

LA. DPS&C
Summary of COVID-19
Response 4/9/20

COVID-19 Mitigation

- Activated DOC existing regulations regarding Influenza and Pandemic Prevention/Preparedness/Response to the highest level.
- Pursuant to the governing Department Regulation, every state prison has a thorough and detailed COVID-19 Pandemic response plan in place.
- Suspended Visitation, volunteering, tours, programming, transfers between prisons/ routine transfers from local level, and postponed the Angola spring rodeo all in effort to minimize movement.
- Limited Dining areas to servicing one dorm at a time.
- Limited Recreation space (outside and gymnasium) to one housing area using it at a time on rotational basis.
- Limited new intakes to only those who must be housed in state prison. Each intake is screened and assessed for symptoms, and then quarantined for 14 days before being placed in general population.
- Pardon and Parole Board has suspended hearings for March and part of April, but expects to resume parole hearings on April 15, 2020. Pardon hearings will resume at a later date.
- In order to reduce inmate's risk of exposure, DOC work crews are working after hours to clean state buildings.
- Daily screening all DOC employees prior to entrance. Anyone entering Louisiana's state-run prisons and DOC facilities, including employees and vendors, is subject to enhanced screening prior to entering. This includes answering screening questions and having their temperature taken.
- Ramped up daily disinfectant cleaning protocols at every prison facility.
- Commenced Reverse isolation process of older and high-risk inmates. Designated a separate housing/ feeding location for reverse isolation. These inmates are also allowed into a recreation area reserved just for them to minimize their interaction with the rest of the facility.
- Issued inmate testing criteria guidelines to all state facilities (based upon LDH direction); any inmate exhibiting an influenza like illness (fever or fever and cough) shall be tested for COVID-19 and influenza. Obtained sample collection kits and transport directly to state lab when collected.
- Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all staff.
- Each facility has quarantine and Isolation capabilities which are being used as needed.

Inmates

- DOC created two COVID-19 informational videos for inmates which include an intro from Secretary LeBlanc/the onsite Physician at Angola/overview of Dept. Response/proactive ways inmates can reduce risk of infection. (English and Spanish versions). One or both of these videos are played on loop at all prisons and are also available on the DOC website for families to view.
- Created a COVID-19 Informational page on DOC website and also posting once per day on DOC website the total number of confirmed Corona cases per facility (staff and inmates).
<https://doc.louisiana.gov/covid-19-information/>
- DOC and Securus are providing inmates in state-run prisons two free 15 minute calls a week and two free email stamps per week so that inmates can maintain communication with family and friends during this crisis. DOC working with provider on video visitation capabilities as well

- Suspended the \$250 minimum account balance requirement on inmate banking accounts in state prisons.
- Required and ensured that ample hand sanitizer and soap available at every state prison.
- Issued additional free bars of soap to inmates in state prisons. (ongoing basis).
- In process of manufacturing cloth masks and distributing to all inmates housed in state prisons. (2 mask per inmate).
- Permitting CTRP program completion via correspondence (approved program list issued by Reentry Division) and allow the awarding of CTRP. good-time credit (appropriate documentation required)
- DOC continues to process inmates pursuant to ordinary release dates as inmates reach their goodtime release date (GTPS) or full term release date. (housed in prisons and jails).
- In process of activating a call center that families can call to request info/whereabouts of imprisoned loved one. (Tentative Live date 4/14).
- Activating video calling for video visitation at Louisiana's state-run prisons and secured a reduced rate of \$2.50/per 10 min call. (Start date is 4/27).

Probation and Parole

- P&P Officers are providing support at Louisiana State Penitentiary, providing security at DPS&C Headquarters, working sit-downs at hospitals with offenders admitted, and are providing support to Erath Police Department at a drive through testing site.
- P&P Officers are using video apps to check in on their caseloads where possible.
- P&P Officers continue to supervise sex offenders and violent offenders face to face.
- Suspended Probation and Parole Academy postponed until further notice.
- P&P officers are limiting use of parole holds and revocation procedures to serious/dangerous offenses. Limiting arrests/detaining people in jail for non-serious non-violent charges/offenses.
- Suspended the use of short term jail sanctions ordinarily used for technical violations.
- For those already confined in jail for one of the above reasons/types of detainers, P&P has recommended to the judge (if on probation) or the parole board (if on parole) to release the nonviolent/non-sex offender from technical revocation jail sanctions, and/or, if applicable, allow the offender to release on bond regarding the new pending charges that are less serious/dangerous offenses, such as non-violent/non-sex offense charges. These measures have resulted in the removal/release of approximately 2000 detainer holds off of people in jail for probation or parole related sanctions or pending revocations which has also resulted in the release of some of these people from jail and parish facilities who did not have any other non-related outstanding charge/bond/warrant restricting their release.
- P&P Officers are working at the convention center in New Orleans and at Louisiana's state parks.

Local Jail Efforts:

- DOC has been in constant contact with Louisiana Sheriffs' Association (LSA) and the local sheriffs providing informational guidance and support throughout this response.
- Local Jail Support: Designated vacant Camp J at Louisiana State Penitentiary as a housing location to isolate inmates who are COVID-19 positive and located in local jails that cannot isolate infected inmates from the general population and do not have appropriate staff to care for them. (put all inmates at risk). Camp J is staffed independently of the other prison camps and existing Angola inmates have no contact with the Camp J facility housing sick these sick inmates.

Joint Agency Response

- DOC, DEQ and LSU have partnered to produce and bottle hand sanitizer for GOHSEP to distribute. Inmates at Elayn Hunt Correctional Center have already bottled approximately 19,000 bottles of hand sanitizer. These have been delivered to GOHSEP for distribution. More bottles of hand sanitizer are being produced.
- PE is producing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) production at EHCC (masks and gowns).