



Issue Brief

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Coronavirus Screening, Notification, and Release Process

Overview

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) established a Pre-release Planning Workgroup to develop an effective novel coronavirus (COVID-19) screening, notification, and release process for adults in custody (AICs). The workgroup included employees from Health Services, Re-entry and Release, and Community Corrections.

The workgroup reached out to all 50 states and the Bureau of Prisons to research what they are doing in response to COVID-19. The team also collaborated with local health and community corrections partners to appropriately plan for release.

Releases

Scheduled releases of AICs will continue as usual. DOC releases AICs to their county of residence. This is usually the county where the AIC resided when the offense occurred resulting in incarceration. (This authority can be found in Oregon Revised Statute 144.270 and Oregon Administrative Rule 255-070-0003.)

The only program that can impact an individual's release date is an Alternative Incarceration Program. All other programming suspended or modified due to COVID-19 will not affect release dates.

DOC continues to operate the Short-term Transitional Leave (STTL) program. There have been no changes to approval criteria or processes.

One of the key criteria for STTL participation is securing approved housing prior to release. All AICs releasing to a personal address (non-shelter or transition bed), should see no interruption in their release to STTL. Some counties are experiencing a sharp decline in the availability of shelter, transitional, or subsidy housing beds as housing providers are attempting to manage social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus. This includes attempts to operate at 50 percent capacity and not accepting new intakes.

Pre-release screening process

On the morning of release, Receiving and Discharge and Health Services employees at each DOC institution will complete a COVID-19 pre-release screening form to assess risk for potential COVID-19. Questions include whether the AIC is showing COVID-19 symptoms, and if they have had contact with a confirmed case within the last two weeks.

A copy of the screening form will be provided to the releasing AIC and uploaded in the Offender Management System (OMS) for the appropriate county community corrections agency.

The releasing AIC will also be educated on proper hygiene procedures and receive a mask if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms.

Notification

If a positive or suspected COVID-19 case is identified during the screening process, DOC will notify the local public health authority and provide them with contact info for the Community Corrections Director or designee within the county of release. DOC will also contact that local Community Corrections Director or designee.

In addition to the pre-release screening process, a Community Medical Care Level (CMCL) form will be completed by Health Services on any AIC within 14 days of release who is determined to be positive or suspected COVID-19 case, recently recovered from COVID, or had close contact with a positive case. In these cases, DOC will notify the local public health authority and provide them with contact info for the Community Corrections Director or designee within the county of release. DOC will also contact that local Community Corrections Director or designee.

DOC has designated a webpage to share regular COVID-19 updates, a list of frequently asked questions, a case tracker with AIC and staff information for each institution, and a list of publications, which can be found on DOC's website at:

www.oregon.gov/doc/covid19.

**The mission of the
Oregon Department of Corrections
is to promote public safety by
holding offenders accountable for
their actions and reducing the risk
of future criminal behavior.**



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