



Managing prisoner receptions

COVID-19 Policy

Version 3_Endorsed_1 May 2020

Application

This policy comes into effect on 2 May 2020 and replaces the previous policy – *Managing prisoner receptions and transfers* – issued on 7 April 2020.

This policy applies to prisoners entering Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) custody, and those prisoners in custody at time of implementation.

This policy is designed to preserve the integrity of the correctional environment to limit the risk of COVID-19 infection on the basis of contemporaneous public health advice from Queensland Health (QH).

This policy remains in place during the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, in accordance with the exercise of chief executive powers in accordance with s268 *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CS Act), until otherwise revoked.

This policy may be subject to update and change, in accordance with advice from QH, and approved by the Commissioner.

Definitions

Isolation¹ is a period of 14 days (which may be cumulative if a prisoner is transferred) in which a prisoner is required to be accommodated in a single cell, insofar as practicable.

A **reception prisoner** is a prisoner received into QCS custody from a Queensland Police Service (QPS) Watch House, a court, or is otherwise received into the custody of a QCS facility.

Appendices

Appendix A – COVID 19 Process Map: Receptions, Isolations, General Accommodation and Discharges

¹ Isolation in this context is equivalent with the Queensland Health definition of quarantine.

Management of prisoners

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the secure custody environment, a reception prisoner will be subject to:

- isolation for a cumulative period of 14 days in single cell accommodation insofar as practicable; and
- temperature checks and health checks as determined by QH personnel.

To preserve the health and wellbeing of each prisoner subject to isolation, to the greatest extent possible each prisoner subject to isolation must also have:

- access to confidential medical assessment and treatment including specialist mental health services;
- access to engagement with the offender development team to monitor and support their mental health;
- engagement with unit and activities officers to provide activities that may be undertaken whilst isolated (such as books, drawing and letter writing);
- access to blue letter mail processes and unmonitored calls with legal representatives; and
- access to facilitated telephone calls, and/or videoconference connection with family.

Once the 14-day period has expired, the prisoner will be considered for placement in the general prisoner population subject to a final health check and temperature check by QH.

Isolated Prisoners – 14 Day Parameters

Whilst prisoners in isolation are to be in single cell accommodation insofar as practicable for the protection of the broader prisoner and staff population, they can undertake the following without resetting the 14-day period:

- attending medical appointments at the Medical Centre or a hospital;
- attending a video conference; and
- other essential appointments (e.g. At-Risk management).

It is the responsibility of the correctional centre to ensure that appropriate risk mitigation strategies are in place to manage all prisoner external to cell activities during the isolation period. At a minimum, strategies must include:

- controlled movement with direct supervision;
- minimised, to the greatest extent possible, surface contact by prisoner; and
- infection control cleaning of all surface contact points after the activity.

A prisoner will only be required to restart or undertake the 14-day isolation period if they are:

- transferred into QPS custody at any point;
- transferred to a court or Watchhouse facility; or
- undertake a leave of absence.

Transfers between facilities to be restricted

Prisoner movements between centres will only occur when essential for placement.

Primary transfer of prisoners from reception/remand facilities in south east Queensland to placement facilities are approved.

Prisoner requested moves will be restricted.

Management of prisoners at point of discharge

Sentence Management Services will identify and advise QH of prisoners who are pending discharge each week, in order to enable QH to conduct a temperature check and screen prior to discharge.

Prisoner transfers not affected by this policy

Prisoner movements between low custody sites, between secure custody facilities and those from a secure facility to a low custody facility, will not be subject to isolation protocols.

Human Rights Act compatibility

This policy has been developed in accordance with public health advice from the AHPCC and QH. The AHPCC noted in their statement published 30 March 2020 that, excluding healthcare settings, correctional and detention facilities are at a higher risk of outbreaks of COVID-19. Given the serious public health concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 in corrective services facilities, and the safety of the public, QCS considers that any limitations imposed on a prisoner's human rights as a result of this policy are demonstrably justifiable.

