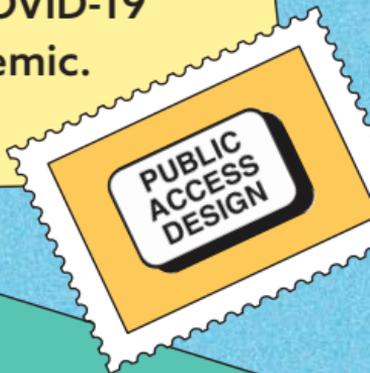


# Keep in Touch



Stay connected with loved ones incarcerated in New York state prisons, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



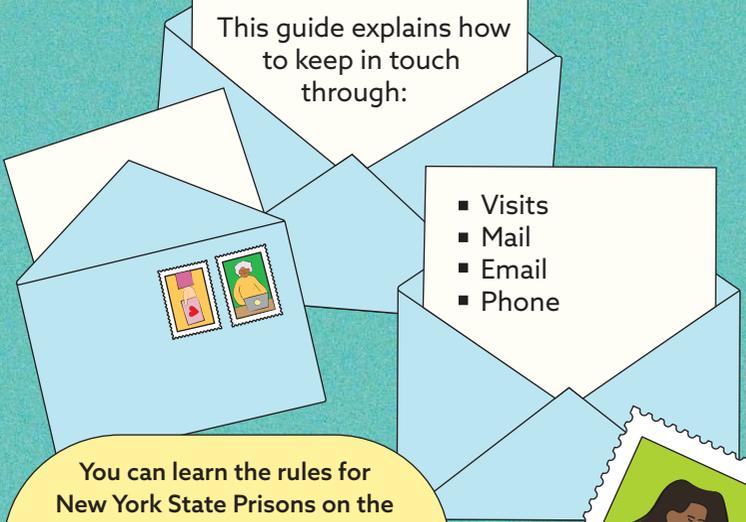
# Stay Connected!

Staying in touch with your incarcerated loved one can be tricky, especially during a pandemic.



This guide explains how to keep in touch through:

- Visits
- Mail
- Email
- Phone



You can learn the rules for New York State Prisons on the New York Dept. of Corrections and Community Supervision's (DOCCS) website: [doccs.ny.gov](https://www.doccs.ny.gov)



## Before You Get Started

However you stay in touch, there are two things you always need to know:

- 1) Your loved one's DIN
- 2) The name of the prison they are in

To find both, visit [nysdoocs.lookup.doccs.ny.gov](https://nysdoocs.lookup.doccs.ny.gov)

DIN stands for Department Identification Number. It's a number your loved one was assigned when they were incarcerated.

# 4 Visits

## Before You Go

Find out when you can visit your loved one:

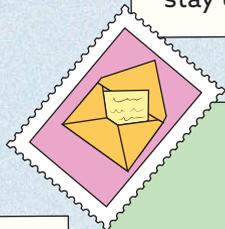
- Go to [doccs.ny.gov/find-facility](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/find-facility)
- Click on the facility they're in
- Scroll down to "Visitation" to see the schedule
- Call the facility the day of your visit to confirm the schedule

Some organizations can help you with a ride, see pg. 11!

Follow the dress code: DOCCS has rules about what you can wear. For details go to [doccs.ny.gov/dress-code](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/dress-code)

Bring a photo ID: Like a driver's license or passport that hasn't expired

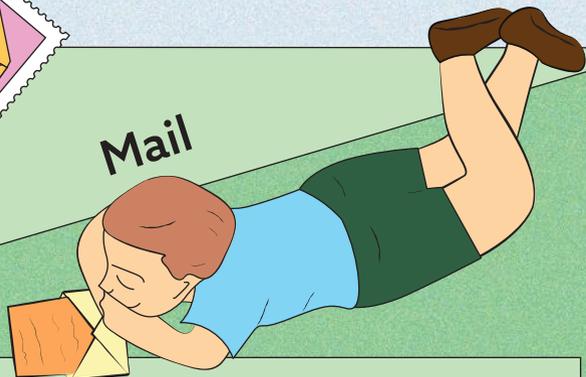
Don't bring anything that's illegal or could set off the metal detector.



# 5 Things to Consider

Get a COVID-19 test before you go. DOCCS will test you when you get there, but it's good to get tested before your trip so that you don't risk exposing other visitors if you have it. Rules are constantly changing, so stay up to date at [doccs.ny.gov/visitors](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/visitors)

## Mail



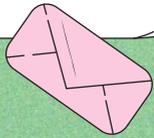
## Before You Send

Find out the prison's mailing address:

- Go to [doccs.ny.gov/find-facility](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/find-facility)
- Click on the facility they're in—the mailing address will be at the top of the page
- Include your loved one's full name and DIN on the envelope or package
- Include your full name and return address

### Things to Consider

Mail sometimes arrives late or gets lost in prisons, and the pandemic has made this worse. If you need to get in touch right away, try sending an email instead!



