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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members  
From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary  
Date: April 14, 2021  
Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

This Sunday, April 18th is the first day for in-person visitation in over a year at our facilities. Reestablishing in-person visiting is an early indicator of where we are in the pandemic and our focus on easing our way toward a return to some normalization of our operations. There are a number of changes to the in-person visitation process and procedures at each facility to address the health and safety concerns surrounding COVID-19. A copy of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is included with this message, and information is posted at <https://www.doc.ks.gov/visitation-in-person>. The website includes links to information from each facility, phone numbers for more information and links to KDOC policies on approved visitors and visitation.

In the last week, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) delivered several totes of checks that we estimate to include nearly 3,000 Economic Impact Payments (EIP) issued by the IRS to residents. These are accompanied by a similar number of separate letters from the IRS. Much like those of us living in the community, we understand that each of our residents is anxious to receive those funds, however the sheer volume of checks received, and the tasks required to process them for receipt is overwhelming. Each check must be opened, then recorded on the resident's account and deposited. All of this must be done before the resident then makes a request to distribute the funds.

This time-consuming process must be done while the normal day-to-day transactions are maintained. We are also continuing to receive smaller numbers of first and second round EIP checks. Even with approval for staff overtime and volunteers from other units who will delay their work to help out, we are looking at several weeks to process the checks on hand and are assuming more will continue to arrive. Please know that sending Form 9's, e-mails and phone calls to inquire about the funds will only divert staff from processing these checks.

While the number of COVID-19 positive cases within KDOC continues to decline, the pandemic is far from over. There are daily media reports of areas experiencing increases, and while progress is continuing on vaccinations our society has long way to go. We will continue to post COVID-19 numbers and vaccination details are available on our website at <https://www.doc.ks.gov/kdoc-coronavirus-updates>. These are also sent to residents in twice-weekly memos. Please continue to do your part to keep our numbers low by wearing masks, social distancing whenever possible, practicing good hygiene and frequent hand washing.



**Kansas Department of Corrections**  
**In-Person Visitation **Frequently Asked Questions****  
**Updated April 14, 2021**

**1. When will in person visitation resume at KDOC facilities?**

Beginning April 18, 2021, the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) will resume in-person visitation at all facilities. Visitation will be limited in the number of visitors, length and frequency of visits and include multiple COVID-19 mitigation strategies for both visitors and residents. These will remain in effect as long as necessary and will be reviewed and changed as necessary based on the continued impact of COVID-19 across Kansas and/or the experience with the resumption of visitation.

**2. Is visitation resuming at all facilities?**

Yes. Beginning April 18, 2021, all adult facilities and the one juvenile facility operated by KDOC will resume in-person visitation. Visitation will be limited in the number of visitors, length and frequency of visits.

**3. What days will visitation occur at KDOC facilities?**

Sunday April 18, 2021 was selected to phase in visitation with newly implemented scheduling processes and necessary COVID-19 mitigation strategies. The following weekend, April 24 and 25 will be the first Saturday and Sunday visitation weekend. Days may vary by facility. Currently, only the Winfield Correctional Facility has expanded visitation to Fridays (beginning April 23<sup>rd</sup>) and Mondays (beginning April 26<sup>th</sup>) as added options.

**4. What hours will visitation occur each day?**

As was the case pre-COVID-19, visitation hours vary for each facility. Visitors can see the hours for the facility they wish to visit using the online schedule available at [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com)

**5. Will I be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a mask? If so, do I have to bring my own mask.**

Yes. No visitor will be allowed to visit unless they wear a mask upon entry to any facility building and for the duration of the visit. The mask must be kept on at all times and cover the mouth and nose. Visitors must provide their own mask. Children age two and up must wear a mask at all times.

**6. Will I be tested for the coronavirus before being allowed to visit a resident?**

No. We are aware that some states are requiring visitors to complete a 15-minute rapid COVID-19 test prior to entry, but KDOC has not adopted this requirement. Prior to being admitted to the facility, KDOC will require visitors to have their temperature taken along with asking each visitor a series of questions about symptoms or contact with anyone within the last 14 days who is suspected of having the virus.

Visitors who do not pass this screening will be denied admission to the facility and the visit canceled.

**7. Can anyone show up to visit on the day(s) visitation is scheduled?**

No. Only those approved visitors who have scheduled a visitation appointment using the online visitation scheduler [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com) or by contacting the facility visitation clerk. Scheduling will close **72 hours** before visitation begins at the facility for that week. Anyone who has not followed this process will be denied access to the facility.

