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1. Communicating hygiene awareness to prisoners

Written information on hygiene awareness is presented on notice boards of every housing unit. It covers the basic hygiene measures: how to wash hands, how to cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing, how to dispose used tissue paper and to notify a prison officer immediately when not feeling well.

At this moment information is also constantly forwarded through national and international TV and radio channels that prisoners have access to.

2. Maintaining hygienic environments in facilities

All prisons must have (especially in the prison entry and prisoner admission facilities, also in the quarantine unit) adequate amount of disinfection products and medical personal protective equipment: respirators, protective gloves, protective eyewear, together with no-touch thermometers.

3. Vigorous screening of visitors or restrictions.

All people entering a prison are checked with a no-touch thermometer and in case of suspected fever, cough or other symptoms of virus, the person is recommended to go home and contact a general medical practitioner.

All prison visit tours and similar activities that are not necessary for the everyday functions of prison, are cancelled.

From 14.03.2020 all visits to prisoners are suspended, except visits by criminal defense counsels, representatives who are advocates, ministers of religion, notary and consular officers of country of nationality to prisoners.

4. Regular screening and training of staff

Prison medical department provides prison officials with protective equipment together with instructions and hygiene requirements for use. Other people are instructed by the prison officials.

All cases and situations when wearing a surgical mask is compulsory is listed separately for prison officials, prisoners and visitors whose visits can not be restricted.

5. Screening of parole prisoners on return

See p 8.

6. Establishment of quarantine/observation spaces at correctional facilities

From 16.03.2020 all prisoners in closed prisons are locked in cells; the daily one hour open air time is cancelled for the time being, except in the mother and child unit.

Prisoners' contacts with state institutions, municipalities, criminal defence counsels, representatives who are advocates, ministers of religion, notary and consular officers of country of nationality to prisoners are not restricted. Private phone calls are enabled at least once a week.

Medical inspections are recommended to be carried out inside prisoners' housing units, in exceptional cases and when necessary - in the medical unit.

Court hearings are held via video conference.

Open prison prisoners can use a phone free of charge to contact prison officers.

From 17.03.2020 open prison prisoners are not allowed to leave prison.

All group activities for prisoners are suspended; individual (on to one) programs and activities continue.

Prisoner canteen (store) services are suspended. Sanitary hygiene products and stationary are provided to all prisoners by prison service.

Packages for prisoners are admitted via Postal Service only.

Prisons will minimise the movement of prison staff between different units. The number of officers who come into contact with infected (or suspected infected) prisoners is kept to a minimum.

Prison staff canteen will provide food in takeaway containers or the canteen is used by each unit's staff separately and the dining hall is disinfected inbetween.

Prison officials are required to report immediately on every person with clinical signs of virus. One person from medical staff will be responsible for performing the first evaluation of all suspected infected persons in prison.

All pregnant prison officers and workers, with no exceptions, must stay home immediately and do distance work.

7. Reporting and treatment on identification of positive cases

Prisons will report immediately to the Ministry of Justice Prison Department of any suspected and identified virus cases, also of other related problems.

8. Screening of newly arriving prisoners

Transfers of prisoners between different prisons are suspended. Transfers between Police detention houses/centers and prisons are carried out in exceptional cases only, and after individual case agreements between Police and Prison Service.

All admitted prisoners are checked with a no-touch thermometer in the transfer bus prior arriving a prison; in case of suspected infection, the receiving prison's medical department is notified immediately and the bus will be disinfected after the transfer.

For all prisoners with clinical signs of infection, there is organised a quarantine unit, where he/she has to be housed for 14 days or until the infection risk has passed. The original cell of the infected (suspected infected) prisoner who has been transferred to the quarantine unit will be disinfected. Restrictions to the prisoners held in the quarantine unit and other people entering the quarantine unit are set by the medical department.

Contact

For any further questions regarding the procedures in the state of emergency taken by the Estonian Prison Service please contact the following:

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