



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS INCARCERATED

An informational guide for family and friends
to help navigate the Idaho prison system.



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The sentencing of a loved one to a period of incarceration is one of the most difficult experiences a family can endure. We hope this information will answer many of the questions you might have at this early stage about IDOC's programs and how you can support your loved one during their incarceration.

The first stop for everyone who is sentenced to prison in Idaho is a reception and diagnostic unit (RDU). The men's RDU is at Idaho State Correctional Institution south of Boise. The two women's units are at the Pocatello Women's Correctional Center (PWCC) and the South Boise Women's Correctional Center (SBWCC).

Your loved one will be at RDU for two to four weeks. During this time, they will undergo a variety of assessments, including physical and mental health exams, to determine their educational and treatment needs. The information that is gathered also helps determine at which facility your loved one will be living.

Residents of IDOC facilities can only make outbound calls, and while at RDU they have limited opportunities to do so.

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions by family and friends who have a loved one incarcerated at IDOC.



HOW DO I STAY CONNECTED WITH MY LOVED ONE?

Residents who maintain positive, healthy relationships with people in the community are more likely to succeed when they are released than those who do not. There are several ways you can stay connected with your loved one while they are incarcerated.

One way is by sending them a letter via the U.S. mail. We strongly recommend using the [search function](#) on the department's website to find up-to-date mailing addresses and contact numbers for all residents. Letters are opened and checked for contraband before being sent to the resident. For more information, see [mail guidelines](#) on IDOC's website.

You can also stay connected with your loved one via [messaging and video](#). Your loved one will have an opportunity to activate their account with the company that provides the service, ViaPath. You will need to [set up your own account](#) so you can send messages, photos, and video messages. To do so, you will need your loved one's name, IDOC number, and a credit or debit card.

ViaPath also offers live video visits. Visits are set up by your loved one.

For questions about these services, please contact ViaPath Customer Service at 866-516-0115.

You can also talk on the phone with your loved one. The phone service is operated by IC Solutions. You will need a credit or debit card to make a deposit. Your loved one can make telephone calls using the funds you deposit. For more information, see the [IDOC page on the IC Solutions' website](#) or call IC Solutions Customer Service at 888-506-8407. All calls between you and your loved one will be recorded.



HOW DO I SEND FOOD, BOOKS, AND GIFTS TO MY LOVED ONE?

There are other ways you can support your loved one during their incarceration. But please note, all the products and services described below are extras. IDOC provides every resident with clothes, bedding, laundry service and food. Residents have several meal options from which they can choose to meet their dietary and religious needs, and personal preferences.

If you wish to send money to your loved one so they can buy extra food, clothing, personal hygiene items or other products available through their facility's commissary service, you can do so through [Access Corrections](#). You will need a credit card to open an account. Commissary orders are submitted each week.

If you wish to send your loved one a gift package, you can do so through [Access Securepak](#).

If you wish to send your loved one a book, you must do so through an approved vendor. They are:

- Edward R. Hamilton
- Thrift Books
- More than Words
- Prison Book Program
- Books a Million
- Books N Things
- Sure Shot Books
- The Women's Prison Book Project
- Idaho Prison Arts Collective

Books from other vendors, like Amazon and Barnes & Noble, are not accepted at this time.



HOW DO I VISIT MY LOVED ONE?

For starters, you must be approved as a visitor. To do that, you must fill out a [visiting application](#). It usually takes four to six weeks for applications to be reviewed and approved. Once that happens, your loved one will be notified. It will be up to them, not the facility, to notify you.

Before visiting, it's important you read the [visiting rules](#). They are strictly enforced. Violations may mean a loss of visiting privileges.

North Idaho Correctional Institution has additional [site-specific rules](#) due to its location.

No paper money is allowed in visiting rooms. Visitors may bring coins in clear plastic bags or debit or credit cards to make vending-machine purchases.

Note:

It is a crime to introduce contraband. Idaho Code 18-2510 states that a person commits a crime by knowingly introducing or possessing contraband in a correctional facility. Contraband includes but is not limited to tobacco, cell phone(s) or telecommunication equipment, controlled/illegal substances, firearms or dangerous weapons, ammunition/explosives, and escape tools or devices. Violations are punishable by imprisonment of up to five years and/or fine of up to \$10,000.

IDOC's website lists the [visiting schedules](#) for all the department's correctional facilities. If a facility is forced to suspend visitation, an advisory is posted in the top story section of the home page of the website and on the department's [Facebook page](#).



**HOW DO I
ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT MY LOVED ONE?**

The [Request for Information](#) link on IDOC's website can connect you with information about a variety of topics, and it gives you the option of contacting a staff member if you wish to know more.

You can also call the facility in which your loved one is incarcerated. If the officer on duty is unable to help you, they might refer you to the warden's office.

If you still have questions or concerns, you can contact IDOC's Office of Constituent Services at 208-658-2134.

Changes in visitation schedules and other important news and information are also shared across various social platforms. Follow us for up-to-date information.



idoc.idaho.gov



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