**8. Are children allowed to visit?**

Yes. KDOC recognizes that in-person visitation is especially beneficial for children and their parents. We have developed visitation processes that we believe can safely allow visitation of any age child. The child will count as one of the two visitors per resident.

**9. Are older visitors allowed to visit?**

Yes. KDOC recognizes that many residents have older family members and we have developed visitation processes that we believe can safely allow visitation by any age adult.

**10. How do I sign up for a visit?**

New to the visitation process is the requirement to schedule all in-person visits through an online scheduling software. This software is supported through [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com) and the visit must be scheduled at least **72 hours** before visitation begins at the facility for that week.

For those who do not have access to the internet or prefer to schedule through a staff member, that can be done by contacting the visitation clerk at the facility you wish to visit. This must also be done at least **72 hours** before the scheduled visit. Please call the main number at the facility and ask to speak with the visitation clerk. More information is available at <https://www.doc.ks.gov/visitation-in-person>

**11. How far in advance do I have to schedule an in-person visitation?**

Scheduling will close **72 hours** before visitation begins at the facility for that week.

**12. If I do not have access to the internet to schedule a visit, can I contact the facility to schedule a visit?**

Yes. We understand that not everyone has access to technology or prefers not to use technology for similar activities. An in-person visit may be scheduled by contacting the visitation clerk at the facility you wish to visit. This must also be done a minimum **72 hours** before the scheduled visit. Please see <https://www.doc.ks.gov/visitation-in-person>

**13. How long can I visit with my resident on the day I arrive?**

As was the case pre-COVID-19, visitation hours vary for each facility. As we resume in-person visitation, the duration of visits will be shorter than in the past to provide opportunity for a greater number of families to visit and to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions. Facilities will limit visitation time to one (1) to two and a half (2.5) hours. You can see allowed length of visit for the facility you will be visiting in the visitation scheduler [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com).

**14. How often will I be able to visit my resident in the coming weeks?**

To support social distancing in the visitation area, in-person visitation requires fewer visitors in the visitation areas and a shorter period of time for each visit. This is being done to protect the health and safety of visitors, residents and staff in the visitation areas. To increase the opportunity for everyone, initially visits will be allowed no more than once every two weeks per resident. As we experience the demand for in-person visitation we will adjust this limitation if possible.

Updated 04.14.21 The limitation of once every two weeks has been expanded to once a week.

**15. Do I need to notify someone if my plans change last minute and I will not be taking part in a visit?**

We understand that circumstances can require a last-minute cancelation of a scheduled visit. Should that occur for you, please return to the visitation scheduler [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com) and record your cancelation. Please also note that to not disrupt the visit of other families, no rescheduling or switching of a scheduled time for the visit can be accommodated. You will need to reschedule using the online scheduler for another day/time.

**16. If I arrive late for my visit, will I still be able to see my resident?**

If a visitor does not arrive by the time of their scheduled visit every effort will be made to allow the visitor and resident to visit for the remaining portion of the scheduled visit. But to ensure access of other families, we are unable to accommodate extending the visit longer than was scheduled. For example, if a visit was scheduled for 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and the visitor arrives at 10:30a.m., the visit length will be the remaining one hour and conclude at 11:30 a.m.

**17. Can I visit without signing up in advance using the registration software?**

No. Only visitors who have a scheduled appointment will be allowed entry into the facility. You may schedule that appointment using [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com) or by contacting the visitation clerk at the facility you wish to visit. Only persons who are already an approved visitor through KDOC visitor approval process will be allowed to schedule using these methods. Information on the application to visitation privileges can be found at <https://www.doc.ks.gov/visitation-in-person>.

**18. How many visitors will be allowed for each resident?**

To support social distancing of visitors, residents and staff in the visitation areas, in-person visitation will be limited to two (2) visitors per visit. As we experience the demand for in-person visitation we will adjust this limitation if possible.

**19. How many people will be allowed into visitation rooms at the same time?**

The number of persons will vary by facility based on the visitation area. Each facility will limit the number of visitors and residents in the room to no more than half of historical capacity levels. This is necessary to support social distancing of visitors, residents, and staff in the visitation areas.

**20. What practices will be in place in the visitation room to protect me from exposure to the coronavirus and my resident?**

The health of every visitor, resident and staff member taking part in in-person visitation is a high priority. Each visitor will be required to have their temperature taken along with being asked a series of questions about symptoms or contact with anyone within the last 14 days who is suspected of having the virus. If symptoms or a fever are present, access to the facility will be denied and the visit canceled. We encourage any visitor to be healthy and mindful of this requirement before traveling to the facility.

