



Office of the Ombudsman

Independent Health and Wellness Advisor
to the MA Department of Correction

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COVID-19 UPDATE TO INCARCERATED PERSONS WITHIN THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Per both the Federal and Commonwealth of Massachusetts orders respectively, the COVID-19 emergency ended on May 11, 2023. Due to this change in status, the Office of the Ombudsman updated our COVID-19 standards accordingly. Guidelines for incarcerated persons within the DOC are now as follows:

1. All new intakes at any DOC facility will be tested for COVID-19 on arrival and will be quarantined for 7 days with a repeat COVID-19 test after day 5. The incarcerated person shall be released from quarantine on day 8 after a negative COVID-19 test.
2. If an incarcerated person has a positive COVID-19 test, that person needs to be isolated for 7 days, with a negative test after day 5, that person can be released on day 8. The incarcerated person should wear a mask until day 10.
3. If an incarcerated person is a close contact with a COVID-19-positive person, that exposed incarcerated person does not need to be quarantined but should be monitored for the development of symptoms. A COVID-19 test after day 5 should be done.
4. If an incarcerated person is symptomatic and refuses to test for COVID-19, that person should be encouraged to mask or quarantine can be considered.
5. If 3 or more incarcerated persons are symptomatic and test positive for COVID-19 on 1 unit, that unit should be placed on quarantine for 7 days with repeat COVID-19 testing after day 5. The unit should be released from quarantine on day 8 if no further cases of COVID-19 occur.
6. COVID-19 bivalent vaccines remain available to all incarcerated persons and are offered through the medical vendor at every DOC facility.
7. Masks remain available for any incarcerated person who chooses to wear one.
8. Incarcerated persons should be encouraged to mask if they have symptoms of a respiratory illness and need to visit health services.

Despite the changes in COVID-19 standards, it is still important that we remain aware of COVID-19 and the risk of infection for ourselves and others.