



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY

PRISON

FACILITY/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE

7/17/24

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1 of 7

NUMBER

DOC 420.340

POLICY

TITLE

SEARCHING AND DETAINING FACILITY VISITORS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 3/31/91
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Revised: 3/1/15
Revised: 1/4/22
Revised: 7/17/24

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Policy statement I., Directive I.A.3., I.B.2.a.I.B.5.a., II.B., III.A., III.C.1., III.D.1.a., III.D.1.b., III.D.2., and III.D.2.b. - Removed unnecessary language
Policy statement II., Directive I.A.1., I.A.2.a., I.A.4. & 5., I.A.5.a., I.B.1.a.-c., I.B.2.a.1), I.B.3.a & b., I.B.3.b.2)-4), I.B.4.a., I.B.5.b. & c., I.B.5.b.2), I.C.1., II.A., III.B., III.C., and IV.A. & B. - Adjusted language for clarification
I.B.2.a.2), I.B.3.c., I.B.4.c., I.B.5.b.2)a) & b), I.B.5.c., and IV.C. - Added clarifying language
Added I.B.3.a.1) that the Shift Commander will consider appropriate alternatives if the visitor does not consent to a cross-gender search
Added I.B.3.b.1) that a pat search will include patting/sliding the hands along the fully clothed body of the visitor


APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

6/17/24

Date Signed

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REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 72.02](#); [RCW 72.09.650](#); DOC 410.200 Use of Force (RESTRICTED); DOC 410.320 Threats, Bombs, and Suspicious Objects (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.250 Use of Restraints (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.330 Searches of Vehicles (RESTRICTED); DOC 420.360 Searches by Canines; DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED)

POLICY:

- I. The Department requires searches of contract staff, volunteers, vendors, and other visitors on facility grounds.
- II. Searches will be conducted, as required, to maintain and enhance the security and safety of personnel, incarcerated individuals, and the public by minimizing the introduction of contraband into Department facilities.
- III. The Department may detain any visitor who enters or remains on facility grounds without permission, appears to have committed or is attempting to commit a crime on facility grounds, or is found in possession of contraband.

DIRECTIVE:


- I. Searching Visitors
 - A. Notification
 1. Notices will be clearly posted along facility perimeter boundaries and at all entrances to inform all visitors that they are subject to search.
 2. Before being searched, visitors must be informed of the type of search that will be conducted and the consequences of refusing a search.
 - a. When a group has been approved for a tour of a facility, the Superintendent/designee may determine in advance if tour group members will be searched and the type of search(es) that will be conducted. This decision will be communicated to public access employees/contract staff and employees/contract staff escorting the tour.
 3. All visitors will be provided the opportunity to read this policy.
 4. Each visitor must sign DOC 21-575 Acknowledgment of Visitor Search Requirements the first time they visit. The form will be retained by the facility. A copy will be given to the visitor upon request.

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5. Visitors refusing a search will be escorted from the facility and law enforcement may be notified of any suspected criminal activity.
 - a. A visitor who refuses a search may be denied access to the facility for a period of 90 days. A second refusal may result in permanent denial of access.

B. Searches

1. Electronic Search
 - a. Visitors to Level 3, 4, and 5 facilities will be scanned using a handheld or stationary electronic metal detector/body scanner.
 - b. Visitors to Level 2 facilities may be scanned using a handheld or stationary electronic metal detector/body scanner.
 - c. If an electronic search detects the presence of metal (e.g., screws, pins, plates, artificial joints or other medical appliances, underwire bra), a pat search will be required.
2. Container Search
 - a. Handbags, briefcases, and any other containers or hand-carried items brought in by visitors will be searched. These searches may be conducted in a public area.
 - 1) The visitor will be present during the search unless ownership cannot be established or there is a compelling security reason for proceeding with the search in the visitor's absence. Items of unknown ownership should be handled as suspicious objects per DOC 410.320 Threats, Bombs, and Suspicious Objects (RESTRICTED).
 - 2) A canine search may be used to conduct or supplement a container search.
3. Pat Search
 - a. Pat searches will be conducted in a private setting by an employee/contract staff of the same gender as the visitor being searched, when possible.
 - 1) If the visitor does not consent to a cross-gender search, the Shift Commander will consider appropriate alternatives.

