



# NEWS RELEASE

## DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

### Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson, Jr.

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Presented by **Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations**

245 McKee Road | Dover, DE 19904 | Office: 302.857.5232 | [jason.miller@delaware.gov](mailto:jason.miller@delaware.gov)

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## Department of Correction temporarily places limits on in-person visitation as a precaution amid increased COVID-19 transmission in the community

**Dover, DE** – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) announced today that in-person visitation to all of its Level V prison and Level IV work release and violation of probation facilities is now limited to one adult visitor per inmate. All visitors will be offered a surgical face mask upon their arrival and will be encouraged to wear it while in DOC facilities. These measures are being taken as proactive steps amid the increase in COVID-19 cases in the community to reduce the risk of transmission to inmates and staff.

The Department of Correction has continued to follow its comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation protocols which were introduced in March, 2020 and have been updated more than a dozen times with the latest best practices and public health guidance. DOC's COVID-19 protocols feature testing and quarantine of new arrivals to DOC facilities, testing and quarantine of inmates who exhibit symptoms of illness and inmates who have had sustained contact with COVID-positive individuals, ongoing cleaning and air purification of DOC facilities, and continual education and access to COVID vaccination and booster shots. Face masks are being provided to inmates and staff and face masks have remained required in all areas where medical care is provided and in COVID isolation and quarantine units.

DOC COVID-19 inmate testing and vaccination highlights:

- The DOC continues to aggressively employ inmate COVID-19 testing and **more than 35,500 inmate tests have been administered** since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- DOC's inmate COVID-19 vaccinations began in January, 2021. **59% of current inmates in DOC custody have received at least partial COVID-19 vaccination and 1,629 current inmates who are eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster have received a booster shot. Meanwhile, 2,208 inmates have been released after receiving COVID-19 vaccination while in DOC custody.**

- Review additional updated information about COVID-19 cases on the DOC website at [https://doc.delaware.gov/assets/documents/Confirmed\\_COVID\\_Cases.pdf](https://doc.delaware.gov/assets/documents/Confirmed_COVID_Cases.pdf)

“The health and safety of our officers, staff, visitors and the individuals under our supervision remains our top priority,” said **Department of Correction Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson Jr.** “While our comprehensive COVID-19 screening, testing and mitigation measures have continued to work effectively we are temporarily taking the additional step of limiting in-person inmate visitation to one adult visitor to further reduce the risk of transmission.”

The number of inmate and DOC staff cases of COVID-19, which remained at near zero for months, has risen in recent weeks but remains relatively low. As of May 26, 30 inmates across all DOC facilities statewide have known active cases of COVID-19, of whom only two have minor symptoms of illness. Over the past several months most inmate COVID-19 cases have been identified through proactive testing administered upon inmates' arrival at DOC facilities from the community or through weekly testing of work release participants. As of May 26, 18 DOC employees have known active cases of COVID-19.

These COVID-related visitation changes will be reviewed within two weeks and will be lifted as soon as it is safe to do so.

The DOC offers a variety of phone and video visitation to inmates in order to facilitate family and community support that is important to their wellbeing. During the COVID-19 pandemic the DOC sped up and completed a multi-year technology project to expand video visitation to all Level V prison facilities. DOC is implementing a project to expand video visitation to Level IV work release and violation of probation facilities this year.