**C. Prisoner’s Eligibility to Visit and Types of Visits**

All prisoners are eligible to receive visits unless they have temporarily lost that privilege due to disciplinary action. There are, however, different types of visits.

Most prisoners are in the general population and may receive contact visits. Contact visits allow the prisoner to sit together with his/her visitors and have limited physical contact with them (a brief kiss and/or hug at beginning and end of visit, hold hands during the visit). These visits occur in a large visiting room, usually furnished with tables and chairs and usually shared with many other prisoners and visitors. Contact visits are restricted to five visitors at a time. Contact visits are not limited in duration except for normal visiting hours or terminations caused by overcrowding to allow other visits to begin.

Prisoners who are still in reception (recently admitted to CDCR or transferred between prisons) or who are segregated (i.e., Administrative Segregation, Security Housing Units, Adjustment Centers, pending specific rules violation report charges, or assigned to Behavior Management Units) are restricted to non-contact visits. Non-contact visits occur with a glass partition between the prisoner and his/her visitors. The prisoner is escorted in handcuffs by staff to the visit. The handcuffs are removed only after the prisoner is secured in his/her side of the visiting booth; thus, parents who do not wish to have children see the prisoner in restraints should wait away from the booth or glass partition until the prisoner is settled. Non-contact visits are restricted to three visitors and are limited in time (usually one to two hours, depending on the prison and the reason for the non-contact status of visits).

Prisoners on Death Row, often referred to as “condemned” prisoners, are housed either at San Quentin State Prison in Marin County (men) or at Central California Women’s Facility in Chowchilla (women). “Condemned Grade A” prisoners on Death Row may receive contact visits (meaning no partition between prisoner and his/her visitor) unless their visiting privileges have been restricted for disciplinary or security reasons. “Condemned Grade B” prisoners on Death Row may only receive non-contact visits. All Condemned visits are in a secured booth and involve the prisoner being escorted to visiting in handcuffs. Visits for all prisoners on Death Row are limited in time (usually one to two hours).

Some prisoners are eligible for “family visits.” These visits occur in private, apartment-like facilities on prison grounds and last approximately 30 to 40 hours. Prisoners on Death Row, with life sentences, with convictions for sex offenses, or under disciplinary restrictions are not eligible for family visits. Family visits are restricted to approved visitors who are immediate family members (parents, children, siblings, legal spouses, or registered domestic partners) of the prisoner. Family visits are further restricted by availability; usually one visit every three to five months. An eligible prisoner must put in an application for a family visit with his assigned Correctional Counselor I at the prison. This handbook focuses on regular (weekend and holiday) visiting and not on family visiting. Further inquiry about family visiting should be directed by the prisoner to his/her counselor or by the family to visiting staff.

In addition to the types of visits available, there are other factors which may restrict a prisoner’s eligibility to visit. Some of these factors require the visitor to check with the prisoner about his/her particular circumstances, while other factors require the visitor to check with the prison. Such factors include:

The prisoner’s work or school hours: Generally a prisoner may not visit during the hours he/she is assigned to a job or to school. Under limited circumstances, a prisoner may obtain permission to visit during work or school hours, but such circumstances are generally limited to family visits, a rare visit (visitor has not visited in more than six months), an emergency visit (death or serious illness of family member), or excessive distance (visitor comes from more than 250 miles and has not visited in the last 30 days). The prisoner must obtain prior written approval to visit during work or school hours by seeking Excused Time Off (ETO) from his/her supervisor.

The prisoner’s criminal history: Some prisoners may have restrictions to visit with minors based on their convictions. If the prisoner you wish to visit has been convicted of a criminal offense involving a minor, you should check with him/her if you plan to bring children (even if the children are the prisoner’s children) to visit.

Medical quarantines: Sometimes part or all of a prison is quarantined to control the spread of a contagious disease. When that occurs, visiting is not allowed for any prisoners housed in areas under quarantine. The 800 Visitors’ Information number (800-374-8474) will advise a visitor whether there is a medical quarantine and which parts of the prison are affected.

Lockdowns or Modified Program: Prisons are often placed on “lockdowns” or “modified programs” in response to threats to the safety of staff and prisoners or the security of the institution. These “modified programs” may be restricted to specific groups of prisoners, areas of the institution, or in the case of a lockdown, are applied to all prisoners in all area of the institution. The 800 Visitors’ Information number, noted in the preceding, will provide information regarding lockdowns and modified programs and which prisoners are restricted from visiting as a result. Since both lockdowns and medical quarantines can occur with very limited notice, it is wise to check the Visitors’ Information number just before leaving for a visit.

Hospitalized Prisoners: When a prisoner is seriously ill or injured, he/she may be hospitalized, in either a prison hospital or a community hospital. Visits with hospitalized prisoners are only considered for prisoners having life threatening or critical injuries or illnesses. These special visits are restricted to immediate family members with current approval to visit at the institution. Requests to visit at a community hospital must be approved by the Warden and attending physician. Visitors should make requests to visit by contacting the Warden’s office.