

LA. DPS&C
Ongoing COVID-19 Response
Feb 2020- Current

Ongoing COVID-19 Mitigation Measures:

- Activated DOC existing regulations regarding Influenza and Pandemic Prevention/Preparedness/Response to the highest level. Pursuant to the governing Department Regulation, every state prison has a thorough and detailed COVID-19 Pandemic response plan in place.
- DOC HQ Medical Division created and Issued uniform COVID-19 guidelines to state facilities regarding testing, quarantine, medical isolation etc. in accordance with CDC recommendations. The guidelines are updated routinely as new guidance issued from CDC.
- Ongoing routine communication and collaboration with Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), including on-site visits to state prison facilities, regarding COVID-19 mitigation/response measures (testing, quarantine, medical isolation, movement reduction measures etc.).
- Implemented heightened disinfectant/ cleaning protocols at every prison facility.
- Mandated daily screening all DOC employees prior to entrance.
 - Anyone entering Louisiana's state-run prisons and DOC facilities, including employees and vendors, is subject to enhanced screening prior to entering. This includes answering screening questions and having their temperature taken.
- Required all DOC employees to wear a mask at all times while on premises of any state facility/building including in probation and parole staff working offsite/in the community.
- Implemented Movement Reduction Measures to reduce risk of exposure and transmission:
 - Suspended Visitation, volunteering, tours, programming, transfers between prisons/ routine transfers from local level, and postponed the Angola 2020 spring and fall rodeos all in effort to minimize movement.
 - Limited dining areas to servicing one dorm at a time (with some limited exceptions for small cohorts).
 - Limited recreation space (outside and gymnasium) to one housing area using it at a time on rotational basis.
 - Limited transfers new intakes to only those who must be housed in state prison and facility to facility transfers. (Each intake/transfer is screened and assessed for symptoms, and then quarantined for 14 days before being placed in general population).
 - Limited off-site inmate work crews in state buildings to after business hours/ during some months instituted complete restriction on off-site work crews depending on current prison positivity rate and/or community positivity rate.
- Pardon and Parole Board suspended hearings for March and part of April, but resumed parole hearings on in late April, 2020 utilizing video platforms.
- Commenced Reverse isolation process of older and high risk inmates. Designated a separate housing/ feeding location for reverse isolation. These inmates are also allowed into a recreation area reserved just for them to minimize their interaction with the rest of the facility.

- Issued COVID-19 testing criteria guidelines to all state facilities (based upon LDH direction); regarding symptomatic and asymptomatic testing re staff and inmates.
 - All symptomatic persons are tested
 - Targeted mass testing of asymptomatic persons ongoing on a rotational basis.
- Routinely Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all staff.
- Each facility has designated quarantine and medical Isolation capabilities which are being used as needed.
- Created Covid-19 Furlough Review Panel in partnership with LDAA, LSA and Victims Advocate to evaluate certain eligible inmates, who are within 6 months of release date, for early release to home incarceration. Panel convened/active until state entered phase II.

Inmates

- DOC created two COVID-19 informational videos for inmates which include an intro from Secretary LeBlanc/the onsite Physician at Angola/overview of Dept. Response/proactive ways inmates can reduce risk of infection. (English and Spanish versions). One or both of these videos are played on loop at all prisons and are also available on the DOC website for families to view.
- Created a COVID-19 Informational page on DOC website and also posting once per day on DOC website the total number of confirmed Corona cases per facility (staff and inmates).
<https://doc.louisiana.gov/covid-19-information/>
- Facility Wardens/Medical Staff are mandated to provide routine updates to inmate population regarding status of COVID-19 pandemic and changes to DOC policies and procedures implemented as a result of changing CDC guidance.
- DOC and Securus are providing inmates in state-run prisons two free 10 minute calls a week and 2 free email stamps per week so that inmates can maintain communication with family and friends during this crisis. Suspended the \$250 minimum account balance requirement on inmate banking accounts in state prisons.
- Activated video calling for video visitation at Louisiana's state-run prisons and secured a reduced rate of \$2.50/per 10 min call.
- Required and ensured that ample hand sanitizer and soap available at every state prison.
- Ongoing Issuance of additional free bars of soap to inmates in state prisons. (ongoing basis).
- Distributed two cloth masks to all inmates housed in state prisons. (2 mask per inmate) which are replaced as needed.
- Permitting CTRP program completion via correspondence (approved program list issued by Reentry Division) and allow the awarding of CTRP. good-time credit (appropriate documentation required)
- DOC continues to process inmates pursuant to ordinary release dates as inmates reach their goodtime release date (GTPS) or full term release date. (housed in prisons and jails).
- Starting in April, activated a call center that families can call to request information regarding the DOC ongoing COVID-19 response.
- Providing \$5 canteen credit to any inmate housed in state prison facility who opts to take flu vaccine.
- Ongoing collaboration with local partner organizations re collection and distribution of donated PPE to inmate population. (i.e. *VOTE, The Parole Project, Reform Alliance etc.*)

Probation and Parole

- P&P Officers are providing support at Louisiana State Penitentiary, providing security at DPS&C Headquarters, working sit-downs at hospitals with offenders admitted, and are providing support various police departments stationed at drive through testing sites for traffic logistics and security purposes.
- P&P Officers are using video apps to check in on their caseloads where possible.
- P&P Officers continue to supervise sex offenders and violent offenders face to face.
- P&P officers are limiting use of parole holds and revocation procedures to serious/dangerous offenses. Limiting arrests/detaining people in jail for non-serious non-violent charges/offenses.
- Suspended the use of short term jail sanctions ordinarily used for technical violations.
- For those already confined in jail for one of the above reasons/types of detainers, P&P has recommended to the judge (if on probation) or the parole board (if on parole) to release the nonviolent/non-sex offender from technical revocation jail sanctions, and/or, if applicable, allow the offender to release on bond regarding the new pending charges that are less serious/dangerous offenses, such as non-violent/non-sex offense charges. These measures have resulted in the removal/release of approximately 2000 detainer holds off of people in jail for probation or parole related sanctions or pending revocations which has also resulted in the release of some of these people from jail and parish facilities who did not have any other non-related outstanding charge/bond/warrant restricting their release.
- P&P Officers provided support at convention center in New Orleans and at Louisiana's state parks as needed and also continue to provide supplementary support to prison facilities for staffing on-site and off-site medical trips.

Collaboration with Local Jails:

- DOC has been in constant contact with Louisiana Sheriffs' Association (LSA) and the local sheriffs providing informational guidance and support throughout this response.
- Local Jail Support: Designated vacant Camp J at Louisiana State Penitentiary (males) and LCIW (females) as a housing locations for medical isolation of COVID-19 positive inmates that are located in local jails which do not have the capacity to medically isolate such cases from the general population and/or do not have appropriate staff to care for COVID-19 cases. Camp J is staffed independently of the other prison camps and existing Angola inmates have no contact with the Camp J facility housing sick these sick inmates.

Joint Agency Response

- In March – May, during nation-wide shortage, DOC, DEQ and LSU partnered together produce and bottle hand sanitizer for statewide distribution.

- Ongoing production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) (masks, gowns etc.) via Prison Enterprises for continued distribution to staff and inmates.