



Covid-19 Detection and Mitigation in Confinement Facilities

What Public Health Needs to Know About Corrections



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Training and Technical Assistance Center

Correctional facilities face many unique challenges during a public health emergency. Correctional facilities may have crowded living conditions; a high-risk population (e.g., persons with underlying medical conditions), communal spaces for eating, learning, socializing, and bathing; limited medical, quarantine, and isolation resources; restricted entrances; and frequent turnover in population. Supporting a correctional facility or providing resources requires advance planning and creative solutions to balance public health with facility security. The following graphic provides public health a glimpse into the unique considerations for collaborating with corrections.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know the population dynamics within correctional facilities, including resident demographics and health profiles. • Those living in correctional facilities may be at higher risk for disease transmission and poor health outcomes. • Consider the correctional environment (bed layout, shared lavatories) on disease transmission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with the healthcare services available within correctional facilities. • There is a great deal of variation in healthcare services within correctional facilities (e.g., no healthcare, onsite care, or healthcare provided by government or private contractor). • Collaborate on strategies to enhance healthcare delivery to people who are incarcerated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to implement infection control measures adapted to correctional facilities. • The correctional environment may pose a challenge for infection control because of crowded living conditions and communal space. • Work with correctional facilities to identify ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, accounting for unique needs related to space and security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and address the unique needs of populations of higher risk within correctional facilities. • Correctional facilities house a population with higher risk, many of whom have underlying medical conditions or disabilities. • Collaborate on strategies to protect high-risk individuals, such as the older adults or those with pre-existing health conditions.
Population Dynamics	Healthcare Services within Correctional Facilities	Infection Control Measures	Populations at Higher Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of corrections systems' emergency response plans and ensure alignment with public health guidelines. • Correctional facilities' emergency plans need to balance response with security of the facility. • Coordinate joint exercises and drills to enhance emergency preparedness before an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate on resource allocation strategies to correctional facilities during health emergencies. • Share information about available public health resources that can support correctional facilities. • Correctional facilities can be both a resource user and provider of resources to public health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern corrections systems in your state and jurisdiction. • There are many legal and regulatory constraints affecting correctional facilities. • Ensure that public health recommendations align with legal requirements for correctional facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the public health data reporting capacity in facilities. • Staff responsible for disease reporting often have other responsibilities, insufficient time for comprehensive reporting to their local public health department. • Facilities may use paper medical records or an EHR. • Work with correctional facilities on ways they can report public health data.
Emergency Response Plans	Resource Allocation	Legal and Regulatory Framework	Public Health Data



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Some local public health departments have staff dedicated to responding to emergencies in correctional facilities and other congregate settings. Others may have staff with limited knowledge of the unique challenges facing correctional facilities. Similarly, public health guidance tailored to correctional facilities is available for some diseases, but not for others. Develop relationships with your local public health department before an emergency so they understand your facility's needs. The following graphic provides guidance to correctional facilities on how to collaborate with state public health agencies and local public health departments.

- Stay informed about current public health guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state public health agencies, and local public health departments.
- Implement recommended practices within correctional facilities to protect both staff and people who are incarcerated.
- Discover what resources your state public health agency and local public health departments have to assist in detection and mitigation strategies of infectious diseases.
- Public health guidance tailored to correctional facilities is available for some diseases.

Public Health Guidelines

- Collaborate with state public health agencies and local public health departments to develop effective health screening and testing protocols within correctional facilities.
- State public health agencies and local public health departments can often help administer tests.
- Reporting cases of infectious diseases to state and local public health authorities can help identify outbreaks early and keep the population and staff healthy.

Health Screening and Testing Protocols

- Work with state and local public health officials to establish vaccination strategies for both staff and people who are incarcerated.
- Coordinate with public health agencies on the design of vaccination campaigns to reach staff and people who are incarcerated.
- State public health agencies and local public health departments can often assist with hosting vaccination clinics.

Vaccination Strategies

- Establish clear communication channels with public health agencies around challenges implementing current public health guidance based on facility limitations.
- Conduct health education sessions with staff and people who are incarcerated, and provide access to educational videos and materials
- Report health-related incidents promptly and accurately to public health authorities.

Communication and Reporting

- Work with the local public health department to help develop infection control practices tailored to your facility.
- Follow infection prevention and control measures recommended by public health authorities.
- Collaborate on training programs for corrections staff on effective hygiene practices.

Infection Prevention and Control Measures

- Make the local public health department aware of your data reporting capacity to find a method that works for your facility.
- Establish mechanisms for ongoing epidemiological surveillance within correctional facilities.
- Coordinate with state or local epidemiologists to define data collection and reporting needs, frequency, and format.

Epidemiological Surveillance

- Work together on emergency response plans that involve public health considerations.
- Assign corrections staff to participate in public health drills and exercises to enhance coordination.
- Establish a connection with your local or state public health emergency coordinator and liaison.

Collaborative Planning

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