

State of Iowa Department of Corrections Policy and Procedures

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Chapter 1: Administration & Management

Sub Chapter: General Administration

Related DOC Policies: NA

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Subject: Incarcerated Individual & Staff Communications

PRE Standards: NA

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1. PURPOSE

To give a general description of the processes used to ensure that constructive communications are maintained in the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) institutions.

2. POLICY

Maintaining open, positive and effective communications between and among staff and incarcerated individuals is a key component in the achievement of the Department's mission of Creating Opportunities for Safer Communities.

To that end, it is the policy of the IDOC to maintain systems of communication and a Department-wide culture that foster:

1. Open, positive communication between employees of all levels and functions;
2. Effective communication of rules, regulations, policies, procedures and expectations of the institution to incarcerated individuals;
3. Open, positive communication between incarcerated individuals and staff.

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3. DEFINITIONS – See IDOC Policy AD-GA-16 for Definitions.

4. PROCEDURES

Establishing and maintaining lines of communication between and among incarcerated individuals and staff is vital. These lines of communication shall include the use of regularly scheduled meetings; tours; written communications; the development of positive, healthy, professional relationships; and other methods.

A. Meetings

1. The Warden, Deputy Warden, Associate Wardens and department heads shall conduct monthly meetings with employees under their direct supervision. Senior Leaders shall periodically attend meetings for which they are not routinely scheduled. In order to facilitate inter-departmental communication and collaboration.
2. Regularly scheduled meetings between the Warden and/or selected staff with representations of the incarcerated individual population is an effective method of maintaining positive communications with the population. Each facility shall establish procedures to ensure that such communication is facilitated.

a. Selection of Representatives

A representative from each living unit or work area can be elected, appointed, or designated to meet with the Wardens or designee(s) and offer suggestions for the betterment of the entire institution.

b. Procedural Rules

Procedural rules shall be established prior to initiation. Areas to be covered are:

1. Qualifications for membership;
2. Selection process;
3. Responsibilities of members and office holders;

4. Term of appointment;
 5. Scheduled meeting dates and times;
 6. Items to be discussed;
 7. How final decisions shall be made;
 8. General rules of conduct and expectations;
 9. Communication of meeting decisions;
3. Collaboration between the Management Team/Executive Staff and leadership of the Local Collective Bargaining Units is encouraged.

B. Tours/Rounds

Routine rounds of the facility by administrative and supervisory staff is important in maintaining open lines of communication with staff and incarcerated individuals.

1. The Warden and all executive staff of the institution, including shift supervisors, are expected to be readily available to staff and to the incarcerated individual population on an informal, regular basis.
2. The Warden and all institution executive staff shall make formal rounds of the institution, ensuring all occupied areas are visited monthly by each executive staff person. These rounds shall be documented utilizing the PDA system.
3. Institutional procedures shall encourage Shift Supervisors to visit all areas occupied by incarcerated individuals at least once during each shift. These visits shall include active observation and interaction with both staff and incarcerated individuals. Procedures shall require, at a minimum, a once daily Shift Supervisor visit to all occupied areas and the submission of daily report to the Associate Warden of Security. Unoccupied areas, at minimum, are to be inspected weekly.
4. Observations made while making rounds of the institutions, both positive and negative in nature, should be documented and forwarded to the respective department heads and area supervisors.

C. Written Communications

1. Procedures should clearly identify under what circumstances hand written communication will be accepted in lieu of electronic memos.
2. This information shall be provided to incarcerated individuals via regular information channels or incarcerated individual handbook.
3. Electronic memo/kites shall be answered by staff in a clear and concise manner and may be subject to review. Staff shall be expected to appropriately respond in a timely manner (normally within 7 days). Responding staff shall identify themselves legibly with name and title on all communication.

D. Other Methods of Communication

Staff whose work involves routine contact with incarcerated individuals are expected to develop and maintain positive professional relationships with those incarcerated individuals and shall:

1. Serve as a pro-social role model.
2. Treat incarcerated individuals with respect.
3. Set clear expectations of incarcerated individuals that hold them accountable as well as encourage acceptance of personal responsibility and personal growth.
4. Use positive reinforcement for pro-social behavior as well as, when necessary, negative reinforcement and/or sanctions for inappropriate behavior.