Travis County Sheriff’s Office Visitation

Governed by Texas Administrative Code, Title37 – Public Safety and Corrections, Part 9 – Texas Commission on Jail Standards, Chapter 291 – Services and Activities, Rule §291.4 – Inmate Visitation Plan – requires each inmate be allowed a minimum of two visitation periods per week of at least 20 minutes each and at least one opportunity must occur in the evening or on the weekend.

Visitation by the numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre 2009 (100% face-to-face)</th>
<th>2009 – 2012 (50% face-to-face/50% video)</th>
<th>2013 (100% video)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum visits</td>
<td>40 per hour</td>
<td>40 face-to-face/hour</td>
<td>167 twice an hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101 video twice an hour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average number of visits monthly</td>
<td>CY 2008 = 4,831</td>
<td>CY 2009-2011 = 6,260</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>attorney visits – 60</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>home visits – 334</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>video at TCCC – 4,569</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total – 4,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitation lobby wait times</td>
<td>1.5 – 3 hours</td>
<td>45 minutes – 1.5 hours</td>
<td>5-10 minutes with appointment – 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>without appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors in lobby</td>
<td>30-150</td>
<td>30-100</td>
<td>Up to 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evolution of visitation and the Travis County Sheriff’s Office

Pre-December 2001, visits were offered five days a week, evenings only, with one visit period per hour, based on housing unit. Visitors were transported to the buildings by bus for visits. Each housing unit had two visitation days each week. Visitors arrived at TCJ and TCCC to sign-up for visits and available spaces were filled on a first come first served basis.

December 2001, the Visitation Building opened at Del Valle. Visits were five days a week, mornings and afternoons, with one visit period per hour, based on housing units. Inmates were brought to the visitation center for the visit, with the exception of max security inmates from Buildings 2 and 3. Visitors for these max security inmates were transported to Buildings 2 and 3 for visits. Visitors arrived at TCJ and TCCC to sign-up for visits and available spaces were filled on a first come first served basis.

In 2004 the first video visitation systems (4) were added for individuals wanting to visit max security inmates in Building 2. Visitors for max security inmates housed in Building 3 were still taken to the building for visits. Between 2004 and 2009 visitation was expanded to six days a week. Visits were based on housing units, one visit period per hour, and rotated between mornings and afternoon/evenings every other day. Visitors arrived at TCJ and TCCC to sign-up for visits and available spaces were filled on a first come first served basis.

Prior to 2009, all visitation periods were based on the housing unit of the inmate, and when inmates moved from one housing unit to another, their visitation periods changed accordingly. This resulted in visitors being turned away when they came at the wrong visitation period. In 2009, video visitation expanded with the opening of Building 12, designed and built solely for video visitation, and outfitted with an additional 97 video visitation booths. The complex moved to a five day a week schedule (Tuesday – Saturday). Visitation occurred once per hour and visits were based only on inmate gender, not housing. Female visits were allowed once in the morning (10 am), once in the afternoon (3 pm), and once in evening (8 pm). No male visits were allowed during these times. Visitors arrived at TCJ and TCCC to sign-up for visits and available spaces were filled on a first come first served basis. Buildings 2 and 12 conducted video visitation only; visitors for Building 3 max females were transported to the building, and all other visitation was conducted in-person.
In May 2013 all visits went to video. Currently, the visitation center is open for free video visits from 8 am – 10 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, excluding County Holidays. Additionally, off-site video visits are available seven days a week, 8 am – 10 pm, and include opportunities to visit even on holidays. Any inmate not restricted from visits due to disciplinary issues may have visits at any open time. Visitors may sign up for visits and secure a slot from any internet enabled device or at the visitation center. Signing up in advance assures a visit at the scheduled time.

Other Visiting Options

Currently the TCSO has two programs that give inmates an opportunity to earn contact visits with their children once per month: Parents and Children Together (PACT program, for males) and People Recognizing the Inherent Dignity of Everyone (PRIDE program, for females). PACT teaches the elements of nurturing parenting and is taught by an instructor from Any Baby Can. The mission of PRIDE is to assist women in building stronger relationships with their children and families. Since March of 2010, 207 unduplicated inmates have received PACT and PRIDE contact visits (138 males, 69 females), impacting 402 children. TCSO believes that these programs are valuable, and due to staffing constraints, generally provide security for the one a month contact visits using 12 hours of overtime.

Additionally, requests for special visits are considered on a case-by-case basis upon request to the building supervisor. Special visits are non-contact, and take the place of the next normally scheduled visit.

