

Resource Guide and Considerations for Reopening a Detention Facility Under COVID-19 Restrictions

This document can also be found on the
Colorado Jail Association Website. [Click Here](#)

General Considerations

Please take note of the following general guidelines that will need to be addressed as facilities resume normal operations. While the steps listed below are not all-inclusive and will vary from facility to facility, this will serve as a sound and practical blueprint that facility administrators can use. In the event that additional infections occur in the near future and/or a “second wave” occurs, facilities will need to be prepared. Now is not the time to rush to normal operations! As private-sector businesses reopen in your area, the competition for PPE and disinfectant solutions will become more significant in the short term.

- * Aside from recent federal relief legislation, the Bureau of Justice Assistance has several active funding opportunities. [BJA COVID Funding Opportunities](#) Additionally, the American Jail Association, American Correctional Association, National Commission on Correctional Health Care, Corrections Technology Association, and National Association of Counties are regularly updating their websites with relevant COVID-19 information.
- * The University of Tennessee in conjunction with The Tennessee Corrections Institute have also authored a fantastic COVID Operations Document that can be found here: [UT TCI COVID Reopen Plan](#)
- * Administrators must ensure that all reopening steps – and more importantly any existing restrictions – are in continued compliance with your city, county, state, and federal government guidelines. It is important to communicate all steps with any stakeholders well in advance. There has been a significant increase in COVID-19 litigation initiated by inmates and various inmate advocacy groups across the country. It is important that administrators take the time to be familiar with current legal decisions and proactively address any noted concerns raised in court. [Current COVID Legal Rulings](#)

General Considerations Cont.

- * It is also imperative that administrators recognize that arrestees and inmates come to their facilities from a variety of sources, such as new arrests, warrant walk-ins, writ returns, court remands, and fugitive units – just to name a few. Each of these sources must be staged as to not overwhelm facility operations. This includes consistent communication with all stakeholders.
- * With many facilities experiencing reduced inmate counts that have not been seen in many years, administrators should assess normal operational schedules and daily events during this time. Adjustments to lockdown times, inmate programming, laundry exchange, commissary programs, and volunteer hours, to mention a few, should be reassessed while the impact on the facility is minimal.
- * If not already doing so, administrators should give serious thought to utilizing more web-based video-conferencing platforms with their local Courts, Probation/Parole Offices, Public Defenders and District Attorney's Offices. With advances in H.323 and SIP (session-initiated protocol) technology, most systems have the ability to bridge various systems together, enabling an inmate to appear in virtual court or to attend hearings without leaving the facility. While there remain many local and state legal hurdles to overcome in this area, it is still worth consideration. The National Center for State Courts regularly updates information regarding the use of these systems. [Video-Technologies Resource Guide](#)

After Action Report and Discussion

- * Now is the time to create sound After Action Reports or Critical Incident Reviews for senior administrators, public officials and partners. Reports should take an honest look at how your facility responded to the outbreak and focus on how you can improve. Ensure that you solicit input from all levels of your organization as well as your key stakeholders. However, keep in mind that most government documents are subject to “open records” requests and are discoverable in both criminal and civil actions.

Key Stakeholders

Most importantly, administrators must continue to utilize their COVID-19 Response Teams (or approved designees). Teams will continue to meet each business day, or as needed, to provide updates regarding overall facility status.

Mandatory key internal stakeholder suggestions:

- * Health Services Administrator
- * Mental Health Administrator
- * Food Services Director
- * Daily Watch Commander(s)
- * Facility Administrator(s)
- * Administrative Support Staff
- * Facility Maintenance/Custodial Services
- * Administrative Analyst/Budget
- * Transportation / Court Liaison Supervisor
- * Alternative Sentencing Unit Supervisor

Employee Care...

Without a doubt, employee care and communication is the key to success as we navigate these unprecedented times. Administrators must have a strong communication strategy that involves all critical stakeholders.

