

State of Iowa Department of Corrections

Policy and Procedures

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Applicability: CBC

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Chapter 12: COMMUNITY-BASED CORRECTIONS

Sub Chapter: N/A

Related DOC Policies: [AD-IS-05](#), [AD-TS-04](#), [CBC-01](#), [CBC-06](#), CBC-15, [CBC-HRU-10](#)

Administrative Code Reference: N/A

Subject: HOME VISITS AND FIELD CONTACTS

PREA Standards: N/A

Responsibility: Beth Skinner

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Authority:

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) staff to follow when conducting home visits and making contacts in the field. This policy is grounded in research, prioritizes staff safety, aligns with national best practices, and supports effective and equitable community supervision across all districts.

2. POLICY

It is a policy of the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) to utilize home visits and field contacts to help the department understand the environment in which a client lives, works, and associates.

3. DEFINITIONS - As used in this document:

- A. Home Visit - An in-person visit to a client's residence for compliance monitoring, accountability, and relationship-building.
- B. Field Contact - Any contact with a client outside the office (e.g., employment, treatment, or other public location).
- C. Pre-Placement/Home Placement Investigation (HPI) - Review of a proposed residence in the community.
- D. Authorized Staff - IDOC staff which are Certified High Risk Unit Officers or otherwise trained per this policy to conduct home visits and field contacts.
- E. Review of Risk - A review of client's record, including prior violence, non-compliance, current living conditions, to anticipate and mitigate potential threats to staff safety.

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4. PROCEDURES

A. Purpose of Home Visits and Field Contacts

Home visits and field contacts are essential for:

1. Verifying client residence and living conditions.
2. Ensuring compliance with supervision terms.
3. Supporting client rehabilitation.

4. Building relationships, trust, and rapport with the client and their family.
5. Gathering collateral and environmental information to inform case planning.
6. Promote accountability and public safety.

B. Staff Requirements and Training

1. Home visits and field contacts shall be performed by Authorized Staff. At minimum, Authorized Staff are required to complete:
 - a. IDOC NEO Training per IDOC policy **AD-TS-04**, *Orientation and New Employee Training*.
 - b. "Home Visit Best Practices" eLearning
 - c. Other scenario-based or facility training as required per local procedures.
2. Only Iowa Law Enforcement Certified High Risk Unit Officers shall conduct a home visit by themselves.
3. Home Visits - Non-certified (non-sworn) staff shall conduct home visits in pairs.
 - a. Staff who have not yet completed all the training required may be paired with an Authorized Staff per approval by the District Director/designee.
 - b. Authorized Staff may also coordinate with local law enforcement agencies to supplement pairing of staff.
4. Field Contacts - A single Authorized Staff may conduct a field contact to a public location.
5. All home visits and field contacts shall be compliant with constitutional rights and IDOC policy **CBC-01**, *Assessment, Case Management and Supervision Standards*.

C. Staff Safety & Review of Risk (Home visits)

1. Notify law enforcement dispatch (if required) before exiting the vehicle and upon return.
2. A communication check-in/out process shall be followed to ensure designated staff are aware of locations at all times.
 - a. Submit a plan to their supervisor/designee listing names, addresses, and estimated return times for scheduled visits per local per procedures.
 - b. Staff shall maintain communication via radio or cell phone throughout the visit.
3. Confirm where registered victims live, no contact orders, those with residency restrictions.
4. Ballistic vests shall be worn during home visits if requested and issued by the department.
5. A review of risk shall consider client behavior, substance use/abuse history, mental health stability, and any known threats. (i.e., supervision level, client behavior, criminal history, propensity for violence, known associates, nature of site location and surroundings.
6. If determined unsafe, staff shall terminate the visit and document accordingly.
7. Any safety concerns should be relayed to pertinent staff immediately via phone, email, generic note documentation, shift logs, or other methods as determined by local procedures immediately prior to staff ending their shift; with full documentation completed within 24 hours.

D. Legal Compliance & Search Authority

1. Consent is required for home entry unless reasonable and articulable suspicion is present.
2. Probation/Parole agreements do not override Fourth Amendment protections.¹ Staff may only observe items in plain view (immediately visible). Staff shall not open doors, drawers, or containers without consent or reasonable suspicion.

¹ <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-4/>

3. Refusals to allow entry may be considered a violation of the probation/parole agreement, but do not justify warrantless or forced entry.

E. Documentation

All home visits and field contacts shall be documented in ICON under Security Standards within three business days or as defined in local procedures.