Security issues related to face-to-face visits not applicable to video visits:

- Keep Separates – On 01/26/2015, 360 of the inmates in our facilities needed to be kept separate from one or multiple others. Reasons for Keep Separate status include co-defendants charged in the same crime, “enemies” outside of jail, along with any other number of causes. Because face to face visits involve moving inmates outside their housing areas, this list must be reviewed to ensure that individuals aren’t scheduled for movement into common areas at the same time.
- Inmate movement – Face to face visitation would result in an average of an additional 450 inmate movements in the Inmate Mall per day. Currently there are more than 900 inmate movements, on average, per day in the Inmate Mall.
- As a practice TCSO attempts, whenever possible, to maintain a physical as well as visual barrier between male and female inmates. In order to continue this practice, visitation times would have to be limited based on inmate gender. Approximately 12-15% of the ADP is female.

This information and historical summary has been compiled for reference as questions and proposals around video visitation are considered.

PURPOSE:

To describe the inmate visitation plan that will be used in the Jail.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Sheriff’s Office to allow inmates the opportunity to have visits with family, friends, their attorneys and other officials under conditions consistent with the security of the facility.

PROCEDURE:

1. Any person acting in an official capacity as a representative of a government, law enforcement, health and welfare agency or court ordered individuals are authorized necessary visitation. Attorneys may visit clients anytime although delays will be experienced during counts, meals and lock-downs. Attorney and official visitors may, in the course of their duties, give inmates official or legal papers only. Credentials that confirm an official visitor’s association with the agency or office, such as a legible, officially issued picture identification must be presented in order to be permitted access. Attorneys must also present their state issued “Bar” card. A legible, officially-issued picture identification is defined as:

   a) An identification card issued by an agency of government known to the Corrections Bureau member on duty; and

   b) The identification card bears the officially affixed photograph and signature of the bearer. Examples of which are:

      1) State or federal drivers licenses;

      2) Department of Public Safety (D.P.S.) identification cards;

      3) U.S. or other national passports;

      4) U.S. military identification cards; or

      5) Any similar document that may reliably confirm the identity of the bearer, even though it may be expired.
2. Law office staff are afforded the same access as an attorney, except that a letter voucher must be on file and approved by the facility Captain/Director. The staff member will also be required to furnish the noted picture identification upon entering the facility. Approvals are made on a case by case basis. Approval is at the Captain/Director's discretion based on the safety, security and orderly operations of the facility. Requests are approved for one year and are renewed on a yearly basis. Approvals are automatically terminated when the attorney requesting such no longer employs the requestor's agent or designee. The letter should be on the law office's letterhead and should state:

a) The staff member's name;

b) Date of birth;

c) Officially-issued picture I.D. number;

d) Sponsoring attorney's Bar number and signature;

e) The general nature of the business expected to be conducted on behalf of the attorney.

3. In addition, a letter is required from the attorney authorizing that his/her staff member be allowed to visit the specified inmate named in the letter. This letter is required for each and every visit and shall state:

   a.) The staff member’s name

   b) The inmate’s name & Booking No.

   c) The sponsoring attorney’s signature & Bar No.

4. Routine non-contact visitation privileges are available for inmates to utilize to visit with family and friends. Each inmate is permitted two, on-site, free, twenty minute non-contact visits each week (Tuesday-Saturday) and unlimited scheduled off-site paid visits (Monday thru Sunday), provided that this privilege has not been temporarily suspended as a result of disciplinary action.

5. Staff conducting visitation will ensure the visitor(s) pertinent information is entered into the inmate’s visitation system file before scheduling the visit or the visitor may schedule the visit from home in the video visitation system. If the inmate refuses the visit or is at court, staff conducting the visit will cancel the scheduled visit to ensure the inmate is eligible for another visit later in the week. Visitors must meet the following criteria:

   a) Only three (3) visitors, including infants and children, may visit at any one time during an on-site visit;

   b) Present a legible, officially issued picture identification card, as outlined in paragraph 1 of this policy;

   c) Not be currently incarcerated or not have been incarcerated within the last thirty days;
d) Be at least seventeen years of age or older, as verified by a legible, officially issued picture identification card, as outlined in paragraph 1 of this policy; and

1) If under seventeen years of age the visitor must be accompanied by a parent or guardian; or

2) If the visitor is the legal spouse of the inmate and is also under the age of seventeen, they must present a valid marriage license and a legible, officially issued picture identification card, as outlined in paragraph 1 of this policy.

