



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
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October 1, 2020

**TO:** All Interested Parties  
**FROM:** *Miller* *Ronna Cole*  
Arminda Miller and Ronna Cole  
Prisons/Health Services Incident Commanders  
**SUBJECT:** Safe Start Visitation

As you are all personally aware, there have been a lot of changes and modifications to many of our normal practices since the onset of COVID-19 earlier this year. One of the hardest decisions made as an agency was to temporarily suspend the in-person visitation program in March 2020. We understand and value the importance of maintaining connections with family members and other loved ones, especially during times such as this. However, we have had to balance that with the responsibility of keeping everyone safe, from those in our facilities to our staff to those from our communities.

We believe we are finally in a place where we can reopen our in-person visitation program in a phased approach called Safe Start Visitation. This plan has a focus on making in-person visitation a safe environment with protection to ensure as little potential for exposure as possible for our incarcerated individuals, our visitors, and our staff.

Phase 1:

This is where we are currently: video visitation only. Between March 1, 2020 and July 1, 2020, individuals within DOC facilities had approximately 26,000 video visits with loved ones. However, we know there are ongoing limitations with the video visitation system, such as technological issues and scheduling issues.

Phase 2: The following rules will be in place for Phase 2, which is the next step:

- All visitors must be on approved list
- Up to two adults are allowed per visit
- Children under 18 not allowed to visit yet
- Visitors with serious underlying health conditions should not visit
- One visit per incarcerated individual per month
- Visits will be for one hour
- Visits will be scheduled in advance
- Visits will be scheduled by cohort
- Visits will be no-contact
- Visitors must answer screening questions and participate in temperature check
- Visitors must sign acknowledgement form with up-to-date contact info
- All visitors will be provided surgical masks that must be worn

***“Working Together for SAFER Communities”***

Phase 2 Continued:

- The following will not be in use:
  - Vending Machines
  - Water/Drinking Fountains
  - Games/Books
  - Children's Areas
  - Photos
  
- IMU/Restricted Housing Visits begin per normal scheduling process

Phase 3: Changes from Phase 2 to Phase 3 include the following:

- Up to two visitors per visit - one may be a child 8 years of age and older
  - Children's areas will remain closed
  - Child must remain with visitor at all times
- Up to two visits per incarcerated individual per month
- Visits will be for two hours
- Beverage vending open to visitors only

Phase 4: "New Normal"

In Phase 4, all no-contact barriers will be removed and all pre-COVID visitation practices will resume, as long as it has been deemed safe to do so. Extended Family Visits (EFVs) will resume in Phase 4 as well.

We know that family interaction and support is critical for success for those in our care. While we cannot know for sure how long we will be under modified practices, it is our hope that moving toward a new normal in a safe, healthy and thoughtful manner will help restore those things that are most meaningful.

No-contact barriers are currently being built, delivered, and installed at all facilities in visitation rooms. Once these are installed, and all other safety precautions have been established and implemented, a start date will be announced.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we continue to work through this in as safe a manner as possible.

AM/RC:jmc

Cc: Robert Herzog, Assistant Secretary, Prisons  
All Prisons Deputy Directors  
All Superintendents  
All Visitation Staff  
Safe Start Visitation Workgroup