## Email

### Before You Send



- JPay is the company that operates tablets and email service in prisons
- You and your loved one need to set up an account at [jpay.com](http://jpay.com)
- Log-in to send an email



JPay calls emails "Secure Messages"

### Things to Consider

- Incarcerated people can lose access to their tablet, which they need to read emails. It can take a while to get access again.
- The JPay system doesn't always work. Your emails can get delayed or never be sent.
- If you're having problems, call JPay at **(800) 574-5729**



## Phone

Calls are limited to 10-30 minutes, depending on the facility.

### Before You Receive a Call

- Securus is the company that operates phone service in prisons
- Set up your account at [securustech.net](http://securustech.net) or by calling **(800) 844-6591**
- Your incarcerated loved one has to call you
- If you have money on your account they can call you collect
- They can also load money on their account to call you

## Things to Consider

The pandemic has made it harder for incarcerated people to use the phone.

If you haven't heard from them over the phone, send them a voice memo through JPay instead.

DOCCS rules say that incarcerated people can make calls every day from 7am-11pm, including holidays.



## Some Things That Can Go Wrong

- You can travel to visit your loved one and not be allowed to see them when you get there
- Your loved one can be moved to a different facility or hospital without anyone telling you
- You can be notified that something you tried to send wasn't delivered because it had contraband

Contraband is stuff you're not allowed to send to your loved ones or bring with you when you visit them. Prisons decide what is contraband. For a list of items that you can and can't send, visit [doccs.ny.gov/family-guide-allowable-items](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/family-guide-allowable-items)

## If Your Rights Are Violated, File a Complaint:

Find the superintendent's contact info:

- Go to [doccs.ny.gov/find-facility](https://www.doccs.ny.gov/find-facility)
- Click on the facility they're in
- Click on the most recent "PREA Audit Report"
- Scroll to the second page, titled "Facility Information"
- Look at the contact info under "Warden/ Jail Administrator/Sheriff/Director"
- Write them a letter

## Having Trouble?

Even when you try to follow all the rules, things can still go wrong.



### Tips for Writing a Complaint

Make sure to include:

- Date and time of the incident
- Name of the facility
- Your loved one's DIN
- Description of what happened
- Names of people involved



Send a copy of the letter to the Commissioner:

Department of Corrections  
 and Community Supervision  
 State Office Campus  
 1220 Washington Ave  
 Albany, NY 12226-2050

**Keep a copy for  
 your records!**

### Why File a Complaint?

Even if you file a complaint, it might not solve your problem. But it's important to do because it creates a record of the problem. It can help show that the system needs to be improved.

Filing a complaint should NOT impact how your loved one is treated in prison. If it does, contact CANY (see pg 11).

## You're Not Alone!



Community organizations can help answer your questions and connect you with others impacted by incarceration.

If you need help planning how to visit your loved one, getting legal support, or preparing your loved one for reentry, reach out to:

- **Correctional Association of New York**  
 Phone: (212) 254-5700  
 Email: [info@correctionalassociation.org](mailto:info@correctionalassociation.org)
- **Alliance of Families for Justice**  
 Phone: (347) 973-0580  
 Email: [info@afj-ny.org](mailto:info@afj-ny.org)
- **Fortune Society**  
 Phone: (212) 691-7554  
 Email: [info@fortunesociety.org](mailto:info@fortunesociety.org)
- **Prisoners' Legal Services of New York**  
[plsnyc.org/get-help/](http://plsnyc.org/get-help/)
- **Osborne Association**  
 Phone: 718-707-2600  
 Email: [info@osborneny.org](mailto:info@osborneny.org)



**Google "NYPL  
 Connections  
 Guide" for more  
 resources**

This project was produced through **Public Access Design**, a program of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP). Public Access Design projects use design to make complex urban issues accessible to the New Yorkers most affected by them. [publicaccessdesign.org](http://publicaccessdesign.org)

**The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)** is a nonprofit that uses the power of art and design to increase meaningful civic engagement in partnership with marginalized communities. [welcometocup.org](http://welcometocup.org)

**The Correctional Association of New York (CANY)**'s mission is to safeguard the human and civil rights of people in prison in New York; promote transparency and accountability; eliminate harmful policies and practices; and support decarceration strategies. [correctionalassociation.org](http://correctionalassociation.org)

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