
 Corrections and Community Supervision DIRECTIVE	TITLE Inmate Legal Visits		NO. 4404
			DATE 11/02/2017
SUPERSEDES DIR# 4404 Dtd. 01/27/16	DISTRIBUTION A B	PAGES PAGE 1 OF 3	DATE LAST REVISED
REFERENCES (Include but are not limited to) 7NYCRR Part 200 & 201; Public Health Law §206(15); Judiciary Law §484; ACA Standard 4-4280, 4-4274, 4-4275, 4-4500; Directive #4421, #4900, #4910	APPROVING AUTHORITY 		

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide a uniform manner in which inmate legal visits are to be conducted throughout the Department in conformance with statutory and case law regarding inmate access to the courts.

This directive contains the guidelines which govern legal visits within a facility or institution under the control of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Legal Visit:** A visit between an inmate and an Attorney, approved legal representative, or Attorney's authorized representative for the purpose of discussing confidential legal matters, or a visit between an inmate who is a foreign national and the authorized diplomatic representative of their country of citizenship, or a visit between an inmate and a representative, including an employee or registered volunteer, of a rape crisis program.
- B. **Attorney:** One who is duly admitted to the practice of law in this State or another jurisdiction; he or she need not be formally retained or be the Attorney-of-record for the inmate.
- C. **Approved Legal Representative:** Second or third year law school students and law school graduates approved by order of the appropriate Appellate Division (see Judiciary Law §484).
- D. **Attorney's Authorized Representative:** Paralegals, law students, and investigators, or any other individuals identifiably employed by or under the supervision of, and responsible to an Attorney.
- E. **Rape Crisis Program:** Any local, State, or National organization authorized to provide rape crisis services, victim advocacy services, and emotional support services, including, but not limited to, organizations approved to provide such services in New York State by the Department of Health pursuant to Public Health Law §206(15).
- F. **Diplomatic Representative:** An agent or representative of a foreign nation who, as confirmed by the U.S. Department of State and/or the foreign nation's embassy, has the authority to represent, supervise and/or transact the affairs of the foreign nation.

III. POLICY

- A. The right of meaningful access to the courts, and the right to counsel are rights an inmate clearly retains upon incarceration. Accordingly, an inmate retains the right to legal visits.

- B. A legal visit may be used solely for the purpose of discussing confidential legal matters.
- C. A legal visit by an Attorney's representative (e.g., an investigator, unaccompanied by an Attorney) will only be authorized if:
 - 1. The Attorney for whom the representative is employed certifies to the Department that such visit is necessary, in connection with his or her legal services, to the inmate being visited; and
 - 2. The legal services relate to a specific and unresolved matter.
- D. A facility or institution may not impose any further restrictions without the prior approval of the Counsel to the Department.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Attorneys and their representatives are expected to give at least 24 hours notice, to a facility, indicating the inmate(s) requested to be seen. This notice may be in writing or by telephone. The 24 hours notice requirement may be waived for good cause. However, all requests to see an inmate, including those made on the day of the visit, shall be complied with in the same manner as a request for a non-legal visit.
- B. The Superintendent may deny legal visits of any Attorney or representative for good cause if such action is necessary to maintain the safety, security, and/or good order of the facility. However, prior to each such denial, the opinion of Counsel's Office must be received.
- C. Legal visits are to be conducted Monday through Friday except holidays, during the normal facility visiting hours. A denial of a legal visit on a Saturday during normal Saturday visiting hours must be approved by the Watch Commander. Attorneys and their representatives should be advised of the times when inmates are eating meals and/or count times, and should be discouraged from arriving at these times. Consideration for after-hour, holiday, or Sunday visits, based on special circumstances, shall be given on a case-by-case basis.
- D. In general, all legal visits shall be contact visits. The Superintendent must obtain the opinion of Counsel's Office prior to suspending contact visit privileges for any inmate and Attorney or approved legal representative. Regular procedures apply to the suspension of an inmate's contact visit privileges with Attorney's authorized representatives.
- E. If an Attorney or representative requests to see a large number of inmates, efforts shall be made to provide the greatest number of visits possible. Subject to considerations of safety, security, and good order of the facility and the legal necessity for such a visit, a limited number of inmates may be allowed to meet simultaneously with an Attorney, approved legal representative, or authorized representative.
- F. Legal papers may be exchanged during a legal visit and may be left with an inmate by an Attorney or representative subject to inspection for contraband. Such inspection shall be done in the presence of the Attorney and the inmate. Care must be taken not to read the content of the papers during the inspection.

In the event that the legal materials to be exchanged are voluminous, the facility may either:

1. Conduct an inspection of the legal papers in the package room at the conclusion of the visit, provided that the removal of the papers from the visiting room and inspection in the package room can be done in the presence of the inmate, unless both the inmate and the Attorney or representative consent to such inspection out of the presence of the inmate; or
2. Have a supply of blank envelopes available in the visiting room into which the legal papers can be placed and sealed for subsequent reopening and inspection in the presence of the inmate, consistent with the procedures for handling legal mail set forth in Directive #4421, "Privileged Correspondence."

The intention to leave legal papers with the inmate should be communicated by the Attorney or representative to the visiting room Correction Officer. These procedures shall also be followed if an inmate wishes to leave legal papers with an Attorney or representative.

- G. In emergency situations, or when a substantial threat exists to the safety, security, or operations of the facility, or to the visiting Attorney or representative, legal visits may be suspended. This is to be done for the duration necessary to ensure the safety and security of the facility and of the visitor.
- H. Nothing in this directive is to be construed to countermand procedures as found in Departmental Directives #4900, "Security in Gate Areas/Secure Posts," and #4910, "Control of & Search for Contraband."
- I. An inmate has the right to attend and the right to refuse any legal visit. Any refusal must be in writing and signed by the inmate in duplicate; one copy to be given to the Attorney requesting the legal visit and the other copy to be placed in the inmate's file. When an inmate refuses a legal visit, and refuses to sign such a statement, the refusal shall be documented and witnessed by two Department employees. (See [Form 4404A](#), "Sample Letter".)
- J. The Superintendent shall designate an area for legal visits. Such area should ensure the confidentiality of all communications during the visit.