

Understanding DOC Administrative Policies

The Department of Corrections has many policies, but it has a group of core policies referred to as DC-ADMs. These policies govern the basic operations of state prisons and treatment of its inmates. Below is a summary of each.

DC-ADM 001 – Inmate Abuse Allegation Monitoring – This policy ensures that inmates are not subjected to corporal or unusual punishment or personal abuse or injury. It provides definitions outlining what abuse is and provides directions for how allegations may be reported. It also provides details about abuse allegation investigations, collection of evidence (including photography of physical injuries, etc.).

DC-ADM 002 – Inmate Cable Television Service – This policy provides general population and certain administrative custody status inmates the opportunity to purchase cable television service from the cable service provider. It outlines the responsibilities of the cable service provider, the inmates, the business office and the unit manager.

DC-ADM 003 – Release of Information – This policy establishes procedures and responses to requests for information. It ensures that information is released in accordance with applicable laws and department policy. The policy includes specific protocol for requesting inmate information, requesting department information and Right-To-Know Law requests (including staff responsibilities, fees, etc.).

DC-ADM 004 – Criminal Violations – This policy ensures that prosecution and/or administrative action is used to process and investigate all alleged criminal acts. All alleged acts must be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authority and disposed of. The policy covers criminal complaints by inmates and criminal complaints against inmates.

DC-ADM 005 – Collection of Inmate Debts – This policy states that the department can collect, consistent with current law, all inmate debts which it is authorized to collect, and transmit the proceeds to the appropriate party/parties. The policy includes responsibilities of central office and facilities, court orders and filing fees, information on different collections and financial information provided upon release.

DC-ADM 006 – Reasonable Accommodations for Inmates with Disabilities – This policy establishes procedures for an inmate to request an accommodation for a qualified disability that affects a major life activity. It ensures that every inmate, including an inmate with a qualified disability, is housed safely and that reasonable accommodations are made in regards to programs, services and activities offered.

DC-ADM 007 – Access to Provided Legal Services – This policy ensures that legal reference materials are acquired, maintained and made available to an inmate, and that assistance in the use of legal reference materials is made available to an eligible inmate.

DC-ADM 008 – Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) – This policy establishes zero-tolerance for any form of sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate or reentrant under the supervision of the Department. Anyone who engages in, fails to report, or knowingly condones sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate or reentrant shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may be subject to criminal

prosecution. A claim of consent will not be accepted as an affirmative defense for engaging in sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate or reentrant. The department prohibits retaliation against an inmate, reentrant, or staff member who reports sexual abuse or sexual harassment or who cooperates with an investigation into such conduct. This policy outlines the Department's strategies to prevent, detect, and respond to allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in a manner that is consistent with the national PREA standards.

DC-ADM 009 – News Media Relations – This policy establishes procedures for informing the public and the news media of events within the department's areas of responsibility. The department shall ensure that an area is identified in each facility that is accessible to news media representatives and that a contact person is designated for routine requests for information at each facility. The policy includes general access information and procedures for filming department property, news media access to inmates, news media access to employees, news media coverage of emergency situations at a department facility, requests by movie companies and public information officer guidelines.

DC-ADM 201 – Use of Force – This policy states that the use of force against an inmate is authorized when the acting staff member reasonably believes such force is necessary to accomplish certain objectives, including the protection of self or others. When force is used, a staff member should use the least amount of force reasonably necessary and the use of force will stop once control is achieved. Force is not authorized as a means of punishment or revenge. Deadly force against an inmate is authorized only when the acting staff member reasonably believes such force is necessary, and that a lesser degree of force would be ineffective or insufficient. Planned uses of force shall be videotaped, and every incident of use of force shall be reported, documented, and reviewed. Every employee shall receive training regarding the contents of this policy.

DC-ADM 203 – Searches of Inmates and Cells – This policy prohibits the introduction and presence of unauthorized weapons, drugs and other contraband that presents serious threats to the security and proper management of a correctional facility. It calls for searches of facilities and inmates to control contraband and provide for its disposition. The policy includes information on cell searches, K-9 inspection, pat searches, strip searches and body cavity searches.

DC-ADM 610 – Food Services – This policy establishes standards and procedures for the preparation and service of all food items. These standards ensure compliance in maintaining the highest professional standards of security, sanitation, physical hygiene, food handling practices and safety. Menus are written to produce nutritious, well-balanced meals that meet or exceed the macronutrient needs for the majority of the DOC population as established by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Therapeutic diets and nutritional interventions are provided when medically necessary as prescribed by a physician, psychiatrist, dentist, physician assistant or nurse practitioner. Religious diets are provided as required to meet the needs of religious groups in accordance with department policy DC-ADM 819, "Religious Activities."

DC-ADM 801 – Inmate Discipline – This policy establishes a disciplinary process that provides clear notice or prohibited behavior, outlines a fundamentally fair hearing process and establishes consistent sanctions for violations of Department rules and regulations.

