



Office of Legislative Corrections Ombudsman

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Visiting a Michigan Correctional Facility

The following information is based on the following Michigan Department of Corrections Policy Directive 05.03.140 “Prisoner Visiting” and Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) Visiting Standards (displayed at each institution).

Who can Visit

1. Persons approved for placement on the prisoner’s approved Visitors List.
2. The prisoner can complete a Visitor List identifying those immediate family members and not more than ten others from whom s/he would like to receive visits.
 - a. **Immediate family members:** grandparent, parent, stepparent, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, child, step-child, grandchild, sibling, step-sibling, and half-sibling. An aunt and uncle can be added if adequate verification is provided that they served as a surrogate parent.
3. The following individuals are allowed a visit without being on the List, unless they are related by blood or marriage, on probation or parole as a result of a felony, or a prisoner:
 - a. Qualified clergy
 - b. Volunteer in an outreach program sponsored by an external religious organization
 - c. Attorney or attorney’s representative, on official business
 - d. Representative of the legislative, judicial, or executive branch of government; consulate general.
 - e. NOTE: These visits are not counted as one of the prisoner’s regular visits.
4. The prisoner should submit the List to designated housing unit staff. Names of immediate family members can be added/deleted from the list by the prisoner at any time. Other names can be added/deleted by the prisoner at least once every six months.
5. **Number of Visits:**
 - a. Level I: 8 per month
 - b. Level II: 7 per month
 - c. Level IV: 5 per month
 - d. Level V: 4 per month
 - e. Segregation: 4 per month
 - f. STG I: 3 per month; STG II: 2 per month.

Applying to Visit

1. Each person named on the Visitor List must complete the MDOC Visiting Application and submit it to the facility where the prisoner is housed.
 - a. Visiting Application: can be picked up in person at an MDOC facility or from the website, www.michigan.gov/corrections. Prisoners may mail applications to the proposed visitors.
2. Once the Visitor List and Visiting Application is completed, facility staff will determine if the proposed visitor is eligible for placement on the prisoner's approved List.
 - a. *Tip: Include self-addressed, stamped envelope with your application. If no envelope is provided, the proposed visitor is only notified of a denial.
3. All the following criteria must be met to be approved:
 - a. The visitor is not subject to current visitor restriction.
 - b. The visitor is not a prisoner or former prisoner in any jurisdiction. However, a prisoner/former prisoner who is an immediate family member may be placed on the list with prior approval from the Warden.
 - c. The visitor is not on parole or probation as a result of a felony conviction. However, immediate family member may be approved with approval of Warden and written approval of supervising field agent.
 - d. The visitor is 18 or older, an emancipated minor, or the child, step-child, grandchild, sibling, step-sibling, or half-sibling of the prisoner. However, minors shall not be approved if:
 - i. There is a court order prohibiting visits between the child and prisoner;
 - ii. Parental rights of the prisoner have been terminated; or
 - iii. The prisoner has been convicted of child abuse, criminal sexual conduct, or any other assaultive or violent behavior against the child or sibling of the child, unless exception has been granted by the Director upon request of the Warden.
 - e. The visitor is not on another's prisoner's approved visitors list, except as an immediate family member.
 - f. MDOC employees can only visit as set forth in the Employee Handbook.
 - g. Volunteers can only visit as set forth in PD 03.02.105 "Volunteer Services and Programs."

Denial and Removal from List

1. The Warden may deny placement of anyone on a prisoner's approved visitors list for the safety or security of the facility, protection of the public, previous violations of visiting room rules, or for other reasonable causes.
2. If a visitor is denied placement on the approved list, the visitor will be provided with a copy of the denied Application, which includes the reason for denial, and be advised in writing of the reason for the denial.
3. Appealing a Denial: A proposed visitor may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Warden.
4. Removal from a List:

- a. A person can request to be removed from the list. The person will be removed from the list within 5 business days after the facility receives the request. The prisoner and listed person will be notified in writing that the person was removed from the list.
- b. The MDOC shall remove a visitor from the list if the MDOC receives reliable information the visitor is no longer eligible for placement on the list. Both the prisoner and visitor will be notified in writing of the reasons for removal.
- c. Appealing a Removal: Prisoner may appeal through the grievance process. Visitor may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Warden.