- * Communicate with all facility staff regarding current events, reopening plans, and any relevant information necessary to alleviate any concerns staff might have. Utilize city/county websites, internal intranet platforms, emails, texts and short videos to staff for a clear, consistent, and concise message
- * Screen every employee and offer on-site physicals as necessary (consult union and or collective bargaining rules as necessary). [CDC Clinical Screening Guidelines](#)
- * Follow CDC guidelines for temperature checks and screening questionnaires at the beginning of each shift. Ensure that staff has staggered start times to avoid a “rush” at facility entrances where staff will congregate. Consider online check-in forms and health acknowledgements prior to admittance to the facility. There are a wide variety of temperature devices ([Sample Devices For Temperature Checks](#), [Thermal Imaging Temp Check](#)) ranging from less than \$100 up to several thousand dollars. Administrators should coordinate with their local public health department on the correct selection and focus only on FDA-approved devices. [FDA Temperature FAQ](#)

Employee Care...

- * Offer on-site peer counseling regarding employee expectations, known current risks for each assignment, and continued facility plans. This might include regular visits by a PEER support team, Facility Administrators, Facility Chaplain, or a therapy animal. Ensure that all staff is updated on how to contact any available employee-assistance programs. A simple flier with basic instructions provided by Human Resources or Administration should be fine.
- * There are many non-profit organizations that offer free resources and counseling, but only a few specifically for correctional staff. Here is one of the best: [Desert Waters Services](#)
- * Staff appropriately based on actual need, being careful not to overstaff relative to reduced inmate population. Keep relief teams and/or rotating teams intact for as long as possible.

The Tough Stuff.....

- * In the event you have lost staff due to a COVID-19 related death, now is the time to memorialize the loss and acknowledge their impact on the agency. Because staff will process the loss of a fellow co-worker in different ways, it is important to ensure that agencies take a multi-faceted approach. PEER support teams can play a critical role at this time
- * Prepare staff now for any projected funding shortfalls that might impact their training, salary and benefits packages, and equipment replacement. Be honest with them from the beginning!
- * Begin giving some thought to how you can acknowledge/recognize the efforts of your sworn and non-sworn staff to include community stakeholders who have helped your organization. Some ideas may include certificates, a special award pin, comp time, or a traditional celebratory event. Make sure to communicate your efforts to local media outlets and promote on your social media platforms. Remain aware of the impact this may have on your furloughed staff.
- * PEER Support programs can play a critical and long lasting role in assisting staff navigate through these difficult times. If you don't currently have a PEER Support Program, now may be the time to start one. The Center for Innovative Public Policies offers a step by step guide to creating and maintaining a program: [PEER Support Program](#)

Furloughed Staff

- * Many agencies have furloughed staff, most likely non-sworn staff. Administrators must ensure that there is a consistent feedback loop from the organization to each employee on furlough. Options might include a Facebook page, weekly webinars, emails including temporary job assistance information, unemployment/state/federal benefits, etc.
- * Upon returning to work, mandatory temperature checks, health screening tools, and masks will help to minimize impact on the organization and help alleviate any employee concerns
- * Offer remote working options if available to minimize potential exposure to staff and to those that were not furloughed.
- * If staff have been furloughed for longer than a few weeks, they may need updated training or they have new responsibilities as you agency learns to “work with less”. Ensure they are assigned a FTO/DTO to assist them in reintegrating back into operations. The Center of Innovative Public Policies has many recommendations on how to retrain staff: [CIPP](#)

Exposure Mitigation

- * Create “sanitized zones” where staff can sanitize between areas of the facility. Limit specific staff to common duties to reduce exposure. This may include kites, request forms, mail collection/delivery, commissary, hygiene exchange. Provide additional sanitation and PPE equipment for these specific purposes
- * Ensure non-sworn “public facing” staff have appropriate distancing and barriers configured to limit exposure from visitors to the facility. Ensure these staff also have proper PPE and disinfectant solutions. Consider adopting an “appointment only” schedule for the near term to limit visitors from comingling in common public areas
- * Institute mandatory post cleaning on/off shift
- * Maintain social distancing for staff, i.e., no in-person roll call, group meals, etc.
- * Minimize movement within the facility to specific areas of responsibility. Create internal areas of control that limit staff movement for their work hours. This includes outside visitors, vendors, delivery personnel, administrative staff, and volunteers.