Additionally, the policy states that information concerning an inmate's criminal acts shall be forwarded to appropriate court or law enforcement officials for consideration for prosecution. The policy specifically covers misconducts and rule violations, informal resolution, misconduct hearings, disposition of charges and misconduct sanctions, appeals, disciplinary custody status inmates, community corrections and assessment of financial losses and costs.

DC-ADM 802 – Administrative Custody Procedures – This policy allows for placement of an inmate in Administrative Custody (AC) status whose presence in general population would constitute a threat to life, property, himself/herself, staff, other inmates, the public or the secure or orderly running of the facility. The policy covers specifics of the placement process, administrative hearings and release from AC status.

DC-ADM 803 – Inmate Mail and Incoming Publications – This policy allows an inmate access to communication with members of society through the established public mail system. Facilities are to inspect mail, determine the types of publications allowed and review publications intended for inmates. Restrictions are related directly to facility order and security, public safety and obscenity laws and statutes.

DC-ADM 804 – Inmate Grievance System – This policy ensures that every individual committed to DOC custody has access to a formal procedure through which to seek resolution of problems or other issues of concern arising during the course of confinement. For every such issue, there shall be a forum for review and two avenues of appeal.

DC-ADM 805 – Outside Work and Housing Units, CWP, Forestry Units, Armed Mounted Work Detail, Administrative Procedures and Temporary Hold Ins – This policy ensures that each inmate being considered for placement in an outside work or housing assignment is reviewed and approved by a formal staffing process. In instances involving problematic cases, each inmate must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate regional deputy secretary and, in specific cases, approved by the secretary.

DC-ADM 807 – Inmate Grooming and Barber/Cosmetology Programs – This policy allows inmates personal freedom in their appearance as long as it does not conflict with the facility's procedures for safety, security, identification and sanitation efforts. This policy also gives guidelines for vocational programming in the barber/cosmetology fields.

DC-ADM 812 – Inmate Visiting Privileges – This policy sets forth standardized rules and procedures governing inmate visiting privileges to facilitate a fair and consistent implementation of this policy. The policy includes general procedures, procedures for special inquiries and visits, security procedures and procedures for private viewings and deathbed visits.

DC-ADM 813 – Guest Speakers – This policy furthers the communication of ideas, philosophies and information by permitting representatives of recognized and approved organizations to speak to the inmate population or a segment of the inmate population. The policy covers requests and request determinations.

DC-ADM 815 – Personal Property, State Issued Items, and Commissary/Outside Purchases – This policy ensures inmates are provided with basic hygiene items, clothing items, and the opportunity to purchase a reasonable variety of items in addition to those

furnished by the facility. Inmates are permitted to purchase and possess only those items approved as personal property, issued by the facility, and/or listed on the Approved Correctional Industries (CI) Catalog or authorized for outside purchase. Limitations on the amount and variety of inmate property may be imposed for security, hygiene, and/or safety reasons. Commissary funds will be independently audited following standard accounting procedures and an annual financial report will be produced.

DC-ADM 816 – Inmate Compensation – This policy states that the department should compensate an inmate for participating in work and/or education programs. An inmate is not an employee of the department. Compensation and opportunities to advance provide positive reinforcement for developing good work habits that are important for the inmate’s reintegration into the community upon release. The policy covers general procedures, responsibilities and payroll information.

DC-ADM 818 – Automated Inmate Telephone System – This policy grants inmates the privilege of legitimate telephone communications with individuals in the community, while at the same time protecting society from harm, including, but not limited to criminal activity, harassment, threats and intimidation using the inmate telephone system. The policy covers general procedures, privileges and restrictions and electronic surveillance.

DC-ADM 819 – Religious Activities – This policy ensures that the department accommodates inmates’ religious beliefs consistent with the security needs and orderly administration of the facility by providing for the orderly management of religious opportunities for all inmates under the department’s jurisdiction.

DC-ADM 820 – Co-Payment for Medical Services – This policy discusses the department’s right to require a co-payment fee whereby an inmate will share in the cost of his/her medical services. It covers co-pay fees and the Medical Services Program.

DC-ADM 821 – Inmate Marriages – This policy permits inmates to marry while incarcerated, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the accompanying procedures manual. The policy discusses marriage requests, obtainment of license and the performance of ceremonies.

DC-ADM 822 – Inmate Organization Picnics/Banquets and Inmate Fundraisers – This policy permits picnics, banquets and fundraisers for inmate organizations. A facility is not required to permit one of these events. The policy discusses general guidelines, the request process, inmate/visitor eligibility, security and menu/cost.

You can view these basic DOC policies and all others on the DOC’s website at <http://www.cor.pa.gov/About%20Us/Pages/DOC-Policies.aspx>