
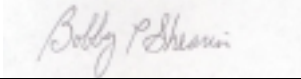
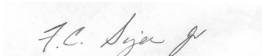


STATE OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF CORRECTION

 DIVISION OF CORRECTION DIRECTIVE	PROGRAM: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	
	DCD #: 20-2	
	TITLE: Responding to Information Requests	
	ISSUED: March 1, 2006	
	AUTHORITY:	 Bobby P. Shearin DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
	APPROVED:	 Frank C. Sizer, Jr. COMMISSIONER

I. References:

- A. COMAR 12.02.04.02
- B. ACA Standards 4-4019, 4-4487

II. Applicable to: Headquarters, Maryland Correctional Enterprises and All Facilities

III. Purpose: To establish procedures for responding to inquiries.

IV. Definitions: None.

V. Policy: It is the policy of the Division of Correction to respond to inquiries and requests for information regarding programs, services, operations, inmate matters and other concerns in a timely, complete and accurate manner.

VI. Procedures:

A. Inquiries are received at the Division through the following methods:

- 1. Written correspondence
- 2. E-mail
- 3. Telephone/voice mail
- 4. Facsimile

B. Logs may be maintained to record the above communications for future reference and for referral purposes.

C. All incoming mail shall be date-stamped on the date of receipt. Each agency/facility shall have an appropriate stamp that indicates the name of the facility or agency and the date.

- D. An inquiry or complaint addressed to Division headquarters or a Division facility shall be responded to or acknowledged as soon as possible, with time frames specified as follows:
1. Government officials – 3 work days
 2. Public Information Act requestors – not more than 30 days
 3. Inmate relatives/friends – 3-5 work days. NOTE: The majority of letters contain requests/complaints that can only be handled at the facility where the inmate is housed, and will be referred to that facility in an expeditious manner.
 4. Inmates – not more than 30 days (See NOTE above). Inmates shall be encouraged to use the administrative remedy procedure to seek resolution to problems and complaints at the institutional level prior to writing to the Governor, the Secretary, the Commissioner or other headquarters staff.
- E. If a response time may be in excess of the time frames indicated above, an interim response shall be prepared, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence, advising the requestor that a more detailed response is to follow, and an indication as to when a reply can be expected, as in the following situations:
1. If the inquiry requires research or compilation of statistics or other materials not currently available; or
 2. When referring the requestor to another individual or agency. A copy of the transmittal letter shall be sent to that individual or agency.
- F. In instances where a delay in responding to federal, state or local legislators and executives may be unavoidable, one of the Commissioner's executive staff shall be contacted for guidance and approval.
- G. A request for information that is considered confidential and/or sensitive shall be referred to one of the Commissioner's executive staff or to the public information officer, as appropriate.
- H. The Commissioner may refer correspondence to a member of the executive staff, to a headquarters program director, or to a warden, who shall ensure that a response is prepared in accordance with the time frames listed in section VI.D. above or other time frame directed by the Commissioner. This individual shall:
1. carefully review the Commissioner's instructions to ensure that the response is drafted with the proper signature; and
 2. ensure that a direct response is not made unless specifically instructed.

- I. The inmate affairs coordinator is the individual at Division headquarters designated to coordinate responses to inmate letters addressed to the Commissioner or his executive staff, and requests forwarded to the Commissioner by the Governor, the Secretary and elected officials, for one of the following actions:
 - 1. Preparing a draft response for the appropriate signature,
 - 2. Suggesting comments/recommendations for a response, or
 - 3. Preparing a direct response, with a copy to the requestor.
- J. The warden may designate an individual at the institutional level to respond to inmate concerns or refer letters to the appropriate unit for response.
- K. The warden shall personally review an inquiry from a legislator that addresses issues with legislative or budgetary implications, and shall consult with a member of the executive staff to coordinate an appropriate response.
- L. Unless e-mail, facsimile, telephonic or another type of response is preferred, correspondence with agencies, offices or individuals outside the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services shall be placed on current Division headquarters or institutional letterhead, as appropriate. Inter- and intra-agency correspondence shall be placed on Division or institutional memoranda or e-mail, as appropriate.
- M. Each facility shall have a notice posted in the visiting area to instruct visitors where and how information may be obtained.
- N. Inquiries from the media shall be referred to the Division's public information officer.
- O. Training
 - 1. Staff who answer telephone calls shall be instructed as to proper telephone etiquette to ensure that courtesy and prompt attention is given to callers. Staff shall also be trained in the use of telephone directories to forward callers to the appropriate parties.
 - 2. Mailroom and mail-routing personnel shall be trained in the forwarding of mail and facsimiles to the proper staff persons and instructed on procedures to follow for documents addressed to staff no longer employed at the Division.
 - 3. Receptionists shall be instructed in the use of tact and discretion in referring unscheduled visitors to appropriate staff, if appropriate.
- P. Each warden shall issue an institutional directive to implement and comply with this DCD.

VII. Attachment: None

VIII. Rescissions:

- A. DCD 20-2, dated January 1, 1987
- B. DCD 20-6, dated May 22, 1995
- C. DCD 60-5, dated October 1, 1980

Distribution:

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