6. It is the inmate's responsibility to notify family and friends about the visitation schedule. In circumstances where more than three designated visitors arrive for an on-site visit the three designated visitor’s slots per inmate are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. All persons authorized to visit inmates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the safe, secure and orderly operations of the facility. All visitors are expected to comply with the following regulations:

a) Visitors should check in and present required identification at least (fifteen) minutes before their scheduled visitation time;

b) Food, beverages and tobacco products are not permitted to be consumed by or to be in the possession of inmates or visitors during visitation. This includes any item the visitor purchased in the lobby and items the inmate has ordered from the Commissary;

c) All visitors must wear appropriate and conservative attire. Visitors dressed in a manner likely to disrupt the visitation process are not permitted to visit. For example, bathing suits are not appropriate attire, nor are dresses, skirts or shorts that are above the fingertips when arms are extended below the waist. The Officer working front visitation may deny visits from occurring for such reasons.

d) Generally, visitors are not permitted to deliver any personal items, such as books, mail, or clothing. Requests from visitors to deliver items to an inmate are routed to the on-duty supervisor for disposition;

e) Improper conduct, such as displays of nudity, lewd or criminal conduct, or affection beyond the reasonable bounds of propriety, disrespectful, or threatening behavior is cause for visitation cancellation.

7. All inmates are expected to adhere to the rules outlined in the Inmate Handbook. In addition, during visitation, inmates are expected to comply with the following:

a) Be prepared for the visit ten minutes before the scheduled time and respond promptly when called out for visitation, those who are not ready on time may forfeit some or all of their visit time;

b) No food or beverage may be brought to visitation, which includes items purchased from Commissary;
c) Inmates are not permitted to bring items to an official visit unless they have obtained prior written permission from the on duty supervisor (e.g., legal papers to discuss with a visitor);

d) Improper conduct, such as displays of affection beyond the reasonable bounds of propriety or disrespectful or threatening behavior, is cause for visitation cancellation;

8. Failure to comply with regulations, either on the part of the visitor or the inmate, may result in the immediate cancellation of the visit. Depending on the severity of the transgression and the outcome of any investigation, future visits may be restricted. In addition, inmates are subject to decisions of a disciplinary board. Visitors are subject to criminal prosecution and imprisonment if found guilty of bringing contraband into the jail.

9. Any inmate who has an active EPO will not be allowed to receive visits from the victim(s) listed in the protective order, as long as the order is in effect.

   a) The booking staff will enter the victim notification and/or EPO information into the jail management screen designate them as “Not Authorized for Visit” and enclose a notification form in the inmate’s folder;

   b) Any orders received after initial incarceration will be updated in the computer by records staff or receiving and discharge depending on where the inmate is housed;

   c) Staff may research to determine if the EPO restricts “all communication” between the victim and inmate. If so, the designated supervisor may authorize the suspension or blocking of the inmate from receiving visits and/or making phone calls to the victim.”

   d) Visitation staff will approve each scheduled visit during the late shift. Designated visitation staff will screen and approve all new video visitation account applications for completeness and proper identification of the applicant on a daily basis during the late shift.

10. The Captain/Director of each facility is responsible for establishing a reasonable visitation schedule. Information about the visitation process will be made available to the inmates through the Inmate Handbook and in response to requests for information. Visitors may obtain public transportation information, including nearby bus terminals, from Capital Metro. Visitors may obtain information about visiting from off-site via the webpage designated for Travis County video visitation system.

Signed

Greg Hamilton, Sheriff

4/10/15

Revision Date
Greetings! In an effort to improve our services for you the public The Travis County Sheriff’s Office and the Visitation Unit is asking for your help. We would like for you to please assist us by taking a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions about your visit(s) to our Visitation Center.

1. Is this your first visit to our facility?  Yes______ No______

2. When the need arises, how often do you visit with someone at the jail? 1 X Week______, 2 X week______

3. How many times have you visited someone at the jail in the past 12 months? _________

4. Do you pre-schedule your free on-site video visits? Yes______ No______

5. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (best), how do you rate the video visitation system?
   a. Convenience..................................1 2 3 4 5
   b. Scheduling (internet) .........................1 2 3 4 5
   c. Sign-up (on-site) ................................1 2 3 4 5
   d. Video quality...................................1 2 3 4 5
   e. Audio quality..................................1 2 3 4 5
   f. Wait times .....................................1 2 3 4 5
   g. Crowded waiting areas.......................1 2 3 4 5
   h. Interaction with staff .........................1 2 3 4 5
   i. Staff able to solve problems quickly......1 2 3 4 5
   j. Overall satisfaction ...........................1 2 3 4 5

