



**JACKSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Kansas City, Missouri**

POLICY STATEMENT

EFFECTIVE DATE:

**SECTION: DETENTION
SERVICES**

DIRECTOR: Joe Piccinini

POLICY: MAIL

**APPROVED AS TO FORM, COUNTY
COUNSELOR** [Signature]

**A.C.A.: 4-ALDF-2A-27,60; 5B-05, 06,
07, 08, 09, 10; 6A-06**

**RESCINDS:
03-05-13**

POLICY

It is the policy, procedure, and practice of the Jackson County Department of Corrections to ensure safety and security throughout the facility, while providing a systematic process for the collection and distribution of staff and/or inmate mail.

PROCEDURE

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Inmate Mail: The Department of Corrections will not accept or process any package, money order, telegram or sealed letter from a private delivery company, family members, or friends.

A. The incoming mail for the Jackson County Department of Corrections is picked up at the U.S. Post Office by the Department Mail Officer or designee daily, Monday through Friday, excluding Holidays.

1. Mail will be sorted, opened, and inspected.
2. Incoming and outgoing mail will not be held longer than 24-hours, excluding weekends and holidays.
3. Packages will be held no longer than 48-hours.

B. Inmate mail may only be processed and delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Any inmate mail delivered by a "private courier" will not be accepted. This does not include "special delivery" mail delivered by the U. S. Postal Service.

C. All incoming inmate mail correspondence (family/friends) may be on a standard sized postcard or via a standard business envelope. **Exceptions to this rule are listed in Section III of this policy.**

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- D. Inmates may purchase all mail supplies from the commissary such as, writing paper, envelopes, postcards, postage stamps, and pre stamped envelopes or postcards, or those items may be sent via the mail to the inmate. Indigent inmates will be provided with writing supplies free of charge. For more information see section V. of this policy.

II. INMATE MAIL (INCOMINGFAMILY/FRIENDS)

In order to maintain the safety and security of the facility all incoming correspondence from family/friends will be via a regular size business envelope, or a standard size postcard.

NOTE: Approved postcard sizes per the U.S. Postal Service are Maximum Size 4-1/4" x 6" and the Minimum Size 3-1/2" x 5".

A. The following types of postcards and or envelopes are **NOT** approved;

1. Oversized postcards.
2. Defaced and/or altered postcards/envelopes.
3. Envelopes or postcards with watermarks and/or stains.
4. Envelopes or postcards with labels/or stickers.
5. Envelopes or postcards marked with paint, crayons, or permanent markers.
6. Envelopes or postcards with biohazards or chemicals including lipsticks and/or perfumes.
7. Envelopes or postcards depicting nudity/partial nudity, weapons, or gang references.
8. Envelopes or postcards sealed and/or wrapped in plastic.

B. Additional Incoming Inmate Mail Rules.

1. Inmate mail received with an alias name will be **"returned to sender."**
Only mail addressed with the inmate's **"true name"** as listed in the Inmate Management System will be delivered.
2. Mail received for a released inmate will be **"returned to sender."**
3. Incoming mail may be in any language.
4. No restrictions shall be placed on the identity, number of correspondents, or the volume of lawful mail an inmate may receive or send.
5. An inmate is allowed to retain a combination of (20) twenty received postcards or envelopes in his/her cell. If it is determined by staff that the inmate has no support system in the community, the excess letters will be placed with the inmate's property maintained by the Records Unit.

NOTE: Inmates may arrange through their Inmate Service Coordinator (ISC) to have such property released to a family member within five calendar days and only newspapers, magazines, and periodicals will be discarded.

