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Secretary James M. Le Blanc

DOC Suspends Visitation at Louisiana's State-Run Prisons

BATON ROUGE, La. – Out of an abundance of caution and in an effort to maintain health and safety concerning the latest surge of COVID-19 positive cases in Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C) has suspended prisoner visitation indefinitely effective January 6, 2022, at Louisiana's eight state-run prisons. This comes a week after the Department suspended volunteers from entering the prisons due to the rise in COVID-19 cases across the state. The Department has taken this precautionary measure to protect its staff and prisoner populations and will continue to review and reconsider the need for these measures.

In lieu of visitation, the Department will continue to offer two free phone calls per week to ensure inmates have continued connection to family and friends. In addition, video calling remains available for a fee.

To help prevent the spread of this disease within Louisiana's eight state-run prisons, the DPS&C continues COVID screening with temperature checks and questioning of anyone entering the state's prisons, including staff and vendors.

As part of the mask mandate, staff continue to wear masks, and prisoners are strongly encouraged to do so as well in order to protect themselves and others. The DPS&C has reminded its staff and inmates of social distancing and hand washing practices to reduce the potential spread of coronavirus. Staff who are sick with symptoms consistent with the flu or coronavirus are asked to stay home.

Approximately 83 percent of prisoners incarcerated in Louisiana's state-run prisons have been voluntarily vaccinated, and the Department continues to make vaccinations and booster shots available to all inmates.

The DPS&C, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health and the Louisiana Sheriff's Association, is following CDC guidance, and continues to monitor the situation and update its response as necessary.

Stay informed on decisions affecting the state's prisons by visiting the Department's website at doc.la.gov.

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