6. Have you ever visited a Travis County inmate in the past, before the video visitation system was installed? Yes______ No______

7. If “Yes” to #6, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (best), please rate your experience with the old face-to-face visitation system.
   a. Convenience ..................................1 2 3 4 5
   b. Sign-up (on-site) ...............................1 2 3 4 5
   c. Video quality ..................................1 2 3 4 5
   d. Audio quality ..................................1 2 3 4 5
   e. Wait times .....................................1 2 3 4 5
   f. Crowded waiting areas .......................1 2 3 4 5
   g. Interaction with staff ...........................1 2 3 4 5
   h. Staff able to solve problems quickly......1 2 3 4 5
   i. Overall satisfaction ...........................1 2 3 4 5

8. If you have a choice, would you want to visit by free video on-site_______, or free face-to-face (through the glass)_______?
TO:  Wes Priddy, Major  
FROM:  Shane Poole, Captain  
DATE:  3 April 3, 2015  
SUBJECT:  TCCC Visitation Center Survey Results

A general survey of persons utilizing the TCCC Visitation Center during the first two weeks of March 2015 was conducted by the Hospital-Visitation Unit staff. The focus of the survey questions was visitor satisfaction with the current video visitation system and where possible, compare this to any experience the visitor may have had with the previous face-to-face (through the glass) visitation process in place prior to full video implementation in May 2013.

The survey was offered randomly during the signup process during day, evening and weekend operating hours. The survey was offered in English and Spanish, and a copy of the survey as presented is attached. What follows are the questions and answers represented by simple percentage breakdowns. The number of responses varied with a high of 141 responses for a general question to a low of 68 responses to a question specific to the old visitation system.

Just a few take-aways from the survey results:

- The majority of visitors (88%) were repeat customers, visit twice per week (66%), and just over half have visited less than 6 times (53%) in the last 12 months.

- Over half (57%) of those surveyed had used both the current video system and the old face-to-face model for visiting an inmate. Almost two-thirds (64%) of those visiting currently pre-schedule their visitation appointments.

- The majority (85%) of those surveyed rated their overall video visitation experience as good to excellent with only 6% rating it as poor. Of those that had visited using the face-to-face system, only 64% rated their overall experience as good to excellent and 21% rated their experience as poor.

- Of those surveyed, 43% had not experienced the old face-to-face visitation model at TCCC/TCJ, but 91% of the total reported they would prefer face-to-face visitation.
Q1. Is this your first visit to our facility?  n = 141  
Yes = 12%  No = 88%

Q2. When the need arises, how often do you visit with someone at the jail?  n = 131  
1 x Week = 34%  2 x Week = 66%

Q3. How many times have you visited someone at the jail in the past 12 months?  n = 123  
<=5 times = 53%  =>6 times = 47%

Q4. Do you pre-schedule your free on-site video visits?  n = 121  
Yes = 64%  No = 36%
Q5. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (best), how do you rate the video visitation system?  \( n = \) varied

![Visitor Opinion of Video Visitation System](image)

Q6. Have you ever visited a Travis County inmate in the past, before the video visitation system was installed?  \( n = 127 \)

Yes = 57%  No = 43%

![Visited prior to video](image)
Q7. If “Yes” to #6, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (best), please rate your experience with the old face-to-face visitation system. n = varied

Q8. If you have a choice, would you want to visit by free video on-site________, or free face-to-face (through the glass)_______? n = 112

Free video on-site = 9%  Face to Face = 90%
IMPACT OF FACE-TO-FACE VISITATION ON THE TCSO

STAFFING

With the efficiencies introduced through the implementation of the system-wide video visitation system in May 2013, the Department was able to avoid the need to request additional staffing and equipment upgrades at the TCCC Visitation Center and TCJ.

Reinstating face-to-face visitation will necessitate the use of two different visitation procedures by staff simultaneously. The face-to-face visitation procedure is a manual process and more time consuming for staff, visitors and inmates, so additional staff will be necessary to provide the same level of service currently enjoyed by visitors and inmates alike. There are additional safety and security considerations as well.