Arriving at the Correctional Facility

1. Up to 5 people may visit a prisoner at a time, not including children under 2.
2. Identification: All visitors must have picture identification: government issued valid pictured ID: driver's license, state ID card, military ID card, passport.
 - a. For visitors under 18 without a picture ID, a birth certificate, certification of adoption or court order establishing paternity can be used.
 - b. Visitors are given a badge, which must be worn and visible at all times. It is turned in at the end of a visit. Black light hand marking system will also be used.
3. Searches: PD 04.04.110 "Search and Arrest in Correctional Facilities"
 - a. All visitors will be searched before being admitted to the visiting area by a MDOC staff member of the same sex as the visitor. The search includes: visitor's clothing, pat down of all areas covered by clothing, removal of his/her shoes and socks and opening of his/her mouth to allow for inspection. Prostheses and/or wig must also be searched.
 - b. A visitor who brings a baby must change its diaper, using a disposable diaper supplied by the institution, in the presence of a staff person prior to the visit.
 - c. Any personal property which is taken inside the security perimeter of a facility will be searched; reasonable suspicion of contraband and/or consent of the visitor is not required.
 - d. A visitor will not be forced to submit to a strip search or body cavity search unless a search warrant has been obtained.
 - e. Vehicles: If it is suspected there is contraband in a vehicle on facility grounds, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency; employees shall not search the vehicle.
 - f. Contraband: Whenever the Warden or the Administrator of the Office of Parole and Probation Services (or designee) determines there is reasonable suspicion a person will attempt to bring in weapons, alcoholic beverages or poisons, or prescription drugs/controlled substances without written certification from a licensed physician, or the person is found to be in possession of any of these items, MDOC staff may request the appropriate law enforcement agency to be present for questioning or search of the person.
 - g. MDOC policy prohibits the following items from being brought into a facility:
 - i. Cell phones, pagers
 - ii. Audio or visual recording devices, including cameras
 - iii. Tobacco products
 - iv. Money, except change for vending machines

4. Visitor Attire: The visitor is not permitted to visit if his/her clothing does not comply with the following standards. Exception may be made if it is the person's first visit to any MDOC facility. In this case, person will be provided a smock to wear. In subsequent visits, the visitor is not given a smock and cannot leave the facility to change clothes and return for a visit later the same day. The shift commander makes the final decision with regard to attire. Standards:
- a. Visitor must be fully dressed in clean clothes in good repair.
 - b. Must wear underpants/panties; adult females must wear a brassiere.
 - c. Clothing exposing excessive skin is prohibited: includes see-through clothing, tube/halter tops, and shorts or skirts/dresses over 3 inches above the knee.
 - d. Clothing which exposes undergarments is prohibited.
 - e. Extreme form-fitting clothing may not be worn as outer garments.
 - f. Extreme loose-fitting clothing is prohibited.
 - g. Clothing which displays obscene or inflammatory images/words is prohibited.
 - h. Outer garments are not allowed (including headgear, gloves, etc.)
 - i. Religious headgear is allowed, but subject to search/inspection
 - j. Must wear footwear at all times.
 - k. Jewelry is itemized on entry and departure. No more than 10 pieces.