Facility Infrastructure Systems

- * HVAC cleaning should include return vents and filtration systems. Consider utilizing Ultra Violet (UVC) sanitizing equipment. [UVC Article/Devices](#), [UVC Device Rankings](#)
- * Thoroughly clean entire jail interior with an approved CDC disinfectant along with electrostatic sprayers/misters/foggers. [CDC Coronavirus Disinfecting Guidelines](#)
- * Current PPE assessment with projected use per employee
- * PPE stock availability, including backorder confirmations
- * Laundry Operations/supplies to include disinfectants. This also includes cleaning supplies such as mops, buckets, rags, spray bottles, etc.
- * Perform systems checks on all security electronics systems, i.e., doors, locks, intercoms, etc., prior to occupying.

Facility Infrastructure Systems Cont...

- * Food Delivery Services procedures, including limiting equipment use to smaller numbers of staff/inmates
- * Waste procedures (Trash and Infectious Waste Removal)
- * Ensure that all vendors/contractors are made aware of your facility rules and expectations before entering the facility. This includes mandatory PPE use and/or access restrictions
- * If funding permits, take advantage of lower inmate counts to refurbish, repair, or replace critical infrastructure within the facility. This might include simple projects like flooring, painting, and lighting
- * Consider removing traditional manual faucet flush valves and replace with automatic sensor-based devices in non-inmate areas. Also consider installing additional hand sanitizer stations in critical areas between housing pods, entrance/exit, and support areas of the facility.

Intake Admissions and Processing

- * Follow CDC guidelines for temperature checks on all admissions for first 30 days or as necessary
- * Revise “no acceptance policy” and inform all local agencies and internal stakeholders
- * Continue use of mandatory mask, eyewear, and gloves while processing all new arrestees/transfers
- * Stretch Intake Housing time range to 5 to 7 days of observation
- * If available, create quarantine housing areas for an additional 7 days, making certain populations are not co-mingled and higher medical risk inmates are not exposed to a constant turnover of new intakes
- * Create community stakeholder media awareness
- * Verify time held at other facilities. Were there any active COVID-19 cases in the facility?

Supporting Court Operations

- * Ensure staff have adequate time to transition to previous schedules
- * Ensure access signage, rules/regulations, etc., are posted well in advance of entrance
- * Ensure staff have proper access to all necessary PPE
- * Coordinate staff activities with Judicial staff
- * Coordinate all pending and new writs to include court orders with Judicial and District Attorney Staff to ensure facility does not become immediately overwhelmed
- * Ensure Court Security staff have proper barriers i.e. distance, plexi-glass, tables etc. from all visitors
- * Communicate all courthouse restrictions via social media platforms and local media.

Department Transportation Services

- * Clean vehicles, including cabin filters (if equipped) and restraints after/before all transports. This includes all prisoner compartments, seat belts and door handles.
- * Assess and restock PPE equipment daily.
- * Conduct additional COVID-19 medical screening at time of pick-up or when arranging.
- * Conduct all screenings prior to admittance into secured perimeter of facility.
- * Coordinate all pending and new warrant returns/writ returns and prisoner transfers with security staff as to not overwhelm operations.
- * Consider placing a cloth or surgical mask on all outgoing inmates as a joint courtesy to nearby facilities. Additionally, have all departing inmates utilize hand sanitizer prior to leaving the facility.
- * Many state DOC systems will require 14 days of validated medical checks and temperature verification before they will take sentenced county inmates. Start Now!

