



Commission of Correction

ALLEN RILEY
Chairman

THOMAS J. LOUGHREN
Commissioner

CHAIRMAN'S MEMORANDUM

NO: 4-2020

DATE: March 20, 2020

TO: SHERIFFS, COMMISSIONERS OF CORRECTION, JAIL ADMINISTRATORS, WARDENS, JAIL PHYSICIANS, FACILITY MEDICAL DIRECTORS, CHIEFS OF POLICE, AND SSD FACILITY DIRECTORS

RE: Health Advisory: COVID-19 Guidance on Supervision of the Incarcerated Population

The following guidance for local correctional facilities is based on the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Department of Health (DOH) recommendations for preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus of 2019 disease (COVID-19) and the management of Persons Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19.

This memorandum will provide guidance on the supervision of:

- Individuals in **general population**;
- Individuals **quarantined** due to responses provided during the screening process;
- Individuals **quarantined** because they came into contact with an individual who is suspected of or tested positive for COVID-19;
- Individuals who are displaying **symptoms** consistent with COVID-19; and
- Individuals who tested **positive** for COVID-19.

Please review this information with your agency leadership and staff and make any necessary adjustments to your policies and procedures in response to this rapidly evolving health crisis. Congregate facilities are especially at risk for the spread of communicable diseases due to the number of individuals living in close proximity to one another. Facilities must take steps to minimize the risk of an outbreak of COVID-19.

SCOC encourages local correctional facilities to monitor the websites for the CDC, NYS DOH and your respective local health department for new information about COVID-19. Additionally, we urge you to remain in close communication with SCOC staff who have been instructed to immediately elevate COVID-19 questions and concerns.

GENERAL POPULATION SUPERVISION

Existing supervision requirements should be observed. Facilities should adhere to cleaning and disinfecting guidance that is available on the NYS DOH COVID-19 website: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>. Social Distancing should be maintained between staff members and the incarcerated population. A distance of six feet between all individuals is

recommended. While this may present a challenge depending on the physical layout of a facility (e.g. linear, direct supervision), every effort should be made to maintain such distance.

QUARANTINE SUPERVISION

The following guidance is provided for situations where an individual is quarantined as a precaution because of responses provided during a screening process or where a person came into contact with an individual who is suspected of or tested positive for COVID-19:

- Cell Supervision – Social Distancing should be maintained between staff members and incarcerated individuals. A distance of six feet between individuals is recommended. In housing areas consisting of cells with open bars, supervisory visits should be conducted from the “cat-walk” area, if one exists. If necessary, lighting should be adjusted (or flashlights should be used) to ensure adequate visibility. In housing areas consisting of solid doors, supervisory visits can be conducted through the door window. Food slots/cuff ports should be closed when not in use.
- Dayspace Supervision – Social Distancing should be maintained between staff members and incarcerated individuals, and between the incarcerated people themselves. A distance of six feet between all individuals is recommended. While this can present a challenge depending on the physical layout of a facility (e.g. linear, direct supervision), every effort should be made to maintain such distance.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMATIC/POSITIVE SUPERVISION

The following guidance is provided for situations where an incarcerated individual is isolated because he or she is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g. cough, fever, trouble breathing, or pneumonia) or has tested positive for COVID-19:

- Staff assigned to supervise in the same room as such inmates should be wearing Personal Protect Equipment (PPE) such as appropriate masks, gloves, goggles, etc., and any additional PPE required by their department.
- While wearing the necessary PPE in such situations, Social Distancing is not necessary, regardless of the type of housing area configuration or interaction (i.e., supervisory visits).

Additional guidance concerning healthcare precautions should be discussed with your local health department.



Allen Riley, Chairman