The Visitation Center will require an additional 7 officers and 6 Security Coordinators. This will restore the second “Back Visit” officer post required to provide proper safety and security supervision of inmates, and coordinate movement, etc. for personal visits while the first Back Visit officer provides the same services for inmates receiving official visits. (This post was eliminated in May 2013 with the implementation of video visits.) This request will also provide for an escort/supervision officer in the “Inmate Mall”, or secure walkway inmates use while traveling to and from the Visitation Center. A review of incident reports for comparable periods both before and after the implementation of video-only visits at TCCC showed a substantial reduction in incidents committed by inmates while participating in, or traveling to or from personal visits. Therefore, this security post is deemed necessary for the safety and security of all inmates, and civilian and sworn staff utilizing the Mall during visitation hours. The Visitation sign-up desk is currently staffed for 2 Security Coordinator posts with partial relief. The “Visit Coordinator” post is routinely staffed with an officer, but this proposal will allow Security Coordinators to perform this task, freeing the officer for security duties, medical runs, emergency room escort (a need amply demonstrated by overtime analysis). Additionally, this request will provide for the third visitation sign up post at the desk to meet the demands of the time consuming manual signup tasks and coordination associated with face to face visits.

TCJ will require an additional 4 Security Coordinators. With the implementation of video visitation, the number of receptionists assigned to the TCJ lobby was reduced as all visitors participated remotely from TCCC. Allowing face-to-face visits at TCJ will require reinstating the original sign-up and screening procedures in the TCJ lobby in order for visitors to enter into the Jail. Again, this number is based upon 2 posts, 2 shifts, 5 days per week to be consistent with the TCCC Visitation schedule.

EQUIPMENT

In order to provide supplemental face-to-face visitation opportunities, the current equipment will need to be upgraded. There are currently 15 visitation stations at TCCC and 5 stations at TCJ that do not have video systems in place and can be utilized for face-to-face visitation.
Prior to the advent of video visitation, visitors and inmates held conversations over equipment originally installed when the buildings were constructed. The equipment is essentially pairs of powered, point-to-point intercoms utilizing payphone-style handsets. The handsets are not individually timed, controlled, or capable of being recorded/monitored as the video visitation and inmate phone systems are currently for security and investigative services. Further, there is no automated appointment system as is the case with video visitation.

Operationally, at TCCC or a given TCJ floor, visits for all inmates/visitors on the old equipment must be coordinated to start and end at the same time as the connection cannot be individually controlled. This necessitates that all visitors wait until every inmate arrives and is seated for his or her visit before any visits can begin. The visitation period must then be timed manually by a staff member with several notifications made via loudspeaker to all visitors and inmates as the visitation period comes to a close. These conditions make the current system extremely inefficient and far less than convenient for visitors, inmates and staff alike. It also adds significantly to wait times, lobby crowds and on high traffic days, it can result in visitors being turned away. Further, the current system does not allow for the routine monitoring and recording of conversations for security and investigative purposes.

To better facilitate face-to-face visits upgraded equipment would be necessary including handsets and control/recording equipment for 15 (30 phones) visitation stations at TCCC and 5 (10 phones) at TCJ.
SECURUS TECHNOLOGY

Inmate Communications for Family and Friends
OBJECTIVE

› Discuss the communication system currently in place for inmates
  • Background
  • Services provided
  • Contractual information
  • Associated fees

› Why Securus?

› Goals

› Recommendations
BACKGROUND

- Securus provides technology that allows inmates to communicate with friends and family
- Meets TCSO requirements for inmate visitations
- Securus was competitively awarded the Travis County Inmate communication services
INMATE SERVICES PROVIDED

- Collect phone calls
- Video visitation
- Secure voice mail
- Secure email
- Prepaid calling cards
Current contract expires October 2016

FY15 -
• Commission rate is 62.4%
• $840,198 fees collected for Travis County

FY16 -
• Commission rate will be 63.1%
FEE INFORMATION

- Collect calls are $4.65 up to 20 minutes
- Video calls are $20 up to 20 minutes
- Long distance rates vary
- Calling cards are available
- Email & voice mail available for additional fees
WHY SECURUS?

› Formal competition resulted in Securus contract award
› Zero cost investment for Travis County
› $1.2M video visitation infrastructure installed by Securus
› Over $800,000 from inmate collect phone calls
› Over $9,000 from video visitation
› 365x24x7 support
TRAVIS COUNTY GOALS

› Deliver a communication system for inmates that support TCSO requirements
› Provide a safe environment for correctional staff and inmates
RECOMMENDATIONS

‣ Review the services and associated rates
‣ Review business processes to support visitation concerns