



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**PRISON**  
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE  
12/2/21

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**DOC 420.320**

## POLICY

TITLE

**SEARCHES OF FACILITIES**

### REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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### SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:


III.A. - Added clarifying language  
IV.D.2., V.C.1., V.C.1.a.3), and V.C.2. - Adjusted language for clarification  
V.C.3. - Removed unnecessary language

### APPROVED:

Signature on file

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**CHERYL STRANGE**, Secretary  
Department of Corrections

11/18/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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 scheduled and random basis in an effort 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 with the exception of:
  - 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. Areas within the secure perimeter of a facility will be routinely searched. Additional attention should be given to employees and areas where contraband control is more critical, including:
    1. The mailroom
    2. The visit room
    3. Public access areas
    4. Visitor restrooms
    5. The property room

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6. Perimeter boundaries
7. Vehicle entrance(s)
8. Living units
9. Work/program areas

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

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

D. 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 at once 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 trained in this search process.

B. When an incarcerated 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.

C. 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.

2. The chain of evidence, which accounts for the preservation of evidence from the moment it is collected from the crime scene to the trial/hearing, must be protected.

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- D. 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.
- E. Employees will not inform incarcerated individuals of planned searches before they are conducted.
- F. Employees will wear protective gloves and/or other personal protective equipment when searching any person or article, or the surface of any item, to lessen the possibility of becoming contaminated with blood or body fluids.

### III. General Areas

- A. Areas of the facility that are accessed by the public will be searched before and after each use and before incarcerated individuals are allowed access to the areas again.
- B. Areas outside the secure perimeter will be periodically searched for contraband.

### IV. Living Areas

- A. Cells/dorms/living areas will be inspected daily to ensure cleanliness and compliance with facility regulations and identify any safety hazards.
  - 1. The inspections 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.
- D. Correctional employees may enter and search a housing area at any time without prior notice or an incarcerated individual's approval and without the individual's presence.
  - 1. Cell searches should be conducted with a minimum of 2 employees.
  - 2. The incarcerated 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. The search will include a systematic, thorough, and objective search of the area, equipment, fixtures, and incarcerated individual's property.


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4. Reasonable effort will be made to restore the area to its original condition. Bedding will be left folded on the bunk.

- E. A documented search of unoccupied cells/dorms/living areas will be conducted before an individual is moved in.


#### V. Property Searches

- A. Personal 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.
  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

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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.
      - 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.
- VI. Common Areas
- A. Searches of areas used by incarcerated individuals will be systematic and thorough.

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B. Recreation yards will be searched at the beginning and end of daily activities to ensure no individuals, weapons, and/or contraband are present.

1. Results of the searches will be documented per local procedures.
2. A schedule for an electronic search of the yard should be established to ensure weapons are not buried in the ground.

#### VII. Documentation

A. All searches must be documented in the unit/area logbook, indicating:

1. Cells and areas searched,
2. Date and time of search, and
3. Names of employees involved.

B. Before leaving the area, employees must complete DOC 05-384 Search Report 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.
2. Evidence for infractions will be handled per DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED).

#### VIII. X-ray Searches

A. An x-ray/imaging search of packages or inanimate objects may be conducted with devices engineered for this purpose. No person will be scanned or searched with these devices.

#### 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