



CORONAVIRUS SELF-ADVOCACY GUIDE FOR OTHER STATES

This manual (written on March 15, 2020) provides current information to the best of our knowledge. However, the coronavirus pandemic, government responses, and relevant laws and procedures are changing frequently. It is your responsibility to obtain current information and check relevant legal cases, codes, and regulations when using this manual.

We do not have specific information about how correctional facilities in your state are responding to the pandemic (or such information is separately attached). However, we can provide the following general advice.

How to Protect Yourself from Coronavirus While Incarcerated

Your top priority should be to protect yourself from coronavirus infection:

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer before eating or touching your face, eyes, or mouth and after touching surfaces frequently touched by others, like cell doors, counters, phones, and bathroom surfaces.
- **Stay six feet away** from anyone with flu-like symptoms if possible, especially if they are coughing or sneezing. If you come into contact with such a person, shower or wash your hands and face and change and launder your clothes.
- **Every day, sanitize the surfaces in your cell** with disinfectant. If possible, sanitize eating surfaces before eating.
- **Do not share** glasses, utensils, dishes, towels, bedding.

If you have flu-like symptoms:

- **Report** your symptoms to health services and **ask for a coronavirus test**.
- **Cough or sneeze into tissue or your elbow**.
- Stay away from groups. Jail officials should isolate you from others.
- Do not touch others.

If you have contact with anyone with flu-like symptoms:

- **Report** the contact to health services and **ask for a coronavirus test**, especially if you had prolonged contact, if the person coughed or sneezed, or if you had contact with the person's bodily fluids.
- Stay away from groups. Jail officials should quarantine you if you have been exposed to coronavirus.

If you are at high risk of complications from coronavirus because you are:

Pregnant

60 or Older

Medically Fragile (heart or lung disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV+, other immune diseases),

in addition to the foregoing precautions, you may want to request release as described

4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

Phone: (415) 255-7036
Fax: (415) 552-3150

www.prisonerswithchildren.org

later in this manual.

How to Advocate for Proper Coronavirus Precautions in Your Facility:

All correctional facilities should:

- **Provide adequate soap and disinfectant free** to all incarcerated persons.
- **Provide hand sanitizer** when hand washing facilities are not available.
- Aggressively **sanitize high-touch surfaces throughout the facility** including phones, counters, tables, eating surfaces, doorknobs, faucets, and all bathroom surfaces. **Bathrooms should be sanitized three times a day.**
- Ensure **adequate supply of coronavirus testing kits.** Until kits are available, symptomatic people should be tested for influenza and, if they test negative, treated as presumptive coronavirus carriers.
- **Promptly test** people with flu-like symptoms for coronavirus.
- **Isolate** people with coronavirus from all others.
- **Quarantine** nonsymptomatic people exposed to coronavirus, separating them from non-exposed people.
- **Publicly report** anonymized testing results by facility.
- **Screen incoming staff, contractors and volunteers** for fever (taking temperatures) and other symptoms and for exposure to coronavirus, and exclude those with symptoms or exposure.
- **Not unnecessarily penalize incarcerated people by locking down facilities or cancelling programming or visits** as virus control measures when other measures are available. Visitors can all be screened for symptoms and directed to wash hands, and visiting areas can be thoroughly sanitized.
- If contact visits must be cancelled, **no-contact visits should be permitted and** all incarcerated persons should be given **free access to phone or video visits** as a temporary alternative to in-person visits.
- **Reduce crowding by releasing** pretrial detainees and incarcerated persons with lower-level convictions and/or with closer release dates.
- **Release those at high risk of complications** from a coronavirus infection to protect their health and lives.

You can help enforce these standards by **filing internal grievances** if you observe that these precautions are not being followed.

How to Seek Release if You are High Risk of Complications from Coronavirus:

You may want to complete the attached Petition for Release Due to Coronavirus Pandemic and submit it to prison officials and your state's governor, or jail officials and the local Public Defender and District Attorney. You may also want to ask your loved ones to write letters to their state and local elected representatives advocating for your release.

NOTE: This is not an official form. LSPC has created this form to help incarcerated people petition for release in the absence of any formal procedure. If the government establishes a form or mechanism to petition for release, you should resubmit your request on the official form.

Petition for Release Due to Coronavirus Pandemic

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children has created this form to help incarcerated people who are at high risk of complications from a coronavirus infection to petition for release in order to protect their lives and health. **This is not an official form.** If the government creates an official form or mechanism to request such relief, you should resubmit your request.

DATE: _____

NAME: _____ ID #: _____

FACILITY: _____ Housing: _____

I should be released to reduce risky overcrowded conditions because I am a nondangerous pretrial detainee or I am close to my release date:

My charges (if not yet convicted, haven't pled guilty): _____

OR my convictions: _____

My sentence: _____ My release date: _____

I am at high risk of complications from a coronavirus infection because (check all that apply):

___ Pregnant: Due date _____; my pregnancy complications: _____

___ 60 or older: Age: _____ ___ Cancer diagnosis: _____

___ Heart disease: _____ ___ Lung disease/asthma: _____

___ Diabetes: Type ___ A1C ___ ___ Immune Disease: _____

I am not adequately protected from a coronavirus infection at this facility because (describe the conditions that threaten you with infection, such as inadequate sanitation of facility or availability of soap, disinfectant, or hand washing facilities; inadequate isolation of symptomatic people; inadequate quarantine of exposed persons; inadequate exclusion of symptomatic or exposed staff, contractors or volunteers, inadequate testing and reporting, or inadequate health care for the infected):

If I am released from custody, I will be better protected from coronavirus infection or complications because:

I will live at: _____

I will be cared for by: _____

___ I have no housing or caretaker, but I should be relased to transitional housing or a health facility to protect by health or life.

My release will not pose an unreasonable risk to public safety because:

ATTACH this form to a prison or jail grievance form and submit to prison or jail officials.
SEND COPIES: If in prison, send a copy of the form to your governor. If in jail, send copies to the public defender and district attorney. Also send copies to your loved ones and ask them to write to state or local elected representatives asking for your release.
IF CONDITIONS CHANGE, submit an AMENDED PETITION with updated information.