

Georgia Department of Corrections
COVID-19 FAQs for Friends and Family

[What precautions or screenings are in place for inmates arriving at GDC facilities?](#)

The GDC suspended all non-essential offender movement across GDC facilities on March 11, 2020. As we have transitioned into a modified movement process within our system, a strategic plan was developed to ensure priority was placed on taking precautionary measures to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and offenders.

All new arrivals (intakes) and court return offenders will be administered a COVID-19 test and offered a COVID-19 vaccine. Offenders who are symptomatic will be placed in a designated medical isolation unit while awaiting test results. Non-symptomatic offenders will be placed in 14-day security quarantine while awaiting test results. Those offenders receiving negative test result will resume the normal diagnostic process.

[What is the GDC doing to ensure the well-being of staff and inmates?](#)

- Ongoing notification and education of staff and inmate population regarding COVID and vaccines, including educational materials/flyers, are posted in all facilities
- Informational COVID-19 Vaccine video is being played for offenders in housing units
- Enhanced sanitation at all entry points to include additional hand sanitizer for staff
- Screening protocols implemented to include attestation of no known illness and temperature screening prior to entry for all persons, to include staff
- Quantities of hand soap and hand sanitizer have been increased at all facilities.
- Enhanced sanitation and cleaning protocols at all facilities and for all transportation vehicles, to include designating additional Sanitation Officers
- Enhanced screening process for offenders
- Enhanced diagnostic intake screening for offenders entering GDC custody
- Suspended non-essential offender movement across GDC facilities, effective March 3, 2020, until further notice
- Suspended all facility tours until further notice
- Waived \$5.00 medical co-pay for offenders exhibiting COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms, effective March 13, 2020, until further notice
- Sneeze/cough masks have been distributed to all staff and offenders
- Ongoing treatment of all state facilities with chemical fogging as an added sanitation measure
- Disinfecting shoe mats placed at all facilities for use by all individuals upon entering or exiting the facility.
- All new arrivals (intakes) and court return offenders are administered a COVID-19 test.
- Vaccines are available and offered to all offenders

Are inmates being tested for COVID-19?

All inmates entering the Georgia Department of Corrections are screened and tested for COVID-19 upon intake. Those who exhibit symptoms will be medically isolated and referred to a medical provider for further evaluation. All other non-symptomatic inmates will be placed in a designated location and will be medically quarantined for 14 days, and tested again on day 10. In the event an inmate tests positive during the quarantine period, that inmate will be medically isolated for 10 days and the cohort group who was in quarantine with the inmate will be quarantined for an additional 14 days until no additional positive test are confirmed.

Any inmate at any location who becomes symptomatic will be medically isolated and administered a COVID-19 test. Any person in close contact with the individual will be medically quarantined and tested on day 10. Any offender who goes out to a hospital or medical appointment will be tested prior to transfer.

Offender transfers from a diagnostic facility to another facility will have temperature and pulse oximetry performed and recorded and will be instructed to notify medical if they become symptomatic. Offenders will not be transferred if they are showing symptoms or have a temperature.

Are offenders being offered COVID-19 vaccinations?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccinations are offered and available to all offenders.

What happens in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the offender population?

If the offender screens positive for COVID-19, the offender is provided a mask and escorted by an officer wearing personal protective equipment (i.e., mask and gloves) to a medical screening location where a provider will complete the screening exam. Offenders who screen positive, or are suspected of having COVID-19, are placed in the designated medical housing unit and will remain for the required 14-day quarantine period.

During the quarantine period, if an acute community hospitalization is necessary or in the event of an emergency medical condition, the offender will be transported to the designated medical facility.

All staff and inmates who were in direct contact or prolonged close contact will be notified and directed to quarantine following guidelines provided by the Department of Public Health (DPH).

What happens in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 with a staff member?

All staff and inmates who were in direct contact or prolonged close contact will be notified and directed to quarantine following guidelines provided by the Department of Public Health.

Is the offender population receiving additional cleaning products for sanitizing their cells?

We have enhanced sanitation and cleaning protocols at all facilities and for all transportation vehicles, including designating additional sanitation officers. All state facilities undergo a mandated chemical fogging process a minimum of 2x/month, as an added disinfecting measure.

What are the current visitation procedures?

Until further notice, modified in-person visitation will be made by appointment only.

How can family and friends maintain contact with their loved ones while visitation is suspended?

In an effort to ensure the offender population is able to maintain important communication w/ family and friends, effective immediately and until further notice, the GDC and its partners increased no-cost inmate communication resources, two (2) free calls per month, and two (1) free e-stamps per week. Also, mail services have not been affected at this time.

Are inmates allowed legal visits?

Attorney visitation at GDC facilities began on April 7, 2021. Attorneys should contact the Warden's office 5-7 business days prior to the date you wish to visit to schedule a visit with your client or potential client.

Are medical and dental appointments being canceled?

At this time, elective/non-critical medical and dental procedures are being scheduled on a limited basis, in consultation with GDC's statewide Medical Director, and within recommended CDC guidelines.

Are inmates allowed to go to their outside work detail?

Yes, outside details resumed on April 12, 2021.

Are the classes and programs being canceled?

Programming began on a limited basis on July 1, 2020, and classes are being conducted following strict social distancing guidelines as recommended by the CDC.

What is the release process for my loved one?

Any offender being released from GDC custody will undergo a screening for COVID-19 symptoms, to include temperature check. If the offender exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, the GDC will notify the local Department of Public Health of the county to which the

offender is being released. If the offender has been vaccinated, he/she will receive their vaccination card.

[Should my loved one receive a vaccine?](#)

According to the CDC the vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you are vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness. Taking the vaccine will help protect you and those around you.

[Does my loved one need to get the vaccine if they have already had COVID-19?](#)

The CDC recommends you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19.

[Does my loved one have to pay for the vaccine?](#)

No, the COVID-19 vaccine is available at no cost.

[What COVID-19 vaccine is the GDC providing to offenders?](#)

The GDC is offering the two-dose Moderna Vaccine.

[How will my loved one receive their vaccination card?](#)

Upon release, an offender will be discharged with their official vaccine card.