/Watch
 5. Body cavity/strip searches
 - a. Searches of the rectal and/or vaginal cavity in Prisons will be conducted per DOC 420.312 Body Cavity Search.

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- b. Body scanners should be used in lieu of a strip search if one is available and operational.
 - 1) Employees viewing scanner images must meet gender requirements for strip searches.
- c. Searches for individuals in a Reentry Center must be approved by the Reentry Center Operations Administrator and the individual may be transported to a Prison to conduct the body cavity or strip search when possible.

- C. Items being carried/transported by an individual are subject to search.
- D. Contraband found during a search will be processed per DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED) and DOC 420.365 Evidence Management for Work/Training Release.
- E. Employees will wear appropriate protective equipment (e.g., gloves) when searching any person or article, or the surface of any item.
- F. When possible, searches will be conducted within view of the facility's electronic surveillance system(s) without obstructing the search.

II. Routine Searches

- A. A routine search may include an electronic, canine, or pat search and will be conducted:
 - 1. Regularly at designated movement/transfer/control points
 - 2. At random throughout the facility
 - 3. For safety/security concerns (e.g., suspicion of contraband) with supervisor approval

III. Pat Searches

- A. Male individuals may be searched by an employee/contract staff of any gender and will not be considered a cross-gender search.
- B. Unless there is an emergent situation:
 - 1. Females will be searched by a female employee/contract staff.
 - 2. Searches of an individual who is transgender and/or non-binary or is intersex will be conducted by the gender requested on the individual's

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DOC 02-420 Preferences Request and are not considered a cross-gender search.

- C. Emergent situations are limited to:
1. When a delay might result in the loss of dangerous contraband or an imminent threat to anyone's safety/security,
 2. Apprehension of an escaped individual,
 3. Following an emergent use of force, and/or
 4. Critical incident/significant event where evacuation must occur immediately (e.g., fire, natural disaster, crime scene) but a pat search is required for safety/security.
- D. The Superintendent/RCM/Duty Officer will approve/deny a cross-gender search and consider appropriate alternatives.
- E. A pat search includes the following:
1. Patting/sliding the hands along the fully clothed body of the individual
 2. Removing the coat, hat, and/or shoes
 3. A visual inspection of nasal passages, hands, hair, ears, and mouth
 4. A search of belongings in the individual's immediate possession

IV. Strip Searches

- A. Strip searches in a Prison will be conducted:
1. When entering and exiting a restrictive housing unit.
 2. When entering and/or exiting other secure areas, as identified by the Superintendent.
 3. At Level 3 and higher facilities after direct contact with the public, to include:
 - a. Returning from a location outside the secure perimeter of the facility,
 - b. Returning from a contact visit of any type, or
 - c. Arriving from a non-Department facility or in transit from another Department facility.



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- B. Strip searches may be conducted when a reasonable suspicion has been established that an individual may be carrying dangerous contraband that may disrupt the orderly operations of the facility.
- C. A strip search must be conducted by 2 employees and meet the following gender requirements, unless a delay would result in the loss of dangerous contraband or an imminent threat to anyone’s safety/security:
 - 1. Searches of females will be conducted by female employees.
 - 2. Searches of males require that one of the employees conducting the search be male.
 - a. If the second person conducting the strip search is not male, the employee will be positioned to observe the male employee conducting the strip search but will not be in direct line of sight with the undressed incarcerated individual.
 - b. If both employees conducting the strip search are not male, the search will be considered a cross-gender search.
 - 3. Searches of an individual who is transgender and/or non-binary or is intersex will be conducted by the gender requested on the individual’s DOC 02-420 Preferences Request and will not be considered a cross-gender search.
 - a. Strip searches will not be conducted for the purpose of examining an individual’s genitals.
 - 4. The Superintendent/RCM/Duty Officer will approve/deny a cross-gender search and consider appropriate alternatives.
- D. Removal of prosthetic device(s), other than hearing aids, dentures, and/or eyeglasses, will be treated and documented as a strip search.
 - 1. Health Services will be consulted to avoid injury to the individual and/or damage to the device.
- E. Strip searches will be conducted out of view of other individuals to ensure privacy. Only one individual will be searched at a time.
- F. A strip search is a visual inspection requiring the individual to:
 - 1. Remove all clothing and personal belongings, which will be searched,
 - 2. Face the employee and spread feet to shoulder width,



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3. Raise arms to shoulder level and open hands, spread fingers, and rotate hands to expose palms and back of hands,
4. Bend at the waist and run hands through hair vigorously (e.g., beard)
 - a. Loose braids and ponytails must be removed to allow hair to be searched.
 - b. Braids close to the scalp must be removed when directed by an employee and approved by the Correctional Unit Supervisor/ Lieutenant or RCM.
5. Spread and swivel hands a second time,
6. Permit visual inspection of the ear canal and remove hearing aid, if present,
7. Pull ears forward to check behind ear and lobe,
8. Tilt head back for inspection under chin and in nasal passages,
9. Open the mouth, lift tongue, and pull cheeks and lips away from gum line,
10. Remove any dentures or false teeth,
11. Spread and swivel hands a third time,
12. Raise arms to expose underarms,
13. Show chest and stomach area,
14. Raise all excess or rolled flesh (e.g., breasts),
15. Expose genitals (e.g., lifting penis and then scrotum),
16. Assume a squatting position and cough,
17. Expose bottoms of feet and between toes by turning away from the employee, and
18. Separate buttocks to expose anus.

G. The Shift Commander/RCM may approve modified search procedures if the individual requires accommodation (e.g., post medical procedure, disability).

V. Documentation

A. Strip searches will be documented and must contain, at a minimum:

1. Date, time, and location of the search
2. Name and DOC number of the individual being searched
3. Reason for the search
4. Name of employee approving the search
5. Name and gender of employees conducting the search
6. Type and disposition of any contraband found

B. Strip searches in a Reentry Center will be documented as a confidential report in the Incident Management Reporting System (IMRS).

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1. If the individual is transported to a designated facility for a strip/body cavity search, the report will be completed by the sending facility.
- C. If gender requirements cannot be met for a pat/strip search, a confidential report will be completed in IMRS and must contain, at a minimum:
1. Date, time, and location of the search
 2. Name and DOC number of the individual being searched
 3. Reason for the search, including justification for an emergent situation
 4. Name of employee approving the search
 5. Name and gender of employee(s) conducting the search, including steps taken to obtain an employee(s) of the same/requested gender
 6. Type and disposition of any contraband found

VI. Monitoring and Training

- A. All custody employees and applicable contract staff will receive training in effective and proper search techniques, including methods of documentation.
1. Employees/contract staff who may conduct searches will be trained in searches of individuals who are transgender and/or non-binary or is intersex.
 2. Training will be documented in the employee/contract staff's training record.
- B. Supervisors will monitor search techniques and provide feedback and training to correct any deficiencies.

DEFINITIONS:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

DOC 02-420 Preferences Request