

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

What You Should Know About Prison Visitation

1. How do I find someone in jail?

New York City Jails - If a judge orders a person to be held, the prisoner is transferred to a jail operated by the New York City Department of Correction. The Department operates an automated telephone system 24 hours a day that you can call to learn a prisoner's location: **212-266-1500**.

The system functions in both English and Spanish. It is easier to locate a prisoner if you have his or her "book and case" number (City Correction ID number) or NYSID number (the "rap sheet" number or N.Y. ID number). This system also provides information on how to retrieve the property of a person who has been arrested, how to post bail and how to deposit money in a prisoner's personal jail account.

You can also use the Inmate Look-up Service website to check the inmate's status.

State Prisons - People who receive sentences longer than one year are transferred upstate to prisons operated by the New York State Department of Correctional Services. The Department of Correctional Services operates a website <http://www.docs.state.ny.us> that provides the location of every prisoner in the state system. After entering the website, click onto Inmate Locator. You can locate a prison-

er by name, but this system is more accurate and quicker if you also have the Department Identification Number (State Correction's ID number, e.g., 01-A-0000).

You can also call the Department of Correctional Services during normal business hours at 518-457-5000 to ask for a prisoner's location. You need a person's name and date of birth. Again, it is easier to get this information if you provide the Department with the Identification Number.

2. When can I visit a prisoner in a city jail?

Visitors have to check visitation schedule to determine what day their friend or family member is eligible for visits.

On Wednesday and Thursday, registration hours for all facilities on Rikers Island as well as the Manhattan Detention Complex in Manhattan and the Vernon C. Bail Center in the Bronx on Wednesdays and Thursdays are from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Visits are permitted from 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm, but you must register by 8:00 pm.

On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, registration hours for the above facilities are from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm. Visits will begin no earlier than 8:00 am and end at 4:00 pm, but you must register by 2:00 pm.

There are NO VISITS on Mondays and Tuesdays.

3. How Many People Can Visit?

Generally, prisoners are permitted to see up to three (3) visitors at the same time. However, the maximum number can vary depending on space and other conditions in each jail, such as space and the number of visitors at any given time. A prisoner is usually allowed up

to three 60-minute visits during a week, each on separate days. There is a visitation schedule of dates and hours that is made known to the prisoners. Visits must occur at certain times on specified days. The schedule is given to prisoners, but friends and family can also obtain this information at the Department of Correction website.

Children under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older with proper identification. A person 16 or 17 years old may visit without an adult but may not act as an adult escort of a child under 16 unless both the visitor and the prisoner are the child's parents.

4. What Forms of ID are Required?

Every adult visitor and unaccompanied minor aged 16 and 17 must have one form of valid identification containing a clear photograph and signature. A valid identification card must be unexpired. Examples of valid identification documents include:

- *driver license with photo and signature (including out of state licenses)*
- *alien photo I.D. card*
- *passport*
- *school identification card*
- *employment identification card*
- *food stamp card*
- *U.S. Armed Forces I.D. card*
- *New York State Department of Motor Vehicle Non-Driver License I.D.*

Other forms of identification containing the visitor's photograph and signature may be judged acceptable at the discretion of the Department of Correction officers.

5. Are there any prohibited items?

The following items are not permitted inside a City jail: radios, walkmans, beepers, cellular telephones, cameras, electronic equipment, recording devices, weapons, including firearms, ammunition, and knives, drugs, alcohol, or any beverages.

6. How do I visit a New York State prison?

Visiting days and times in the state system vary from prison to prison. Before visiting a prisoner in a state prison, check on the schedule for that facility. Visitors must be pre-approved and are placed on the prisoner's "approved visitor list." There is an exception to this rule for first time visitors with proper identification. Children of prisoners will be allowed to visit without written permission. Minors must be accompanied by an adult and must also have written permission from a parent or guardian if the accompanying adult is not a parent or guardian. Proof of identity is required. All persons entering a correctional facility are subject to search.

7. How can I travel to a state prison?

The Department of Correctional Services operates a free bus service for family members. The service is available for State prisons. The prisoner must apply for family members to use this service by filling out a "Family Visitor Program Application" which is available from either the Chaplain or the Guidance office. The application takes 3 to 12 months to process. Information about the service can be obtained from the DOC Family Services Program: **212-961-4052**.

In addition to the free service, a number of organizations operate buses for a fee:

- *Prison Gap*: 800-734-3733
- *Flamboyant*: 718-325-6874, and
- *B.U.V.S.*: 917-447-2310 (*English*); 646-234-4621 (*Spanish*).

More information about family visitation at prisons can be obtained by contacting the Osborne Association Family Resource Center at **800-344-3314** or visiting their website.

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MAKING THE CASE FOR HUMANITY

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