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6. Beyond what is already stated in this policy, any restrictions placed on mail will apply only when there is reasonable belief that a limitation is necessary to protect the public and/or safety and security of the facility, and staff working in the facility. Restrictions will be enforced only through court order.
7. All incoming inmate mail must have a legible and proper return address.
8. Inmate mail will not be read or rejected except where there is reliable information that a threat to the safety and security of the facility may exist.
 - a. The Manager of Detention or designee shall determine when questionable material is a threat to the institution. In the event the facility receives a threat through the mail, local law enforcement and the Postal Service will be notified.
 - b. The inmate will receive notice when any item poses a direct, clear, and immediate danger to the safety of staff and security of the facility, or an item is not on the approved list. The item is either "returned to sender", given to the Investigative Specialist, or turned over to the U.S. Postal Service

III. INCOMING INMATE MAIL THAT IS ALLOWED IN ENVELOPES

A. Permitted Photographs:

Envelopes containing photographs must be clearly marked "**PHOTOGRAPHS**" or it will be "returned to sender". Inmates may receive and retain a total of **(10)** ten photographs for the duration of their incarceration, with the following restrictions:

1. Photographs will be no larger than 4"x 6".
2. The receiving inmate's name must be on the back of each photograph. **No other markings or writing is allowed.**
3. All photographs must be unaltered.
4. No correspondence may accompany the photographs.

B. The following photographs are not permitted:

1. Photographs of alcohol, alcohol consumption, weapons, gang activity and/or gang signs, nudity or sexually suggestive will be "returned to sender".
2. Polaroid photographs will not be accepted.
3. Photographs having tape, stickers, or labels attached.

C. Inmate Funds:

Envelopes containing Postal Money Orders and Government Checks, dated within the last 30 days must be clearly marked "**Attention Mail Officer**". This will alert the Mail Officer that the envelope contains inmate funds. **Note: Checks and money orders are limited to \$1,000. If any correspondence is found in the envelope marked "Attention Mail Officer" all the contents will be "returned to sender".**

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D. Courier Mail:

Any inmate may correspond via the County's in-house "Courier" mail system with:

1. County Courts and/or Judges
2. Prosecutors Office
3. Office of Ethics, Human Relations, and Citizens Complaints
4. Probation and Parole
5. Public Defenders' Office

NOTE: Postage is not required for inter-department "Courier" mail. The Mail Officer or designee will forward any document on the day it is received. The Mail Officer may verify the sending office when in doubt. Such mail will be opened in the presence of the inmate to inspect the contents for contraband. All other mail must be sent or received through the U.S. Postal Service.

E. Incoming Privileged Mail:

Incoming and/or outgoing "privileged U.S. Mail will be in a sealed envelope. Such mail shall remain sealed until delivered by the Mail Officer to the inmate addressee. The Mail Officer, in the presence of the inmate, will open the sealed envelope and inspect the contents for contraband.

Privileged Mail is correspondence to or from the following:

1. Attorneys, Judges or County Counselors
2. Courts
3. The Governor of Missouri
4. Jackson County Executive
5. Jackson County Legislators
6. Jackson County Office of Human Relations and Citizens Complaints
7. Members of the Missouri House and Senate

NOTE: Outgoing inmate mail may be opened to inspect for contraband where there is reliable information that a threat to the order and/or safety and security of the facility may exist. Inmates are notified in writing when outgoing mail is withheld in part or in full.

IV. OTHER TYPES OF INCOMING INMATE MAIL

- A. **Greeting cards:** Greeting cards are accepted. Cards must be of standard stock, no double thick cards, no recording devices, no cloth cards, and no metal or Millar components. All incoming greeting cards not meeting these standards will be **"returned to sender"**. **Note:** Greeting cards that are in the form of a postcard are acceptable.

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- B. **Magazines, newspapers, periodicals, tabloids, and paperback books:** Must be clearly marked with the name and address of the publisher, bookstore, or subscription house. In the event an inmate has been released or transferred from custody, bills for subscribed publications will be returned to the sender not forwarded. The address of the person receiving the mail should be clearly marked. Only books with flexible paper binding (**paperbacks**) are approved to be purchased by or for an inmate. Moreover, all publication inserts and/or advertisement will be removed prior to delivery to the inmate. **Note: Using a permanent marker, the department Mail Officer will mark the date the magazine was given to the inmate. The date will be placed at the bottom of the first page of the magazine.**

NOTE: The publications listed in Section B, above will be denied if:

1. Not mailed from a publisher, bookstore, or subscription house.
2. Containing sexually explicit material and/or photographs of a pornographic nature.
3. Containing instructions for the manufacturing of explosives, guns, knives, drugs or other unlawful substances.
4. Advocates violence and/or racial, religious, or national hatred within the facility.