Entering the Visiting Room (VR)

1. Property Visitors can bring into the VR:
 - a. Locker key
 - b. Visitor pass
 - c. ID card
 - d. Change for vending machines, maximum \$15.00 per visitor. Over three visitors in group, maximum is \$45.00
 - e. Infant: two clear plastic bottles, one pacific, one single-layered baby blanket. Sippy cup if toddler present.
 - f. Medications and/or medical equipment which may be needed and approved by shift commander.
 - i. Paraplegics must use facility's wheelchair while in the VR. Member of that visitor's visiting party is responsible for moving the individual to the facility wheelchair. If this move cannot happen, they can use their own wheelchair, but it will be a non-contact visit.
 - ii. Quadriplegic: may use their own wheelchair, but chair will be inspected. Clothed body search of exposed areas without removal from the chair.
 - iii. Service animal: harness/collar, cape or backpack will be searched.
 - g. Photo tickets
 - h. Legal documents can be brought in by immediate family members; cannot be left with the prisoner and can be searched.
 - i. Attorneys, their representatives, legal paraprofessionals, law clerks on attorney visits may bring: legal papers, writing pads and implements, softbound copies of law books and up

to \$15 in change. Attorneys may leave legal documents at the front desk at the end of the visit. Delivered as mail to the prisoner.

- j. Outreach volunteers and clergy: two religious books, pen/pencil, note pad, up to \$15 in change. Cannot be given to the prisoner. Clergy may bring in sacramental items only if prior approval obtained from the Warden.
 - k. Media: notebook/pad and pencil/pen. Cannot be given to the prisoner.
2. Physical Contact: Physical contact is prohibited except for one kiss and one embrace at the beginning and end of each visit and when a picture is being taken. Prisoner and visitor can have their arms around the shoulders of one another and may hold hands. Prisoner-parent/grandparent may touch and hold his/her child under two and bottle feed his/her infant while visiting.
 3. Use of Restrooms:
 - a. Only use restrooms designated for public use, not those used by prisoners.
 - b. Visiting party (including prisoner) is permitted one restroom trip per group. If more, it will be counted as another visit.
 - c. Infant: may leave VR one time during the course of the visit to change the diaper
 - d. Exception may be granted if visitor's current medication condition is substantiated in writing from his/her physician and prior approval granted by Warden.
 - e. Searched prior to returning to VR.
 - f. Cannot use restroom during count time.
 4. Photos:
 - a. Prisoner cannot be photographed with another prisoner or another prisoner's visitor.
 - b. Inappropriate gestures will lead to confiscation of the photo.
 - c. Prisoners cannot take photo tickets back to the housing unit.
 - d. All tickets must be used or removed at the end of the visit.

Other Types of Visits

1. Hospital Visits: Hospitalized prisoner may have visitors who meet the requirements of 05.03.140 only if the prisoner is critically ill, as verified by the attending physician, and with prior approval of the Warden or Deputy Warden of the facility providing custody coverage.
2. Non-contact visits: Level V prisoners, those serving a disciplinary sanction in detention (punitive segregation), or those classified to administrative segregation will only be allowed non-contact visits.
 - a. The Warden can limit a prisoner of any security level to non-contact visits when:
 - i. Visiting an immediate family member or an attorney who is subject to a visitor restriction.
 - ii. Adequate search cannot be conducted due to the presence of a medically required device.
 - iii. Prisoner is being monitored for suicidal behavior.
 - iv. The Warden determines, based on a review of a guilty finding in a major misconduct charge or the upholding of a visitor restriction, that a prisoner or visitor demonstrates unmanageable behavior that is related to contact visiting.

- b. If a hearing officer upholds a visitor restriction based on conduct during a non-contact visit, prisoner and restricted visitor will not receive any visits during the time period of the restriction.

Disallowed/Terminated Visits

1. Visits may be terminated based on VR overcrowding.
2. A visit shall be disallowed (not be permitted to occur) or terminated if:
 - a. The prisoner does not want a visit.
 - b. The visitor is a minor family member and is not accompanied by an adult immediate family member of the child or his/her legal guardian who is on the approved visitor's list.
 - c. The prisoner or visitor appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance.
 - d. The prisoner or visitor fails to comply with a requirement of PD 05.03.140 or the CFA Visiting Standards.
 - e. The visitor uses verbally abusive language at staff, prisoners, or other visitors.
 - f. The prisoner commits a major misconduct in the VR.
 - g. Reliable information is received that the purpose of the visit is to conduct an illegal act.