

## **The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service**

### **COVID-19 measures in prisons status as of 8 May 2020**

#### **Status as of 8 May 2020:**

Inmates who are going to serve a prison sentence for unpaid fines, will continue not to be summoned or admitted to serve their sentence.

In lower security prisons, inmates can be summoned to serve the sentence, given that the facility is able to handle the risk of spread of the Corona virus. This means that the facility has a structure where it is possible to keep inmates in quarantine until they have been tested for the Corona virus and have had an introductory conversation.

The intake of inmates who had been summoned to serve a prison sentence in high security facilities was reduced to a minimum in March. The intake of inmates would only be carried out when it was regarded as strictly necessary from a security perspective.

As of 8 May 2020, it has been possible to increase the number of summons, and intake of inmates to high security prison, if the facility has the necessary capacity and can handle the prevention of spread of the Corona virus.

Convicted persons who under normal circumstances would have been summoned to serve the sentence in lower security prisons, can now be summoned to serve in high security prisons (The Execution of Sentences Regulations § 4-3)

Persons will still be placed in custody.

As a main rule, new inmates have been placed in quarantine for 14 days after intake in prisons, without being permitted to be together with other inmates. As of 08 May, new inmates are not permitted to be together with other inmates, until they have been examined, eventually tested, by the prison's health department.

The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service decided on 13 March 2020 that a sentence could be disrupted if there was a violation in the execution of sentence with electronic monitoring, and the convicted person should be transferred to a facility with lower security. The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service has decided that this measure will be discontinued. The convicted person will be transferred to prison if the violation qualifies for summoning to prison.

#### **Single bed cells**

The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service recommends that all inmates are accommodated in single bed cells. If inmates are accommodated in double cells or multiple occupancy cells, this should be abolished as soon as possible. This concerns both high security prisons, lower security prisons and halfway houses.

#### **Immediate suspension of leaves and day releases**

All leaves and day releases were suspended in March. Exceptions could be made under extraordinary circumstances. The reason for making exceptions was to allow the facility to open for leaves regarded as strictly necessary.

Suspension of leaves and day releases have also included leaves intended for rehabilitative purposes. This has been – and still is - regarded as an important measure to prevent the spread of Corona virus in the prisons.

As of 08 May 2020, the following decisions were taken regarding leaves and day releases:

#### Halfway houses:

Leave and day leave can be granted if the convicted person has to undertake tasks regarded as strictly necessary and related to release in the near future. This might be to meet with a future employer, visit place of study or to view potential accommodation. In each case, an individual assessment must be made, where the risk for spreading the Corona virus, as well as prevention of spreading the virus, is a part of the assessment.

It must be taken into consideration whether escorted leave should be used instead of leave or day leave.

#### Lower security prisons

For the time being, leaves or day leave will not be granted in lower security prisons. (There is, however, one exception in one of the departments in Trondheim prison).

#### High security prisons:

For the time being, leaves or day leave will not be granted in prisons with high security.

#### **Escorted leave**

The use of escorted leave was suspended in March 2020. Exceptions were made only under extraordinary circumstances, and only in cases when it was regarded by the prison governor as strictly necessary, and where there was no risk of spreading the Corona virus. The use of escorted leave was to be reduced to an absolute minimum.

As of 8 May KDI, has started to allow for use of escorted leave at all security levels. This is regarded as a part of the gradual reopening after the lock-down in society in general.

Escorted leaves can provide for rehabilitative purpose before inmates' release. At the same time, the prison can assure that necessary measures in order to prevent the spreading of the Corona virus is ensured. This minimizes the risk of spreading the Corona virus to prisons.

#### **Suspension of day release/temporary release (for work)**

In March, the use of day release and temporary release (for work) was suspended in prisons with high security, lower security and halfway houses.

As of May, the Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service has also started to ease access to day release and temporary release.

#### **Electronic control measures as a precondition for release on parole from prison sentence**

Inmates can be released on parole from prison, given that the inmate accepts to be under electronic control measures, such as ankle bracelet, remote alcohol test, and video conversation.

Such control measures will make it possible to grant release on parole, even in cases when under other circumstances would it would not have been advisable.

### **Extension of the period of execution of sentence with electronic monitoring – ankle bracelet**

The period of execution of sentence with electronic monitoring is extended from four to six months.

### **Early release – abolished as of 01 May 2020.**

In exceptional cases the execution of sentence might be interrupted, or early release may be granted, if this is regarded to be advisable in the given case.

This is regarded as a consequence which the Corona situation allows for, and the measure concerns both prison and probation.

Early release was introduced as a measure on 16. March 2020, and on 3 April, the measure was extended until 1 May.

The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service decided on 27 April 2020 that early release as a measure to prevent the spread of the Corona virus should be abolished as of 1May 2020.

Early release might, however, still be granted after 01 May 2020, in case situations occur with an increase in infected persons (staff members and/or inmates) in prison, and the decrease in number of inmates would let the prison tackle the risk of spreading the Corona virus.

### **Other measures**

The use of other measures will be assessed and will be implemented locally at the respective facilities – prisons and probation offices-, in cooperation with the health service.