C. Additional Rules Regarding Publications

1. Magazines:
 - a. Inmates are limited to one magazine subscription.
 - b. Inmates are allowed to retain two magazines in their cell (less than five days old).
 - c. Magazines in the possession of any inmate must have his/her name on the delivery label.
 - d. Magazines over five days old or not in the possession of the inmate subscriber will be removed from the inmate's cell and discarded.
2. Newspapers:
 - a. Inmates are limited to one subscription.
 - b. Inmates are allowed to retain two newspapers in their cell (less than three days old).
 - c. Newspapers over three days old or not in the possession of the inmate subscriber will be removed from the inmate's cell and discarded.
3. Paperback Books:
 - a. Inmates are allowed to retain three purchased paperback books in their cell.
 - b. Inmates will supply proof of purchase of any paperback book not from the department library.

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V. INDIGENT INMATES

- A. The Department of Corrections shall provide indigent inmates with a writing pack (“free-pack”) through the Commissary vendor. Inmates are allowed one “free-pack” per week. For more information, see JAIL SERVICES, C3.07.
- B. If an indigent inmate needs additional writing supplies for contacting the Courts, Attorneys, or the Governor, requests shall be placed through the Inmate Services Coordinator. The Inmate Services Coordinator will see that additional materials are supplied.

VI. INMATE TO INMATE MAIL

Inter-facility mail correspondence between inmates provides the means to organize escapes, riots, assaults, gang activity, and the introduction of contraband. Therefore, inmates housed simultaneously in the Jackson County Detention Center, or Regional Correctional Center are **NOT** allowed to correspond with each other by mail during their incarceration.

VII. PROCESSING THE INCOMING MAIL

The following procedures will be conducted when processing incoming mail:

- A. The Mail Officer or designee will mark all inmate mail indicating where the inmate is housed and stamp with the date received.
- B. If an envelope contains a Government Check, Postal Money Order, or a Cashier’s Check, the amount of the money order or check will be recorded in the “mail” section of the computerized inmate management system. Once recorded, the Government Check, Postal Money Order, and/or Cashier’s Check will be sent to the Records Unit for processing and posting to the inmate’s account. After the inmate’s account is credited with the deposit, a receipt will be returned to the Mail Officer for delivery to the inmate. A copy of the receipt will be put in the original envelope and returned to the inmate the same day. **Note: Mail containing private company money orders, cash, payroll checks, personal checks, or any other unauthorized item will be “returned to sender” with a note attached stating the Department does not accept or process such items. A copy of the note will be sent to the inmate. Checks from Trust Accounts by managing companies are accepted only with the approval of the Manager of Criminal Records.**
- C. Mail containing or displaying gang writing or signs, gang-related drawings or graffiti, and/or gang-related photos will not be accepted. In addition, photos that display nudity and/or explicit poses will not be accepted. Such items will be “returned to sender” when there is a reasonable belief this limitation is necessary to protect the safety, security or facility order.