Intake and Health Care Screening Process

- * Continue restrictions on high-risk medical inmates being admitted to facility
- * Regional Intake Facilities should pool health care resources
- * Continue to follow CDC guidelines
- * Sanitize intake areas daily
- * Mental Health Screening
- * Follow NCCHC standards (2018)
- * Maintain supply of Influenza, Strep and COVID-19 test kits.

Classification of Inmates

- * Continue social distancing requirements per local advice
- * If directed by local health authority, continue mandatory mask wearing
- * Single cell as available, depending on classification needs
- * If conducting split lockdowns, continue for additional time
- * Increase access to outdoor recreation and fresh air if possible
- * Inspect cells daily
- * Ensure inmate access to soap and sanitizers and cleaning supplies
- * Continue inmate education via posters, videos, and announcements.

Inmate Programming Services

- * Increase health care triage by trained officers, EMTs or other medical staff
- * Continue training inmates on personal hygiene
- * Continue limited access from all volunteer groups
- * Continue smaller group settings of 10 or fewer
- * Consider delaying any older volunteers who are at greater health risk from returning to the facility, but keep them informed of any new developments
- * Perform health checks of all visitors to include temperature check/screening
- * Enforce mandatory use of protective mask and sanitizer by all volunteers.

Release and Re-entry Considerations

- * Community service agencies for health checks, employment, food
- * Division of Public Health: resource for continuing support for health and disease control
- * Local County Outreach Centers (education, support, clothing, particularly for interviews)
- * Non-Profit Emergency Services Networks (food, shelter, medicine resources)
- * Alcohol & Drug Abuse Advocates
- * Local Community Healthcare Centers/Hospitals
- * Job Centers – Personal & Career Development Unit – Staff Employment Support Specialists
- * NAMI and/or SAMHSA
- * Local City and/or County Support Center (homelessness and food pantry)
- * Department of Veterans Affairs [VA State Maps](#)
- * Referral to local Domestic Violence Shelters.

References and Resources

- * <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- * https://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_updates/2020_COVID-19/
- * <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>
- * https://bjaojp.gov/funding/opportunities/bja-2020-18553?utm_campaign=solicitations_2020&utm_content=funding_5.12.2020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsfrombjao
- * <https://www.globaltestsupply.com/content/application-note-detecting-elevated-body-temperatures>
- * <https://www.flir.com/discover/public-safety/faq-about-thermal-imaging-for-elevated-body-temperature-screening/>
- * <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/general-hospital-devices-and-supplies/non-contact-infrared-thermometers>
- * <https://www.skytron.com/news/uvc-assists-in-protection-against-the-coronavirus/>
- * <https://heavy.com/health/2020/03/uv-sterilizer/>
- * <https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/map.asp>
- * <https://www.ncsc.org/Topics/Technology/Video-Technologies/Resource-Guide.aspx>
- * <http://www.cipp.org/uploads/3/7/5/7/37578255/cippjanuary2020jtp.pdf>

National Resources

- * American Jail Association: <https://www.americanjail.org/>
- * American Correctional Association: http://www.aca.org/ACA_Prod_IMIS/ACA_Member_COVID.aspx
- * National Commission on Correctional Health Care: <https://www.ncchc.org/covid-resources>
- * University of Tennessee/Corrections Institute: <http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Back%20to%20Normal%20Jail%20Operations%20May%202020.pdf>
- * Corrections Technology Association: <https://www.correctionstech.org/covid-resource-center>
- * National Association of Counties: <https://www.naco.org/>
- * Desert Waters Correctional Outreach: https://desertwaters.com/?page_id=12797
- * Center for Innovative Public Policies: <http://www.cipp.org/>
- * Colorado Jail Association: <https://sites.google.com/site/cjacorrectionscom/home/>

Acknowledgments

- * With special thanks to the Colorado Jail Association, Joel Huffer, Director of Communications for the American Jail Association and other contributors:
- * David McRoberts
- * Peter Perroncello
- * Michael Harris