



Coronavirus: Measures set in force by the Correctional Service

- Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service - Norwegian abbreviation: KDI
- Information in this document might be subject to change, due to the current circumstances. The document was updated 23 March 2020.

As of 23 March 2020, four staff members of the correctional service have been infected by the Corona virus. So far, no cases of Corona virus have been registered among inmates or convicted persons. The four staff members who are infected by Corona are in quarantine, and have not been in contact with other staff members or inmates

The correctional service aims to prevent spreading of the Corona virus. We are following the situation closely, and are adjusting the measures according to the needs. The prisons have good control of all persons entering the prisons and also those who are leaving the prisons. All facilities have extra focus on and attention towards hygiene, in order to prevent spreading of the Corona virus, and to ensure a safe execution of sentences.

Establishment of a crisis response team

The crisis response team meets daily as of 13 March 2020.

Immediate suspension of visits to the prisons

- All visits to inmates from family and friends have been suspended. Exceptions can be made under extraordinary circumstances, but only if the prison governor decides that a visit is strictly necessary, and there is no risk for spreading of the Corona virus.
- Visits from defence lawyers, police and embassies will still take place, but must be conducted in a manner that prevents the risk of being infected (glass wall, 2 meters distance etc).
- Representatives from police/procurator and defence lawyers should be urged to, and be provided with the possibility to conduct communication with the client using a video-link. The correctional service will procure 800 tablets for this purpose. Inmates will be compensated by receiving free call-hours. An information letter for dependents/relatives is being prepared. The Red Cross continues to provide digital visits, and it is up to the local level to determine to which extent this can be conducted.

Reduced requirement to exploit capacity in big open facilities

All inmates should have single bed cells as soon as possible, in order to prevent the spread of infection. The correctional service has decided to reduce the requirement to exploit prison capacity by abolishing the use of double cells and cells with several beds. This concerns both high security prisons, lower security prisons and halfway houses. This will be put into action as soon as possible.

Limitations to the intake of convicted persons to prisons, as well as limitations in summons of convicted persons to serve sentences and fines in prison.

- The summons of persons to serve their sentences in prison has been suspended, as has the intake of convicted persons to prisons. This concerns prisons with lower security and halfway houses. This measure applies to the serving of prison sentences, as well as for fines. Convicted persons, who already have been summoned, will be informed that they do not need to comply with the summons.
- The intake of convicted persons to high security prisons shall be reduced to a minimum. Such intakes shall only be enforced when this is regarded as strictly necessary from a security point of view.
- The measure concerns all convicted persons who have been summoned to serve their sentences up to 15 April 2020. Summons to serve after 15 April 2020 are still regarded to be in force. New summons will not be submitted.
- Custody will continue to be instituted.
- Suspension of the intake of convicted persons to the institutions where it is possible to serve the sentence. (The Execution of sentences act § 12: “Execution of sentence in an institution: In special cases, a sentence may be wholly or partly executed in the form of 24 hour detention in an institution if such detention is necessary for improving the convicted person`s capacity to function socially and in a law-abiding manner, or there are other compelling reasons for doing so”).

Immediate suspension of leaves and day releases

All leaves and day releases are suspended. Exceptions can be made under extraordinary circumstances. (The Execution of Sentences Act § 20: Day-release, § 33: Leave of absence from prison).

Limited use of escorted leave

The use of escorted leave shall be reduced to an absolute minimum, for example visits related to necessary health treatment. (The Execution of Sentences Act § 34: Escorted leave).

Quarantine for inmates

Inmates belonging to a risk group, and inmates who are infected by the Corona virus shall be excluded from company with other inmates, according to § 37. (The Execution of sentences act, § 37: Exclusion

from company as a preventive measure).

New regulations concerning electronic monitoring (EM)

The correctional service is introducing a new temporary practice for EM. A simplified procedure is introduced, which implies that physical contact between the convicted and probation service staff is reduced.

The correctional service recommends using EM as part of the sentence, as this will relieve the current situation in prisons. The new regulations enter into force immediately, and will initially stay in force until 01 May 2020.

Staffing

- There is agreement among central actors (trade unions etc.) concerning prolonged working hours (The Norwegian Working Environment Act (§ 10-6), and the possibility for use of 12 hour shifts (§ 10-5) for the entire institution. This provides for a more flexible system, reduces the attendance of employees. This will also avoid breaching the work hour regulations (§ 10-6: Overtime, § 10-5: Calculating average normal working hours)
- Until further notice, it is not required to apply for an exemption when hiring prison officers without formal education. Persons who are unemployed, but have a formal education from the correctional service should in this case be prioritized when hiring.
- Redeployment of employees between correctional facilities. Additional costs related to work travel can be covered if the travel distance is reasonable.
- A notification letter listing critically important personnel /positions has been submitted to the National Guard.
- A notification letter listing critically important personnel /positions has been submitted to all units of the correctional service, thus enabling employees to cross municipal borders to reach work in eventually forbidden (closed) zones within the municipality.

Community service sentences

As of 17 March and provisionally until 13 May 2020, community service sentences will be temporarily suspended. Exceptions may occur.

Cancellation of vacation for employees

KDI's board of directors has decided to cancel employees' planned vacations outside the Nordic countries.

The decision is authorized in accordance to the Act relating to Holidays, § 6 Fixing holiday dates, changes and compensation (3): Changes of fixed holidays, dates, compensation etc.

The aim of the decision is to prevent a number of employees having to go in quarantine for 14 days after arriving in Norway, should they go on vacation. Such a situation would cause serious operational

problems for the correctional service. This decision is in force as of 13 March 2020.

On 05 March 2020, the Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service published information (instructions) on how employees who have been in areas affected by the Corona virus should respond.

Limitations in physical attendance of employees

- KDI has established remote access via mobile phone for employees in quarantine/employees who can work from home in order to reduce the risk of spreading the Corona virus. This is in force as of 10 March 2020.
- Employees with portfolios and duties that do not require physical attendance, are recommended to work from home. The possibility of working from home is extended to include as many as possible, including employees at the EM control center.
- All courses, conferences and seminars have been cancelled up until 31 May 2020.
- Physical meetings (both external and internal) should be avoided until the end of April 2020, unless the management at a facility, the regional management, the management at KRUS or the management of KDI decides otherwise.
- All duty travels abroad are cancelled as of 10 March 2020.
- The main entrance of the headquarters of the Norwegian Correctional Service «The House of the Correctional Service» (Solheimsgata 21, Lillestroem) is closed. There is a poster on the door with contact information. Employees have personal access cards, and may enter the building.

Suspension of the prison dog service

The prison dog service has been suspended as of 13 March 2020. No searches will be conducted by the dog service after this date.

The University College of Norwegian Correctional Service – KRUS

All courses and seminars are suspended.

20. mars 2020