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1. The Department Mail Officer should carefully conduct a visual inspection of all incoming postcards, regular and or privileged/legal mail by inspecting the envelope. All postage stamps will be removed or blacked out by the Mail Officer before delivery. Other investigative techniques can also be used to inspect for contraband by the Mail Officer (e.g. x-ray, metal detector, K-9, etc.). Magazines, newspapers, and periodicals should be checked for nudity, plastic and/or metal binding.
2. If correspondence to an inmate is found to have contraband, (i.e., drugs, flammables, tobacco, unknown substances, weapon or potential weapon), the entire envelope or package and the suspected contraband will be placed in a large envelope and sealed. A department report will be written by the Mail Officer or designee. A notice will be sent to the inmate by the Mail Officer informing him or her that the mail is being withheld and that future mail may be restricted (except verified Attorney/Client). The envelope with the contraband will be given to the Investigative Specialist for further disposition (e.g. contacting local Law Enforcement). In the event of a suspected biohazard contamination, the area where the envelope was opened will be sealed and the appropriate emergency and medical staff will respond.
3. To minimize the return of mail containing items that are not allowed, the Mail Officer may, at his/her own discretion, dispose of the following:
 - a. paper and binder clips
 - b. "Acco" type clips and/or staples
 - c. book covers
 - d. spiral wire from notebooks and calendars
 - e. string, ribbon
 - f. wrapping and packaging material
 - g. perfume samples, marketing samples, stickers and/or tape
 - h. membership cards and/or membership incentives
 - i. cloth boxes, rubber bands, and cardboard
 - j. greeting card decorations and/or dried flowers
 - k. food and/or candy items
 - l. pencils and erasers
8. If the Mail Officer feels there is too much value in the item, too time consuming, or removing the item would destroy the contents, the entire item of mail will be "returned to sender".
9. Removed items will be kept in the mailroom for 72-hours in case they have to be "returned to sender". After 72-hours, the item will then be disposed of properly. In some situations the inmate may be asked for permission to dispose of an item(s). If permission is not given, the mail would be "returned to sender".

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10. Authorized publications that are received in a box, package, or padded envelope, shall be removed from the box, package, or padded envelope and placed in authorized packaging. The name and living area of the inmate addressee will be placed on the outside of the authorized packaging and delivered to the addressee inmate with other incoming mail. The original wrapping will be kept in the mail room for 72-hours in case the items have to be "returned to sender".
11. The mail will be picked up from the inmate living areas by correctional staff and deposited into the mailbox located near the inmate elevator on each floor. All outgoing regular mail must contain proper postage. Courier Mail does not need a postage stamp.
12. Mail for the Annex inmate living areas and the Regional Correctional Center (RCC) will be placed in the mail boxes located in the living area next to the entrance door. Incoming mail will be delivered to the area by the Mail Officer and delivered to the inmate by the DSO.
13. The Mail Officer will remove all outgoing mail from all mailboxes on each floor of the Main Facility, the Annex, and the RCC daily, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays.
14. Correctional Officers will only deliver the incoming mail (excluding privileged mail) to the appropriate inmate. Positive identification of the inmate will be made by the officer before it is passed to the inmate. The inmate wristband should be used for positive identification.
15. Mail for an inmate will only be given to the inmate to whom the mail is addressed. If the inmate is out of his or her living unit, the mail will be held in the floor work station until the inmate returns. Mail for inmates that have left the facility (released or pulled chain), the postcard or letters will be marked "Out of Facility" and placed into the floor mailbox.
16. Mail for inmates admitted to the hospital will be delivered by the officers assigned to hospital duty.
17. Mail will be returned to the Mail Room or the floor mailbox if it is undeliverable. The mail will be "returned to sender" or forwarded to the inmates' new housing area. Mail for inmates being housed at alternative facilities will be returned to sender. A label with the inmates' alternative housing address will be placed on the front of the envelope.

VIII. STAFF MAIL

- A. Mail and/or Courier correspondence for staff, contract employees, and volunteers will be delivered unopened to the appropriate staff mailbox by the Mail Officer.
NOTE: Courier mail will be accepted by the Mail Officer or Administrative Secretary.
- B. Each unit supervisor is responsible for ensuring the mailboxes for his or her departments are correctly designated with the names of their personnel.

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- C. Prior to returning staff mail the Department Mail Officer will review all staff unit listings Administration, Detention, Inmate Services Coordinators, Records, and Medical to identify the staff person to receive the correspondence. Mail addressed to a past administrative staff person will be given to the Secretary/ Receptionist to assist for proper distribution.

