



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Corrections Announces Book, Publications Policy

Inmates again have direct contact with book donation groups, families may send books

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Corrections (DOC) today announced details of its new book and publication policy aimed at addressing inmate, family and book donation group requests while ensuring safety for all.

“We have listened to inmates and their families and friends and to publication organizations and we have developed what we believe is a fair procedure that balances our need for security with the inmates’ access to books,” Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. “This policy update allows inmates to have direct contact with book donation organizations through a security processing center and ensures that publications will not be used as a path by which drugs are introduced into our facilities.”

The updated policy includes the following provisions:

- Book donation organizations will continue to send donated books to individual inmates as they have done in the past.
- Family and friends may purchase publications through an “original source,” which includes publishers, bookstores and online distributors.
- Inmates may order publications through catalogs.
- Inmates with tablets may choose to purchase eBooks. The number of eBooks will continue to expand based on input by inmates and the DOC will continue to look for free eBook offerings.
- Prison libraries will continue to offer thousands of titles and expand their offerings based on inmate requests.

The new inmate book policy requires publications (defined as books and magazines) to be sent to the DOC’s new Security Processing Center (SPC), at this mailing address:

Security Processing Center
Inmate name, Inmate #
268 Bricker Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823

At the SPC, which will operate five days a week, DOC security staff will conduct thorough security screenings of all incoming publications. After publications clear the SPC, they will be sent to the mailroom at the prison where the inmate is located. From there, books and publications will be delivered to inmates.

Newspaper subscriptions will continue to be processed at the individual SCIs.

The DOC will notify publication companies and book donation groups of the new SPC mailing address. Family and friends of inmates cannot send publications directly to inmates and must work with original source book providers or sellers. Books will only be delivered via book vendors and book donation groups.

Facilities receiving publications that are addressed to a specific state prison rather than to the SPC will be returned to the sender.

Inmates who already have publication, i.e., magazine subscriptions, have until Dec. 31, 2018 to contact the publisher to change the mailing address to the SPC's address. Newspapers may continue to be addressed to the specific SCI.

This publication processing change was prompted by a rash of inmate and employee illnesses following contact with illegal drugs that had been smuggled into the prison system by mail, visits and publications.

"The DOC will still take input on the policy as we work to continue to allow inmates access to books of their choosing while making our prisons safer," Sec. Wetzel said.

Policies were first announced on September 4. Additional work to add body scanners, drone detection systems and electronic drug detection equipment continues. On October 19, [DOC officials announced that their anti-drug policies were working](#).

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