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- b. A pat search will include:
 - 1) Removing the coat, hat, and shoes
 - 2) Patting/sliding the hands along the fully clothed body of the visitor
 - 3) A visual inspection of nasal passages, hands, hair, ears, and mouth
 - 4) A search of belongings in the visitor's immediate possession
 - c. For a pat search of a child in diapers, the diaper will be removed by the accompanying adult and replaced with a clean diaper that has been searched by employees/contract staff. The accompanying adult will also be pat searched.
 4. Locker Search
 - a. A search of state-provided lockers may be conducted using master keys or combinations owned or controlled by the facility.
 - b. A locker search does not require the presence of the person using the locker.
 - c. A canine search may be used to conduct or supplement a locker search.
 5. Canine Search
 - a. A canine search of visitors may be conducted per DOC 420.360 Searches by Canines.
 - b. When a canine has alerted on a visitor, a pat search will be conducted. A vehicle search may also be conducted per DOC 420.330 Searches of Vehicles (RESTRICTED).
 - 1) Access to the facility may be permitted if contraband is not discovered.
 - 2) If suspicion remains, management strategies may include:
 - a) Assigning employees/contract staff to escort the visitor,

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b) Seating the visitor and incarcerated individual directly in front of visit room employees/contract staff, and/or

c) No contact visiting.

c. If the canine alerts on a visitor or there is specific intelligence related to the visitor/individual, the visit may be temporarily suspended pending further investigation.

1) Documentation to support the temporary suspension will be submitted to the Superintendent no later than the next business day.

C. Safety

1. Employees/contract staff will wear appropriate protective equipment (e.g., gloves) when searching any visitor, article, or the surface of any item to lessen the possibility of becoming contaminated with blood or body fluids.

II. Contraband

A. Contraband found during a search will not be permitted inside the facility, and the visitor will be denied access pending review by the Superintendent/designee. Any visitor found in possession of contraband may be subject to permanent denial of access.

1. Contraband will be documented and disposed of per DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED).


B. Local law enforcement will be notified if a visitor is found in possession of contraband that is an illegal item.

III. Detaining Visitors

A. The Shift Commander has the authority to detain or remove visitors who:


1. Enter or remain within a facility or on the grounds without permission,
2. Appear to have committed or are attempting to commit a crime, when probable cause has been established, or
3. Possess contraband.

B. Employees/contract staff observing a violation or having probable cause to believe that a violation has occurred or is about to occur, will notify the Shift

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Commander as soon as possible. Employees/contract staff will inform the Shift Commander of the following:

1. Name of person(s) involved
 2. Location of incident
 3. Nature of incident
 4. Number of individuals involved
 5. Number of employees/contract staff involved
 6. Number of citizens/visitors involved
 7. Injuries, and
 8. Weapons involved
- C. The Shift Commander will provide direction to on-scene employees/contract staff and will send additional employees/contract staff, as necessary.
1. If the violation occurs during visitation, the visit will be terminated by separating the visitor and individual and removing them from the visiting area.
- D. The Shift Commander will immediately notify local law enforcement. Any contraband that is confiscated will be seized, handled, and documented per DOC 420.375 Contraband and Evidence Handling (RESTRICTED).
1. If law enforcement is responding:
 - a. The Shift Commander will direct that the visitor be detained for law enforcement in a location previously designated by the Superintendent. The visitor will be:
 - 1) Under constant observation until law enforcement arrives and assumes custody,
 - 2) Afforded reasonable accommodations (e.g., restroom, water), and
 - 3) Subject to any search method(s) mentioned in this policy.
 - b. If the visitor becomes combative, a threat to themselves or others, or damages property, use of force is authorized including restraints per DOC 410.200 Use of Force (RESTRICTED) and DOC 420.250 Use of Restraints (RESTRICTED) to protect the safety of visitors and personnel or the security of the facility or state property. The Shift Commander will be notified as soon as practical.

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2. If law enforcement is not responding, the visitor will be:
 - a. Subject to any search method(s) authorized in this policy,
 - b. Advised that the incident has been reported to law enforcement and the visitor will be contacted by that agency,
 - c. Instructed to contact the facility to request the status of visitation privileges, and
 - d. Escorted to the facility exit and directed to leave facility grounds.

IV. Training and Monitoring

- A. All new correctional employees/contract staff will receive training in effective and proper search techniques and methods of documentation, including methodology, liabilities, and policy review.
- B. Training will be documented in the employee/contract staff's training record.
- C. Supervisors will monitor and review employee/contract staff search techniques and provide 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: Illegal Item. Other words/terms appearing in this policy may also be defined in the glossary.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

DOC 21-575 Acknowledgment of Visitor Search Requirements