IX. OUTGOING MAIL

All inmates confined at the Department of Corrections are allowed to correspond with whomever they wish outside of the institution, regardless of their classification or security level. All outgoing mail must be properly addressed. Outgoing mail will be in the form of the approved postcard or pre-stamped envelopes, which are available through the Inmate Commissary. Privileged/legal mail must have a recognizable legitimate address of the legal firm or other governmental unit.

1. The Mail Officer or designee will pick up the outgoing mail once daily, except for Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.
2. The mailbox on each floor and in each Direct Supervision Pod will be emptied when the Mail Officer is on the floor.
3. In-house mail, out going mail, and “courier” mail will be separated. All out going U.S. Mail will be placed in the mail box in front of the Detention Facility. In-house mail will be placed in the appropriate mail slot. “Courier” mail will be given to the Administrative Secretarial staff.

Note: This category of mail does not require postage. All mail marked, as “courier mail” will be delivered to the courthouse mailroom by the Department Mail Officer.

4. The Mail Officer or designee will ensure that those inmates on court-ordered mail restriction are unable to send mail, unless the inmate is sending legal mail. If the inmate attempts to send any other document/mail, other than legal mail or as defined by the court having jurisdiction, the mail will be confiscated and the Mail Officer or designee will document the findings in a Departmental Report. The Departmental Report and confiscated mail will be forwarded to the Investigative Specialist. In cases where an inmate is in violation of court ordered mail restrictions, the appropriate Judge will be notified in writing and the inmate may be disciplined.
5. Anytime outgoing mail is held or confiscated in accordance with this policy, the Mail Officer will send written notification to the inmate.
6. Correspondence between inmates in the facility shall not be permitted. Exceptions may be granted to inmates who are family members and who are incarcerated in the facility at the same time. Requests for exceptions will be reviewed and approved by the Corrections Operations Support Administrator. Family members are interpreted as brother, sister, mother, father, husband, wife or step-relations resulting from a legal marriage. The relationships must be legally recognized and does not recognize common law marriages.

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7. In order to be in compliance with the United States Postal Service regulations, only addresses may be written on the front of the envelopes/postcards. No extra writing of any kind is allowed. Envelopes/postcards will not be accepted to be sent out of the facility if they contain anything other than addresses on the front.
8. There is no limit on the amount of outgoing mail. All outgoing mail, including privileged/legal mail, is subject to inspection at any time, but particularly if there is reason to suspect:
 - It contains threats of physical harm against persons or threats of criminal activity.
 - It threatens blackmail or extortion.
 - It contains plans to escape.
 - It contains plans for activities in violation of institutional rules.
 - It is in code.
 - It contains information which, if communicated, would create a clear and present danger of violence and physical harm to some person.

Indigent inmates shall receive pre-stamped envelopes, stationary, pencil and postcards sufficient to send two letters or postcards each week. This includes any mailing of a legal nature.

Outgoing Privileged/Legal Mail

Outgoing privileged/legal mail shall be treated as privileged mail only if it is clearly and properly marked with the name and title of the recipient, and the correct return address of the sender. Privileged/legal mail must have a recognizable legitimate address of the legal firm or other governmental entity.

1. Outgoing privileged/legal mail may be opened to inspect for contraband where there is reliable information that a threat to the order and/or safety and security of the facility may exist. At no time should the mail be read during this inspection. Inmates are notified when outgoing mail is withheld in part or in full.
2. Outgoing privileged/legal mail shall not be held longer than 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) and shall be held only to verify proper addressing.
3. Privileged Mail is correspondence to or from the following:
 - Attorneys, Judges or County Counselors
 - Courts
 - The Governor of Missouri
 - Jackson County Executive
 - Jackson County Legislators
 - Jackson County Office of Ethics, Human Relations and Citizens Complaints
 - Members of the Missouri House and Senate