



## GUIDE TO: VISITS

For those in Pennsylvania DOC Facilities

**QUESTION:** *What are the restrictions when it comes to visiting?*

**ANSWER:** People incarcerated in DOC facilities are allowed to have visitors after they have been incarcerated for a certain defined period of time. All visitors must be approved and recorded on the “Authorized Visitors” list (**form DC-311A**).

However, there are certain visitors who will not be allowed without the Facility Manager’s approval. These visitors are: 1) a previously incarcerated person in any correctional system; 2) someone currently under probation or parole supervision; 3) a currently incarcerated person in pre-release 4); a current or former Department of Corrections (DOC) employee; 5) a current, active volunteer of the DOC; 6) a current or former contract DOC employee; 7) a victim of the crime that led to the incarceration; 8) anyone who has an active Protection from Abuse (PFA) order against them; and 9) someone who has had their visiting privileges suspended. Each facility has **different days and times** for visiting. However, being found with drugs or testing positive for drugs **can lead to a suspension** on having visitors. Also, any visitors found with contraband can be banned from visiting.

YOU DESERVE TO SEE YOUR LOVED ONES

### HOW LONG CAN VISITORS BE RESTRICTED

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> Offense? Six months
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense? 12 months
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense? Indefinite suspension

**ACTION STEPS:** *What can be done to get visitors approved?*

Please note that all requests are subject to the approval of the facility manager.

1. Complete the “Authorized Visitors List” (**form DC-311A**).
2. To complete the form, list every visitor’s:
  - a. full name;
  - b. gender;
  - c. relationship to the person they’re visiting;
  - d. address; AND
  - e. whether they are a formerly incarcerated person (county/state/federal), are currently or were previously on probation or parole, are involved in your current

This letter does not constitute legal assistance or advice, just information. It is possible that the information has changed since the letter was created.

If you have legal questions, you are urged to contact a lawyer or your local Bar Association.

or past offense(s), are a current or former DOC employee, or are a volunteer or contract employee for the DOC

3. Submit to the Facility Manager for approval.

### **ACTION STEPS:** *What can be done if a visitor is prohibited?*

Please again note that all requests are subject to the approval of the facility manager. If a visitor is prohibited, an incarcerated person can:

1. Submit a request slip to their counselor identifying the visitor by name, relationship, and status (currently or formerly incarcerated, released on parole, DOC employee, etc.); and
2. Get a recommendation from someone in their unit team.

### **ACTION STEPS:** *What can be done if visiting privileges have been wrongly denied?*

1. A person can **file a grievance** with an "Official Inmate Grievance Form" (**form DC-804 Part 1**).
  - ❖ It is always a good idea to send copies of grievances to someone on the outside to keep the records safe, but do not send originals because these cannot be returned.

### **OTHER THINGS TO KNOW:**

- ❖ Any changes to the approved list (**form DC-311A**) must be made by filling out and submitting a "Supplementary Approved Visitors" form (**form DC-312A**) at times specified by the facility.
- ❖ Prohibiting visiting rights cannot be used as a disciplinary measure for an unrelated facility rule violation. However, visiting rights can be restricted as a result of changes in housing or custody level that stem from an unrelated violation.

### **MORE RESOURCES:**

1. **Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project:** civil legal resources for incarcerated people  
718 Arch St. #304S, Philadelphia PA 19106 --- 215-925-2966  
100 Fifth Ave, Suite 900, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 --- 412-434-6175  
115 Farley Circle, Suite 110, Lewisburg, PA 17837 – 570-523-1104
2. **Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual:** handbook of legal rights and procedures, available for order at: <http://jlm.law.columbia.edu/order-the-jlm/> for \$30 for incarcerated people

**YOU DESERVE TO HAVE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE**