

CITIZENS FOR PRISON REFORM

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Introduction and Welcome

Thank you for accessing our Resource Guide!

We are Citizens for Prison Reform, and we seek to support you on your journey with a loved one on the inside in the MDOC.

You may feel alone and unsure of how to navigate the prison system, but we are here to help you break through the stigma and become a more effective advocate for your loved one. The information, links, and resources you will find in this guide will help you support yourself and your loved one.

Our monthly meetings are on the 3rd Saturday of each month at a Lansing Church that has provided us space. Our meetings are free, not affiliated with any church and open to the public. Please check out [our website](#) for updated meeting information and location.

Please contact us at [**micpr.org@gmail.com**](mailto:micpr.org@gmail.com) or leave a message on our message line at 269-339-0606 with questions or comments. Also, you may sign up to receive monthly meeting information on the home page of our website. There are hyperlinks throughout this document that will take you to important forms and documents.

As Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

In addition, Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Our lives begin to the end the day we becomes silent about the things that matter.”

General Information

The Michigan Department of Corrections is the branch of the state government responsible for management and administration of Michigan prisons. In nearly every possible area of administration, there is a Policy Directive that describes the Department's official policy regarding a problem you may be encountering. Policy Directives are available online [here](#). This guide also provides direct links to other Policy Directives of interest.

Addresses and Phone Numbers of MDOC Facilities

The MDOC can be contacted at: (517) 335-1426. Their address is:
Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
206 East Michigan Ave., PO Box 30003
Lansing, MI 48909

Upon Entry to the MDOC:

All important documents of an inmate should be kept in a safe place by someone on the outside. This includes their Pre-sentence Investigation Report, any photo ID, birth certificate, passport, certificates, work history, or anything that would be significant for a possible parole hearing or re-entering the community.

For specific MDOC policies, use [this link](#) to search for specific policy directives.

For a list of all prisons, addresses, and phone numbers use [this link](#).

Online Offender Search

If you are unaware of the location of a prisoner or require information on transfers (usually updated within 48 hours), please visit [this link](#).

To find the phone numbers and e-mail addresses for MDOC or other State of Michigan Employees use [this link](#).

Please note that you need to know at least the first letter of a staff member's first name and the last name in order to conduct a proper search. The more information you are able to enter narrows the search to make it easier.

It is also possible that not all employees are listed. There are benefits to e-mailing questions and brief concerns rather than by phone and it can be easier for the staff, however, it is imperative that you be courteous, respectful, stick to facts and state the questions you have regarding your loved one's care.

Always record the name of whom you spoke with on the phone. Creating a log book is helpful - keep a record of conversations, moves, and any significant incident. When in-person, note the name tag information.

MDOC Family Informational Packet

Michigan Department of Corrections has created their own family informational packet [on their website](#).

Policies Relating to New Inmates

Policy Directive 04.01 General Provisions

Prisoner Reception and Guidance Centers

All male and female offenders who are sentenced to prison are taken first to a receiving area or "Reception and Guidance Center" (RG&C) where they are tested, evaluated and classified to the institution to which they will eventually be sent. The receiving process normally takes about 10 days, but prisoners frequently remain in reception units three to five weeks longer while they wait for a cell in the particular prison to which they have been assigned.

There are two reception areas in the Michigan prison system. The Charles Egeler Reception and Guidance Center, located at the former State Prison of Southern Michigan, is where men over the age of 17, and male parole violators, are sent. Male prisoners sentenced in the U.P. will be received at Marquette Branch Prison and transferred to the appropriate reception facility as soon as possible. Women are received at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility. For more information about Reception and Guidance Center Policy, find information [here](#) and [here](#).

Prisoner Orientation

Prisoners shall receive an orientation upon arrival at a Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) facility as set forth in an MDOC Policy Directive. The Orientation shall be provided to prisoners within one week after arrival at the facility unless unavailable (e.g., out on writ; hospitalized); in such cases, orientation shall be provided as soon as possible after they become available. The policy directive lists what should be provided in an orientation and states that an orientation must be unique to the prisoner's segregation unit or security level.

For more information, please view the policy directive 04.01.140 [here](#).

Prisoner Treatment Policy

Standards exist for the humane treatment of prisoners and for the provision of decent living conditions. This Policy Directive on humane treatment, PD 03.03.130 can be found [here](#).

Prisoner Guidebook

Policy Directive 04.01.130

At every prison the Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) is to provide each prisoner in general population, protective segregation or a reception facility a Prisoner Guidebook containing information regarding Department policies and institutional procedures. Most prisons have outdated guidebooks, due to the cost of paper and ever-changing Policy Directives and operating procedures. All facilities have posted rules and a Master Guide of Operating Procedures in the Prison Library.

A version of the guidebook prisoners receive is available [here](#) and the Policy Directive regarding the guidebook can be viewed [here](#).

Prisoner Release of Information

Upon entry into MDOC, and upon movement to a new facility, a prisoner should request to sign a “Release of Information” form, which will give the individual they request the right to obtain their medical and mental health condition. This would be done through medical or mental health staff, putting in a kite (request) for such. This form is good for one year and from facility to facility. The form can be downloaded from the Family Information Packet on the MDOC website [here](#).

Inmate Services

Phone Services

Policy Directive 05.03.130

Phone service is set up through Connect Network GTL at 800-483-8314.

Inmates can purchase phone time on a prepaid debit PIN system, call collect (if a phone service allows this) or individuals can set up a prepaid account with a credit card [here](#) or by calling **(855) 466-2832**.

If you would like more information on MDOC's policy regarding prisoner phone use and selection of personal phone numbers, please visit [this link](#).

Sending Items to Inmates

Policy Directive 04.02.130

For the most part, approved property must be purchased by prisoners through the prisoner store or Trust Fund. To view the policy on prisoner store please visit [here](#).

Sending Money

Money is sent to a Prisoner via GTL Financial Services. All deposits from family members and other members of the public will be processed by GTL Financial Services. Money orders will need to be made payable to GTL Financial Services and sent to the lockbox address below. [A Deposit form](#) must be included with the money order, and mailed to the following:

GTL Financial Services

5700 SW 34th St. Suite 1315

Gainesville, FL 32608

Customer Service: 877-650-4249

There will be no processing cost for any funds sent to the GTL lockbox. A processing cost for on-line and phone transactions still applies.

Any notes or letters included with the mailing will be discarded by GTL.

Deposits may not exceed \$300.00 in value and all money orders must be issued in US dollars.

Deposit forms are available at each correctional facility and on-line.

Any questions regarding processing of money orders should be directed to GTL at **877-650-4249**.

GTL will accept deposits to prisoner's accounts electronically [here](#) or via phone.

Fees apply to both of these transaction types. More information about the current rates and delivery times can be found on the GTL website.

All funds received must comply with PD 04.02.105 [Prisoner Funds and Director's Office Memorandum 2017-18.](#)

Deposited Funds are subject to collection by the Michigan Department of Corrections to pay for obligations imposed by the sentencing court or the Michigan Department of Corrections in accordance with applicable Departmental policies.

Sending Books or Magazines

Policy Directive 05.03.118

Books can be sent directly from publishers or approved vendors listed below. Members of the public may purchase allowable books, magazines and other publications, provided the publications are new, not used and are sent directly from an approved internet vendor. **It must state it is NEW from that vendor or from the publisher. No used books or items are allowed.** Prisoners are not allowed to receive the publication if sold and or mailed by a private individual. It is important to note that you cannot purchase books from the store or ship directly through a local store. Choose the option to include a gift receipt when ordering from Amazon.

Approved internet vendors include:

Amazon.com

BarnesandNoble.com

EdwardRHamilton.com

Prisonlegalnews.org

SchulerBooks.com

Walmart.com

Visually Impaired -- [American Printing House for the Blind](#)

For MDOC policy on book or magazine rejections please visit [this link.](#)

Friends and Family Pack Program

Policy Directive 04.02.135

The FFP Program is a Department-approved customized package program that allows family members and others to send authorized items to prisoners while safeguarding against the introduction of contraband. Prisoners in general population also may place orders for their personal use in accordance with institutional ordering procedures. A vendor kiosk identifying items available for purchase through the FFP Program is available to prisoners in each general population housing unit and in other areas of the institution.

There is a limit of \$100, not including tax and shipping, per FFP order placed. For prisoners, this is in addition to the \$100 bi-weekly limit on the purchase of Standardized Store List items from the prisoner store. Only one FFP order may be

placed by or for a prisoner per quarter (i.e., Jan-Mar; Apr-Jun; Jul-Sep; Oct-Dec). Only the first order placed by or for a prisoner each quarter will be processed, regardless of who placed the order or the value of the order.

Prisoners are prohibited from receiving FFP orders known to be purchased by or on behalf of another prisoner, parolee, or probationer. Prisoners also are prohibited from receiving FFP orders known to be purchased by a family member of another prisoner, parolee, or probationer unless the purchaser also is a family member of the prisoner receiving the item. A “family member” is defined as a grandparent, parent, stepparent, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, child, stepchild, grandchild, sibling, stepbrother, and stepsister; an aunt and/or uncle also is considered a family member if there is adequate verification that the aunt and/or uncle served as a surrogate parent of the prisoner. Violations of these rules could result in a restriction of FFP privileges.

Prisoners in segregation are not eligible to receive FFP orders. If an order is placed for one of these prisoners, it will not be delivered and will instead be returned to the vendor. An order returned for this reason will not be counted toward the quarterly limit. Orders received for prisoners that are temporarily outside of a MDOC due to a court writ will have their order returned after 5 days. The order will not count against their quarterly limit.

For additional information about this program, see [here](#) or visit the [FFP website](#).

Sending a JPay Email

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM 2018 – 2

You can send e-mails by going to [JPAY's website](#). You must have an account for this service and there is a fee for using this service. Prisoners can send responses using this service for a fee on their end as well.

Please note: Prisoners can only respond to someone who has sent them a message through JPAY. If the prisoner is on Loss of Privileges, they may not be able to receive JPAY mail at all facilities.

For more information on MDOC's policy regarding electronic communication, visit [here](#).

Sending Mail to a Prisoner

Policy Directive 05.03.118

Prisoner mail is identified as any written, typed or printed communication of information. Mail is prohibited if it is a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the facility, may facilitate or encourage criminal activity, or may interfere with the rehabilitation of the prisoner. For detailed information about prohibited mail see MDOC [PD 05.03.118](#) discussing this.

When writing to a prisoner using the US Postal Service, the envelope must include the address of the facility where the prisoner is located as well as the offender's name and MDOC number. If you do not know this information, you can search the OTIS Database, located [here](#).

For example:

John A. Smith, #123456
Michigan Correctional Facility
123 Prison Street
Anytown, MI 48909

The following also applies to mail sent to a prisoner confined in the Michigan Department of Corrections:

- Personal mail will be removed from the original envelope and placed in a plain envelope for delivery. The original envelope will be discarded.
- You should include the prisoner's name, MDOC identification number and your return address on the envelope and as well on the letter itself.
- You should also include the prisoner's name, MDOC identification number and your return address on the mail included inside the envelope.
- Mail containing stains of any type including but not limited to perfume, lipstick, oily substances, watermarks, body fluids, etc., are not allowed.
- Mail which includes the use of crayon, highlighter or other markers on the paper, glitter, lipstick marks, unusual stains, body fluids, perfumes, oils or other foreign or unknown substance on the paper are not allowed. (Mail written or printed in colored ink is permitted).
- Mail that is taped, pasted or otherwise joined or fastened to another item by other than a staple is not allowed.
- Greeting cards must be no larger than 6" x 8", single fold, commercially produced and made of standard cardstock with no embellishments, including but not limited to cutouts, jewels, raised areas, etc.

- Mail including photographs and pictures are allowed only if written or printed on white, standard weight paper (white lined paper is permitted).
- Mail including photographs and pictures received on non-white, heavy weight (i.e., greater than 24 pound) or construction paper or using card stock or photo paper is not allowed.

NIXLE (Everbridge)

Sign up to receive alerts from MDOC for a specific prison [at this website](#). This can be useful to learn of canceled visitations or other important information. Go to the list of prisons, click on the prison your loved one is located at, scroll down to the bottom of the page and sign up for NIXLE there.

Visitation

Policy Directive 05.03.140

A prisoner must complete a Visitor List, identifying immediate family members and only 10 other visitors. All of these persons on the prisoner list must then complete the [Visiting Application](#). A prisoner must submit their visitor list prior to an application being sent from someone applying; otherwise, the application will be denied and have to be resubmitted. This application must be completed and sent back to the facility in which they are located for approval before you are allowed to visit.

For information on transportation assistance please visit [this website](#).

To view the visitation policy of the MDOC website, refer to [this link](#).

If you are dealing with a sick prisoner or wish a prisoner to attend an immediate family member's funeral see MDOC Policy [here](#).

There will be transportation and other costs to enable a prisoner to attend a funeral. If these costs are unmanageable, contact CPR for advice.

Visitation Guidelines

Make sure to print and review the [Visiting Standards Document](#) for important rules and regulations regarding such things as: days and times, dress codes, holiday visits, etc. Dress codes are strictly enforced so please review policy carefully.

What to Expect During a Visit

Please note: Each prison may set its own visiting standards. It is highly recommended you call each prison to determine their restrictions and verify your loved one may have a visit *before* making a trip to the facility. Ask about restrictions as they do vary between prisons and not all are listed in the MDOC Visiting Standards document.

Vending Machines

Ask what is needed to purchase food from the vending machines; often you have to buy a card with a \$1.00 bill and then use higher bills to put money on the card. Refunds are possible through the vending company, but not easily done. Some facilities still require quarters to use in the vending machines.

An outside contracted company, not MDOC, controls the vending machines and its supplies. It is not the same company for the entire state.

If you lose money at the vending machines at the prison, you must fill out a loss of money slip at the front desk when you leave the visiting room. The vending machine company is supposed to refund your money upon completion of the slip via mail. If there are other problems, such as a lack of supplies or condiments you can mention this to prison staff.

However, if your concerns are not addressed, you may wish to consider contacting the manager of the vending company.

Comment Cards

There are to be comment postcards that you may fill out. They are in the waiting area by the front desk. You may wish to compliment staff, or express your concerns. They are postage paid and can be dropped off in a mailbox once you leave the prison. You may remain anonymous. If they are not out, you can ask for one from the Officer at the front desk.

Grievances

Policy Directive 03.02.130

A prisoner should first follow the chain of command and steps to communicate the issue at hand: filing a request (Kite) form, then attempt to resolve all issues with various staff prior to filing a grievance. Often this can be accomplished.

Filing a Grievance

Prisoners and parolees shall be provided with an effective method of seeking redress for alleged violations of policy and procedure or unsatisfactory conditions of confinement.

Complaints filed by prisoners regarding grievable issues as defined in the policy directive outlined below serve to exhaust a prisoner's administrative remedies only when filed as a grievance through all three steps of the grievance process in compliance with [the policy](#).

American Friends Service Committee (prisoner advocacy organization) has a simplified version of the grievance procedure [located here](#) that is very informative.

See a simple [grievance explanation chart](#) created by the Family Advisory Board. For a more complex grievance explanation and instructions, see the MDOC Grievance Procedure Document [here](#).

The MDOC Family Information Packet info on grievances can also be found [here](#).

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

Any person can request a copy of a Central Office file or records on a prisoner, parolee or probationer who:

- Is currently under the supervision of the MDOC
- Was under the supervision of the MDOC within the past five years

There will be a fee for processing these records. Certain records are moved to Central Office such as hearing packets, misconducts, and critical incident reports. You would need to complete a FOIA request document to obtain those records.

Other records will be at the prison where the prisoner is located currently. These would be Mental Health or Medical Health records. There is a specific form that must be used to obtain these records. This is the form that would need to be sent into the prisoner to complete, unless you have legal guardianship.

The Prisoner Record Medical and Mental Health Disclosure/Release Form can be found [here](#). The FOIA Coordinator will send your request on to the facility if the records you are seeking are located at the facility your loved one is at, rather than Central Office.

Please note: Your loved one may need to write up permission to release records for FOIA in addition to signing the form for Medical/Mental Health Records. Documents that give you the right to their records may include guardianship documentation, court power of attorney, or any other legal standing document.

A more detailed explanation on the FOIA process can be found [here](#).

A template FOIA and samples of documents you might request prior to a parole hearing or for gathering information can be found [here](#).

A complex FOIA form to obtain all critical incident documents and attachments possible can be found [here](#).

Sample FOIA Form

The following showcases how a FOIA form should be filled out. You should try to be specific with the type of information you are requesting and should include dates:

Your address

Your city, state, and zip code

Date

FOIA Coordinator

Address of Institution OR Michigan Department of Corrections
City/State/Zip OR PO Box 30003 Lansing, MI 48909

Dear FOIA Coordinator:

Pursuant to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCLA 15.231 et. seq., I am requesting copies of the following records:

The critical incident report describing an incident that involved John Doe 111111 and Rudy Roe 222222 that occurred March 22, 2007 at approximately 10:30 a.m. at the Muskegon Correctional Facility.

Please contact me with the cost of processing the above request and forward the records to me at the above address.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

A request to the central office can be sent to: FOIA Coordinator
Michigan Department of Corrections

PO Box 30003

Lansing, MI 48909

Ombudsman's Office

Policy Directive 03.02.135

If you have concerns about a specific individual or about general policy in an institution, you can contact this agency. The Ombudsman's is a legislative oversight body to report back to the legislative body on the Department of Corrections. The office may conduct investigations and works to resolve issues within the department.

You can learn more about this agency [here](#). They may also be contacted at (517) 373-8573 or Ombudsman@legislature.mi.gov. You can also view MDOC's policy on the Ombudsman's office [here](#).

Disciplinary Proceedings

Policy Directive 03.03.105

Disciplinary sanctions may be imposed against prisoners for rule violations. A prisoner charged with misconduct (ticket) is to be given the right to be present at the misconduct hearing. Alleged violations of written rules are classified as Class I, Class II, or Class III misconduct and are further defined in Attachments A, B, and C of this policy. Misconduct reports may be written only for violations identified in these attachments.

For the detailed policy on disciplinary proceedings please view [this link](#).

Parole

Policy Directives 06.06.100, 06.06.103, and 06.06.105

Information on parole, commutation and clemency processes can be found on [MDOC's website](#). It is recommended that months leading up to a loved one's parole hearing, families learn more about the parole process and parole board members.

One family member or advocate may participate in the parole hearing process with their loved one. Please read the policy to see who may or may not participate and to learn what the current process is.

A parole packet should be put together by a loved one on the outside. This should contain a primary letter from the person who will provide housing, financial and emotional support. Additional letters from a possible employer, friend, neighbor, and mentor are possibilities to consider. It is recommended to have the individual inside send home copies of all programs and classes they attend, whether they are required or not and to include these in the parole packet. They may include a letter.

A template FOIA and samples of documents you might request prior to a parole hearing or for gathering information can be found [here](#).

It is suggested to mail the packet together in one envelope to the parole board office at least 30 days in advance if possible. If you do not have a 30 day notice, you should fax the packet and call to be sure they received it. Be considerate of their time.

Parole Board Office	Phone number: 517-373-0270
Grandview Plaza,	Fax number: 517-335-0039
P.O. Box 30003	
Lansing, MI 48909	

The Executive order about Parole Board can be found on [this website](#).

CPR created a webinar to help families understand and prepare for the parole process. The webinar can be found [here](#). [Here](#) is a helpful booklet prepared by American Friends that describes the parole process. These resources provide information on how prisoners and families can prepare for the parole interview.

For reentry assistance, please utilize these resources: [SADO's Reentry Services Locator](#) and [Jobs for Felons Hub](#).

Medical Health Services

General Health Care

Policy Directive 04.06

Health care services are provided to prisoners using a standard of medically necessary care in accordance with court decisions, legislation, accepted correctional and health care standards, and MDOC policies and procedures. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Due to the confidential nature of health information, your loved one will need to fill out a kite request to sign a Release of Information [Release Form](#). This should be done so that you may communicate directly with those in charge of your loved one's mental and/or medical health care. Custody is not allowed to give out information about a loved one's medical or mental health condition due to HIPPA laws, without this form being signed.

Bureau of Health – Central Office Communication

The Bureau of Health is located in Central Office in Lansing. If you feel your concerns are not being addressed at the prison level regarding medical or mental health, you may contact them at (517) 373-3629, and e-mail address is MDOCQAO-communications@michigan.gov. Please be sure to include the full name of the prisoner and/or a prisoner number when sending information.

Mental Health Services

Policy Directive 04.06.180

The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides prison-based mental health services to prisoners with mental or behavioral disorders housed in reception centers, general population, or segregation units. Psychological Services Units (PSU's), located at each prison, are also operated by the MDOC's Bureau of Health (information located [here](#)).

For more detailed information on Mental Health Policies, visit [here](#) and [here](#).

Recipient Rights Specialists

Every prisoner who is diagnosed with a mental illness by the prison is to receive a [Mental Health Rights Booklet](#). If an inmate feels their rights are not being addressed, there is a form in the booklet for them to fill out, where they can [request to see the Recipient Rights Specialist](#).

Segregation Policy

[Here](#) is MDOC's policy on segregation for those with mental illness and more information on these specific services can be found [here](#).

You can access the Mental Health Guidebook [here](#) and the MDOC's policy directive on Mental Health Treatment [here](#).

If you need to obtain mental health records, please read on. These records will be at the prison where the prisoner is located currently. These would be Mental Health or Medical Health records. There is a specific form ([Prisoner Record Medical/Mental Health Disclosure/Release Form](#)) that must be used to obtain these records. This is the form that would need to be sent into the prisoner to complete, unless you have legal guardianship.

Durable Power of Attorney Information

Policy Directive 03.04.107

The Advanced Directives for Health Care Prisoners Policy can be found [here](#).

We recommend you send in the [MDOC Durable Power of Attorney Designation Form](#) and the [MDOC Acceptance as a Prisoner Advocate Form](#) for your loved one to review and discuss prior to calling the facility to set up arrangements for these documents to be signed and witnessed. Make sure you leave with a copy.

It is recommended you then mail a copy to MDOC Central Office for their files, as well as back into the Unit, and the Warden of the facility. These forms are unique and for within the Department of Corrections only.

Additional Information

To see the Michigan Compiled Laws, Administrative Rules, and SOAHR Rules, visit [this website](#). For information on County Jails, visit [this website](#).

Advocacy Organizations

[American Friends Service Committee \(AFSC\)](#) is a service of the Michigan Criminal Justice Program of the American Friends Service Committee. Their work is rooted in an advocacy and community-organizing model. They assist prisoners and their loved ones with their individual problems and provide them with tools to help them become strong advocates for themselves. [A Booklet](#) produced by the group is helpful in gaining basic information on advocating on a prisoner's behalf.

[Safe and Just Michigan \(Formerly CAPPS\)](#) is a non-profit public policy organization, is concerned about Michigan's excessive use of punitive strategies rather than preventive ones to deal with crime and its impact on our quality of life. It informs policymakers, advocacy groups, affected communities and the general public about these issues through numerous means, including a website, a newsletter, research reports, legislative testimony and speaking appearances. A Prisoner newsletter is available.

[Humanity For Prisoners](#) is a hands-on, one-on-one advocacy for prisoners dealing with health issues, death and dying, mental health, and parole and commutation. Focuses only on cases in the State of Michigan.

[Michigan Center for Youth Justice \(Formerly MCCD\)](#) works with Michigan's citizens and leaders to develop a comprehensive strategy addressing juvenile justice initiatives in Michigan. MCCD is involved mainly in policy change through legislation.

[Michigan Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants \(MI-CURE\)](#) is a grassroots organization. It became a national organization in 1985. We believe that prisons should be used only for those who absolutely must be incarcerated and that those who are incarcerated should have all of the resources they need to turn their lives around. A prisoner newsletter is available.

PO Box 2736, Kalamazoo, MI, 49003-2736

Other useful documents are available on the resource tab of [CPR's Website](#).

MDOC Frequently Asked Questions

On the MDOC website there is an FAQ (Frequently asked Questions) Button/link at the top of the Corrections Main page that answers many questions and can be found [here](#). The Main Corrections Page is located [here](#).

Legal Assistance

If you would like to get a legal consultation on prisoner rights or on your individual case, the following organizations may be of assistance:

[Disability Rights Michigan](#) → (517) 487-1755

[Michigan State University College of Law Civil Rights Clinic](#) → (517) 336-8088

[University of Michigan Law Clinic](#) → (734) 764-1358

[Cooley Law School Clinic](#) → (517) 371-5140

[Michigan State Appellate Defender Office](#) → (517) 334-6069

[American Civil Liberties Union Michigan](#) → (517) 484-3176 OR (313) 578-6800

Legislators

Legislators can be helpful in seeking information regarding the corrections system. They are also crucial to bringing forward change in MDOC policy.

[Find Your Representative](#)

[Find Your Senator](#)

How to Contact Citizens for Prison Reform (CPR)

Our Mission: CPR is a grass-roots, family-led initiative that engages, educates, and empowers those affected by crime and punishment to advance their constitutional, civil and human rights.

The group seeks to provide accurate information that will encourage education of our fellow citizens, communities, and elected officials.

The organization believes that effective accountability will promote safer prisons, safer public, and economical cost savings.

We hold monthly loved ones' meetings in Lansing. They are on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Please check our website prior to the meeting to verify the correct location.

Contact Us:

P.O. Box 80414
Lansing, MI 48908

Telephone: (269) 339-0606

Email: micpr.org@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.micpr.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MICitizensforPrisonReform/>

Disclaimer

This handbook was produced by members of Michigan Citizens for Prison Reform to serve as a guide for families, friends, and advocates who have little information about the Michigan correctional system. All information was obtained from Michigan Department of Corrections' website and other credible sources. Information was also gathered from the insight and experiences of several members of Michigan Citizens for Prison Reform who have loved ones in the system. The organization takes no responsibility for missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information.

Glossary of Terms

ADW Assistant Deputy Warden - There are generally multiple ADWs at each facility, each assigned to either security, programs, or housing. Supervisor to the RUMs.

AOT/AOP Assaultive Offender Therapy/Program - A program designed to help individuals who have a history of assaultive behavior and/or often use poor judgment. This therapy is often part of the R&GC recommendations and may be required by the Parole Board.

ARUS Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor - The ARUS is an assistant supervisor within a housing unit. She or he is the person who completes most of a prisoner's paperwork and is the primary contact for prison administrative issues. She or he is generally in the first step into a career of administration within the MDOC. The ARUS should be able to answer questions and help to resolve problems.

BLOCK REP Block Representative - Prisoner elected by majority of prisoner population within a housing unit to serve on the Warden's Forum. Responsible for addressing concerns affecting prisoners. There is a Black and White Rep for each housing unit.

BOOT CAMP- This is a 90-day paramilitary program for young non-violent offenders. Participants perform strenuous physical labor and exercise. Those who cannot complete the program are usually sent to prison. Formally called SAI or Special Alternative Incarceration.

BUSINESS OFFICE - The office in each facility that handles prisoner mail, prisoner records and other paperwork related to each facility.

CALL OUT/PASS/ITINERARY/DETAIL - Document given to prisoner detailing any required activity or movement, such as medical appointment.

CENTRAL OFFICE - The office in Lansing that is the location of the leadership and administration of the Michigan Department of Corrections.

CO Corrections Officer - This is the starting position in the hierarchy of custody and security staff.

COMMUNITY CENTER - Residential program operated by the MDOC or under contract to the MDOC. Located in cities throughout the state, they serve as transitional housing for persons leaving prison.

CONTINUANCE - See Flop.

CONTRABAND - Any item not allowed into the facility per policy and procedure. Illegal contraband is something that would be illegal even on the outside, e.g. marijuana. Legal Contraband would include things such as a rope that could be used in an escape.

CUSTODY STAFF - The staff in control of safety and security including all corrections officers, sergeants, lieutenants, captains or Shift Commanders as well as RUMs and ARUSs. Those not included in custody are mail room, record office, school, mental and medical health staff.

DEPUTY WARDEN - Second in chain of command to the Warden.

DETENTION - If found guilty of a serious misconduct, prisoner can be sentenced to segregation for a period of time. It is a jail within the prison.

DIRECTOR - the head of the entire Department of Corrections. He or she is appointed by the Governor.

DISBURSEMENT - A form used by prisoner to pay for various items ordered through the store or approved vendors. Money is taken from prisoner's account.

ERD/Earliest Release Date - This is the earliest date an individual can be released from prison on parole. It is the minimum sentence minus any disciplinary credits earned. People sentenced to prison after December 15, 2000, no longer receive any credits and must at least serve the minimum sentence imposed by the court.

FLOP - The decision by the Parole Board denying release to an individual who has reached the earliest release date or the end of a previous flop. Also called a continuance. The decision will specify the amount of time before the prisoner will be again considered for parole.

FOIA/ The Freedom of Information Act - Any citizen can use the FOIA to ask for documents from any government department. There are some limitations and the person requesting the documents will be charged a fee. See MCL15.231.

FRONT DESK - Typically this will be the first place the public goes to at any institution. It is staffed a corrections officer. This CO usually answers phone calls to the facility.

GED General Educational Development program - Passing the GED test is equivalent to earning a high school diploma. The law requires that prisoners have a high school diploma or GED

before they are paroled. Exceptions are made for those unable to complete the program successfully.

GPS Global positioning system - The system may be used to track the movements of an individual who has been paroled and is required to wear an ankle bracelet or tether.

GRIEVANCE - Form completed by prisoners regarding violation of policy or inhumane living conditions. There are three levels, Steps I, II, and III. Unless the prisoner “wins”, all three steps must be completed before a prisoner will be allowed to file a lawsuit over that issue.

HOUSING UNIT/BLOCK - Terms used by prisoners and staff identifying a housing unit within a particular prison. These may be identified by a number or a name, such as Four Block or Spruce Unit.

IEP - Individual Education Plan. Plan developed by school staff outlining education goals for prisoners with special education needs.

INDIGINT LOAN - If a prisoner has had less than \$10 in account for at least 30 days, he or she can apply for loan of \$10 per month to purchase mandatory items such as hygiene products. The amount will be collected upon receipt of any money to his or her account.

INSPECTOR - A staff member at each prison that is part of the administration who is responsible for investigating complaints, security concerns and other issues within the prison.

JPAY LETTER - Electronic letter written to prisoner through website. This may be read by staff.

KIOSK - Computer in housing unit in which prisoners submit store orders.

KITE - A kite is a request written by a prisoner and sent to prison staff through institutional mail. It is used to ask for information, medical treatment, or any other need or service.

LEGAL MAIL - EXPEDITED LEGAL MAIL FORM / LEGAL DISBURSEMENT - Mail sent to an attorney or court. A form can be used by prisoners to send such correspondence more quickly than regular outgoing mail. If the prisoner doesn't have sufficient funds postage for legal mail can be borrowed and the amount will be collected upon receipt of any money.

LOP / SANCTION/ TOP LOCK - If found guilty of misconduct, prisoner can be placed on Loss of Privileges which restricts prisoner from various privileges, access to electronics, etc. If on top lock status they cannot leave their cell when normally allowed to leave during the day, such as for yard.

LT. - Lieutenant.

MAIL REJECTION - This is a notice given to the prisoner and the person sending mail that the mail received at the institution has been deemed inappropriate for a prisoner. The prisoner can request a hearing to have the item(s) evaluated for appropriateness.

MDOC Michigan Department of Corrections - The Department runs the prisons, parole, and circuit court probation. It also has a limited monitoring role for jails in Michigan.

MEDICAL DETAIL – Document of medical staff authorizing prisoner to special medical accommodations or equipment that would not otherwise be allowed. Being assigned to a bottom bunk or having a cane, crutches, a second pillow, special shoes are examples of such items.

MISCONDUCT REPORT/TICKET - Report written by MDOC staff member of prisoner's alleged violation of rules. There are three levels of misconduct with the least serious receiving lighter punishment.

NOI Notice of Intent - Written report informing prisoner of an investigation or administrative hearing process dealing with items such as property, contraband, etc.

NON-CONTACT VISITING - Visits at high security levels and at other levels if certain visitor restrictions have been imposed. These visits take place with a glass in between the individuals and by phones.

OBSERVATION CELL - A cell where a prisoner is placed when staff believe they are unstable or have threatened to commit suicide or hurt themselves. Observation cells are sometimes also used when they have medical conditions where they need to be isolated.

OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE/Legislative Corrections Ombudsman - An office within the Legislative Services Bureau created to investigate within the MDOC when serious and repetitive violations are brought to its attention. Generally, a prisoner must exhaust the grievance procedure before the Ombudsman can investigate. Corrections staff and the public may also file complaints with this office.

PAROLE - If an individual is released before the end of the maximum sentence, it is called parole. A parole agent will supervise the individual in the community. It is important that the parolee follow all the rules set up by the Parole Board and the Parole Agent.

PAROLE BOARD - This is a ten member Board appointed by the Governor to consider whether to release prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence on parole, whether to parole someone serving a parolable life sentence and whether to recommend a commutation of natural life sentences. Three member panels make decisions about regular parole.

PAROLE GUIDELINES- A tool used by the Parole Board to determine the probability of parole (high, medium, or low). The tool is used to determine a score based upon the nature of the current offense, criminal history, property and assaultive risk screens, age, conduct, programming completed, and mental health. The score is calculated based on the prisoner's criminal and social history. This may determine whether a prisoner is interviewed by a member of the Parole Board.

PBF/IBF Prisoner benefit fund/Inmate benefit fund - Money that comes from vending machines, a percentage of prisoner hobby craft sales and various other sources and is used to cover expenses that benefit prisoners, such as extra recreation equipment, cable television, etc. Decisions are made by prisoner and staff representatives.

PER Parole Eligibility Report - This report contains a brief description of the crime, prior parole history, institutional conduct (education, work, substance abuse programming, therapy, etc.), physical health, financial status, parole plans, etc. It is one of the tools used by the Parole Board to make its decision to parole or flop someone.

PROBATION - A convicted person may be sentenced to probation in addition to a jail term or instead of jail or prison. A Probation Agent will supervise him in the community. It is important that the probationer follow all the rules set up by the Probation Agent.

PSI Pre-sentence Investigation Report - PSI Reports are created by a parole agent and include the agent's evaluation of the offender, the circumstances of the offense, a personal and criminal history of the offender and a sentencing recommendation. Victim may provide information on what impact the crime has had on their lives and may express their opinions regarding the appropriate sentence. Agents also score the sentencing guidelines and report that range to the court in the PSI Report.

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES - Woodland Center is the only facility that is exclusively for mental health treatment. Other services are provided within special units of prisons or hospitals. The levels of care range from CSI (Counseling and Intervention) to AC (Acute Care). They include OPT (Outpatient Mental Health Program), SSOTP (Secure Status Outpatient Mental Health

Treatment Program), ASRP (Adaptive Skills Residential Treatment Program), RTP (Residential Treatment Program), SSRTP (Secure Status Residential Treatment Program), CSP (Crisis Stabilization Program), RTS (Sub-acute/Rehabilitation Treatment Services). See *Department of Corrections Bureaus of Health Care Services Mental Health Services Program* under Documents on micpr.org web site.

QMHP Qualified Mental Health Professional - a professional who is part of an interdisciplinary psychiatric treatment team.

QUARANTINE - The period of time a prisoner spends at a receiving facility when entering prison. See RG&C.

QUARTERMASTER/QUARTERMASTER KITE - Staff member who is responsible for issuing prisoners clothing and linens. Prisoner can fill out a request form asking for replacement items or different sizes.

RG&C/RGC Reception and Guidance Center - Entry point into the system for men below the bridge. Male prisoners spend the first few weeks in the Reception and Guidance Center. Here, MDOC personnel check the person's education level, work skills, mental health, physical health, etc. They determine where the individual should be housed and what type of programming he should have. Prisoners from the U.P. may be taken to Marquette and then moved down to Jackson to RG&C as soon as possible. Female prisoners go to Huron Valley Women's Facility.

RESTITUTION - A court ordered payment to the victim or repayment of a debt to the MDOC or a court.

RIDE OUT/RIDE IN - When a prisoner leaves or arrives at a prison.

RTP Residential Treatment Program - Inpatient mental health treatment provided in a special unit within a prison or at Woodland Center Correctional Facility.

RUM Resident Unit Manager - This person is in charge of the housing unit. Supervises the ARUS (or ARUSs', if there are more than one in a housing unit) and custody staff (the officers). The RUM should be able to answer questions and help to resolve problems. On the administrative chain of command, the RUM is on the rung below the Assistant Deputy Warden (ADW).

RWA Routine Work Assignment. The Reception and Guidance Center often recommends that individuals be given a routine work assignment. This means the individual should be given a job in the prison.

SAI Special Alternative Incarceration - See Boot Camp.

SCORESHEET- See Parole Guidelines.

SECUREPAK - Family or friends may order food items and other items in \$85 increments quarterly to be given to a prisoner. This can be done either online, through the mail or over the phone.

SEGREGATION – Housing where prisoners are separated from general population for misconduct, safety or security risks. Sometimes called solitary, the box or the hole.

SGT. - Sergeant.

SHAKE DOWN - Refers to a search by a corrections officer of a prisoner or a prisoner's cell looking for items of contraband. Also refers to the pat down of the public and items brought into the facility.

SOAHR State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules - This office is responsible for formal hearings and re-hearings petitions. The vast majority of these hearings are of serious misconduct guilty findings.

SOT/SOP Sex Offender Therapy/Program - Individuals convicted of criminal sexual conduct are required to participate in this therapy. It is designed to help them understand why the offense was committed, to have some understanding of the feelings of the victim, and to learn how to avoid future offenses.

SSOTP UNIT Secure Status Outpatient Treatment Program Unit - Segregation housing unit where Outpatient Treatment Program services are provided.

SSRTP UNIT Secure Status Residential Treatment Program - Segregation housing unit where Residential (inpatient) Treatment Program services are provided.

STORE - Prisoners can order selected food, hygiene products, etc. at a kiosk machine. Money is deducted from prisoners' accounts and items are delivered to the housing unit, usually once a week.

TETHER - An electronic device worn around the ankle that is used to keep track of the person wearing it. It is sometimes used to track a person who has been released from prison on parole.

VISITING ROOM - The area of a facility where persons on a prisoners approved visitor list can visit with the prisoner during designated visiting days and hours.

VISITOR RESTRICTION - Limits placed on a visitor or prisoner in connection with visits. Sometimes it is the result of a misconduct that occurs in the visiting room and sometimes it is the result of substance abuse misconduct received by the prisoner. It includes a ban on all visits or ban on contact visits. It can be for a specified period of time or an indefinite time.

WARDEN - The head of administration, responsible for overseeing the prison. Sometimes a warden may head more than one prison.

WARDEN'S FORUM - All elected Block Reps meet monthly with the Warden or Warden's designated representative to address concerns within the housing units and policy/procedure issues in the facility.