Once you enter the visitation area, expect to see fewer tables and social distancing of groups of residents and their families. All persons in the room will be required to wear masks over their mouth and nose at all times. Plexiglas barriers will be in use and no physical contact will be allowed.

**21. Will I be able to buy food or drinks from vending machines at the facility?**

No food or vending machines will be allowed at this time. Consuming food or drink would require the removal of masks and this is not allowed during the visit. As with other in-person visitation limitations, allowing food and/or drink will be reevaluated with each step of the reopening process.

**22. How much physical contact can I have with my resident during the visit?**

We understand that residents and visitors want to be able to have contact, but at this time we will be unable to accommodate that activity. Resuming in-person visitation exposes the facility residents and staff to visitors who have unknown health conditions with potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus prior to arriving for the visit. Prohibiting physical contact is one mitigation strategy we will employ so that we can resume and continue in-person visitation.

**23. Will residents have to pass medical screening or a coronavirus test before the visit?**

No. KDOC residents and staff continue to use multiple mitigation strategies each day, including surveillance COVID-19 testing. Therefore, it will not be necessary to subject them to screening specific to visitation. However, all visitors will be expected to have their temperatures taken along with being asked a series of questions about symptoms or contact with anyone within the last 14 days being suspected of having the virus. Visitors who do not pass this screening will be denied admission to the facility and the visit canceled.

**24. With in-person visitation resuming, will residents still have free phone calls and video visits?**

Free phone calls and video visits will continue for now. The resumption of in-person visitation requires KDOC to limit the number of visitors and duration of visits, and we recognize that not all residents will be able to have in-person visitation as often as they could pre-COVID-19. At some point in time, these free services may have to be ended, but at this time they will continue.

**25. Why is KDOC changing how in-person visitation is done?**

The changes to in-person visitation are necessary so that we can resume in-person visitation. Public health officials tell us that the COVID-19 virus continues to be present in our communities, state, nation and worldwide. This required KDOC to develop mitigation strategies for in-person visitation. We are excited to welcome visitors back to our facilities, but the risk of further introduction of the virus into our facilities continues to exist.

**26. Are these changes to in-person visitation permanent?**

We expect that some COVID-19 mitigation strategies could remain in place for the foreseeable future, and perhaps permanently, much like they may remain in society as a whole. We are unable to predict what those may be, but we will continue any that are advised by public health officials.

The use of the visitation online scheduler was an initiative that was delayed by the pandemic and was planned for use prior to the pandemic. This technology improves the efficiency of the process for the department and will hopefully improve the process for visitors. The online scheduler will be a permanent part of the visitation process until such time as another technology or process improvement is identified.

**27. I am currently registered for video visits through ICSolutions. Do I have to re-register or take some action to be approved for in-person visitation?**

One registration is used for both video and in-person visitation at [www.icsolutions.com](http://www.icsolutions.com) . Those approved visitors who are already a registered user on ICSolutions do not need to take any additional steps to register for in-person visitation, but you do need to visit the site to schedule a visit when you are ready to do so.

**28. What is the difference between in-person contact and in person non-contact visitation on the ICSolutions brochure and software?**

In-person visitation allows both residents and visitors to be physically present at the facility during visitation. Covid-19 mitigation protocols will be strictly enforced, and individuals will be seated appropriately in groups in the visitation room. Residents and/or visitors who have visitation restrictions in place such as noncontact status shall be able to visit in person. However, they will be required to be separated via a non-contact visitation booth.

All in-person visitation will be non-contact at this time. These features are listed in the ICSolutions materials as services they offer and could be used in Kansas in the future.

**29. Are visitors required to have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and prove that with their vaccination record? What about vaccination status of residents who wish to have in-person visits?**

No. We encourage everyone to get the vaccination to help reduce their individual risk for infection and to contribute the overall public health safety in Kansas, but there is no requirement to do so for in-person visitation at our facilities by either the visitor or resident.

**30. Are there any limitations on who can take part in in-person visitation?**

Yes. As the number of persons and number of visits per day must be limited at this time, we want to ensure that residents and their immediate family have the opportunity for visits before we extend visitation to more distant family members, friends, etc.

At this time in-person visits will be limited to parents, step-parents, siblings, spouses of siblings, half-siblings, step-siblings, children, step-children, spouse, parents of spouse, grandparents, or any person who filled the role of parent de facto with respect to the resident as confirmed by the warden/superintendent upon review of the social history, and only for adults the resident has identified as their primary visitor.

Updated 04.14.21 This limitation has been lifted.