

Dept. of Corrections: Lifting suspension on in-person visits

Posted on Friday, Feb 25, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) announced Friday that it is reopening its facilities for in-person visitation starting Tuesday March 1, due to a continued decrease in COVID-19 activity.

“We appreciate the patience and understanding of those in our care and their loved ones as we have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic,” said DOC Sec. Kevin A. Carr. “Family connection during incarceration has shown to have a positive impact on success upon return to the community, and in-person visitation is one way of maintaining that connection.”

As of Thursday, Feb. 24, there were 77 active COVID-19 infections among people in DOC care and 22 DOC employees with active cases across the entire agency. In addition, 83% of people currently in DOC care have completed their initial vaccine series, and more than 69% of those eligible for a booster dose have received one. This data and more can be found on Wisconsin DOC’s COVID-19 Information Home page.

In addition to in-person visits from approved visitors:

Attorney and professional visits will resume March 1 All volunteers/contractors will again be allowed access to DOC facilities March 1 Resumption of programming facilitated by volunteers/contractors can also resume beginning March 1 Medical offsite visits will no longer be subject to case-by-case evaluation and potential limitation starting March 1 Anyone visiting a DOC correctional institution or center will be subject to any current guidance related to masking and testing.

This marks the second time DOC has reopened for in-person visits since the

beginning of the pandemic. After initially closing its facilities to all but necessary personnel in March of 2020, the agency reopened its doors for in-person visits in July of 2021. However, access to DOC facilities was limited again in December 2021 when infections from the Omicron variant swept across the state.

“Of course, we’re happy to resume many normal operations, and we hope there are no more suspensions of those operations. However, we have and will continue to follow the science in our COVID-19 mitigation efforts.”

With in-person visits suspended for much of the past year, DOC has offered two free phone calls per week to those in its care. The agency also worked to install video conferencing systems in its facilities to help loved ones stay connected, and that option will remain in place. While in-person visits are resuming, some DOC facilities may modify visitation days/times as needed.

Wisconsin’s Division of Adult Institutions cares for nearly 20,000 incarcerated across 36 institutions and correctional centers across the state.