



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
REENTRY
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUAL

REVISION DATE
1/12/22

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DOC 450.110

POLICY

TITLE
MAIL FOR INDIVIDUALS IN REENTRY CENTERS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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- Revised: 4/8/08
- Revised: 1/23/09
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- Revised: 3/26/12
- Revised: 10/20/14
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- Revised: 1/12/22

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Updated terminology throughout

APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

12/29/21

Date Signed

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REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals; DOC 440.010 Personal Property in Reentry Centers; DOC 450.050 Prohibited Contact; DOC 590.500 Legal Access for Incarcerated Individuals; [USPS Domestic Mail Manual](#)

POLICY:

- I. The Department has established procedures governing mail services for individuals in a Reentry Center. Regulations concerning correspondence will be available to employees, contract staff, incarcerated individuals, and their correspondents.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. Inspection
 - A. Incarcerated individuals will not handle or possess other incarcerated individual's mail.
 - B. Incoming and outgoing mail may be opened and inspected for contraband. Mail may be read or rejected based on legitimate facility interests of order and security. The individual(s) will be notified when incoming mail is returned or outgoing mail is withheld.
 - C. Individuals may be permitted uncensored correspondence if it poses no threat to the safety and security of the facility, public officials, or the general public, and is not being used for illegal activities.
 - D. If money is included within the mail, it will be removed and handled per DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals.
 - E. Packages will be opened by the individual in the presence of employees to prevent the introduction of contraband. Packages will comply with DOC 440.010 Personal Property in Reentry Centers.
 1. Letters inside packages will be forwarded to the case manager for review before issuing to the individual.
- II. Mail Between Incarcerated Individuals
 - A. Mail between individuals confined in any correctional facility will only be allowed when authorized by both Superintendents/Reentry Center Community Corrections Supervisors (CCSs)/facility administrator/designee. Individuals must meet at least one of the following requirements:

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- a. Are members of the same immediate family,
- b. Have a child together, as proven through a birth certificate and only if both individuals still have parental rights, and/or
- c. Are co-parties in an active legal case, or one individual is providing a witness statement in the other individual's active legal case.

B. The requesting individual will complete and submit DOC 21-746 Approval for Mail between Incarcerated Individuals to the case manager with any supporting documentation.

1. The case manager will verify that the request meets policy requirements and forward the request with any supporting documentation to the Reentry Center CCS for a final decision.
2. Approvals may be accepted by any receiving facility upon an individual's transfer.

C. The approval may be revoked at any time by either Superintendent/Reentry Center CCS/facility administrator.

III. Unauthorized Incoming Mail

A. Mail will not be allowed if it contains:

1. Threats of physical harm against any person or any other threats of criminal activity,
2. Sexually explicit materials, and/or
3. Any type of contraband.

B. The individual will be notified using DOC 05-826 Reentry Center Mail Rejection Notice if any portion of the mail is restricted/returned.

C. Substantiated allegations of staff sexual misconduct will result in mail, including eMessaging, restrictions between the employee/contract staff/volunteer and incarcerated individuals per DOC 450.050 Prohibited Contact.

IV. Legal Mail

A. Incarcerated individuals have the ability to correspond by means of legal mail. Legal mail must meet the following requirements and is subject to inspection to ensure the contents qualify as legal mail:

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1. Legal mail must be correspondence to or from one of the following, as indicated in the mailing address or return address on the front of the envelope:
 - a. Any court or opposing attorney/party, the Washington State Bar Association, the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board, the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services Office of Risk Management, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) auditors certified by the United States Department of Justice, the Headquarters PREA Coordinator, and/or Just Detention International.
 - b. PREA auditor leads certified by the United States Department of Justice when related to an audit in process at the individual's facility.
 - c. The President or Vice President of the United States, members of the United States Congress, embassies and consulates, the United States Department of Justice, Attorney General's Office, governors, members of the state legislature, and law enforcement officers in their official capacity.
 - d. The attorney of record (i.e., defense attorney) in court cases that have been filed in a local, state, or federal court.
 - e. An attorney corresponding with an individual concerning legal advice, including established groups of attorneys representing the individual (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union, Disability Rights Washington, legal service corporations, public defender associations).
 2. The front of the envelope must be clearly marked "Legal Mail", "Attorney/Client", "Confidential", or similar.
 - a. Incoming mail readily identifiable as being from a court will be handled as legal mail, regardless of whether it has been marked legal mail.
 - b. Documents sent from any Public Disclosure Unit are not considered legal mail.
- B. Legal mail may only contain paper documents that are legal in nature and must comply with DOC 590.500 Legal Access for Incarcerated Individuals. Legal mail

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does not include eMessages or their attachments and will not be processed as legal mail.

C. Legal Mail Procedures

1. Incoming legal mail will be opened in the individual's presence by the case manager. Contents that do not meet legal mail requirements and/or contain contraband or any material that would threaten facility order/ security will be rejected.
 - a. The case manager may confiscate/retain the envelope if necessary for safety and security reasons and will not require a mail rejection notice. The individual may request a copy of the envelope.
 - b. Incoming legal mail may contain a postage paid, pre-addressed envelope for the individual to return documents/responses to the sender.
 - c. An employee who inadvertently opens a piece of legal mail will write the employee's initials and that it was unintentionally opened on the envelope.
 - d. If an individual refuses to accept legal mail, the case manager will document the refusal as a chronological entry in the electronic file with the time, date, sender's name, and individual's name. The mail will be stamped "Refused by Incarcerated Individual - Return to Sender".

V. Outgoing Mail

- A. Individuals will be responsible for the postage costs of their outgoing mail, including legal mail.
- B. Individuals may be provided Community Services Revolving Fund (CSRF) loans per DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals to assist in managing their transition back into the community, which includes assuming responsibility for postage costs for outgoing mail.

VI. The Office of the Corrections Ombuds Mail

- A. Mail to/from the Office of the Corrections Ombuds will be treated as privileged and confidential.

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B. Employees will follow the Office of the Corrections Ombuds guidelines when processing mail to/from the Office of the Corrections Ombuds and incarcerated individuals.

1. Mail will arrive in a light green envelope.
2. Incoming mail will be opened in the individual's presence, inspected, and issued by the case manager.
3. Outgoing mail must:
 - a. Clearly show the correct address for the Office of the Corrections Ombuds.
 - b. Have a return address belonging to the sender.
 - c. Not be opened by employees.
4. Employees will not document sending, receiving, or issuing mail to/from the Office of the Corrections Ombuds.

VII. Forwarding Mail

- A. Individuals will inform their correspondents of a change of address and provide the facility with the forwarding address.
1. Facilities will forward first class mail for a period of 90 days if a forwarding address is available.
 - a. If the mail is unopened, the new address will be noted on the envelope and returned to the United States Postal Service (USPS) for forwarding. State funds will not be used to forward unopened mail.
 - b. Opened first class mail will be placed in an envelope and mailed to the new address at the facility's expense.
 2. Periodicals may be returned to the sender per USPS Domestic Mail Manual.

DEFINITIONS:

The following words/terms are important to this policy and are defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual: Immediate Family, Legal Mail, Mail, Sexually Explicit Materials. Other words/terms appearing in this policy may also be defined in the glossary section.



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ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

DOC 05-826 Reentry Center Mail Rejection Notice

DOC 21-746 Approval for Mail between Incarcerated Individuals