



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
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December 16, 2022

TO: All Juvenile Rehabilitation Employees

FROM: Felice Upton, JR Assistant Secretary *Felice J. Upton*

SUBJECT: Interim Directive: Safety Welfare Checks, Prohibited Items, and Searches

EFFECTIVE: Wednesday, December 21, 2022

In order to promote the safety of youth and staff in our JR settings, I am issuing this Interim Directive to clearly outline new, and reinforce existing requirements for youth safety welfare checks, prohibited items for staff, as well as requirements for searches.

Going back to basics with regard to safety and security across our system is imperative. Our policy and procedure related to security make each of us, the people we serve, our facilities and the citizens of the state of Washington safer.

Reliability and predictability are fundamental to a therapeutic environment. Routine and thorough safety and security procedures are imperative and we each have to do our part.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to creating a safe environment for staff and the young people we serve. In the event anything in this directive conflicts with current JR policy or local standards, this directive supersedes.

Interim Directive

SAFETY WELFARE CHECKS FOR JR YOUTH

➤ **IN SECURE FACILITIES**

Youth Safety Welfare Checks (formerly called headcounts) must be conducted *randomly* in staggered checks which should not exceed 15 minutes **any time** a youth is in their room and as otherwise directed by local leadership Appointing Authority or designee.

- **Safety Welfare Checks** must be documented on the appropriate form.
- Staff conducting a **Safety Welfare Check** on youth during sleeping hours must see a portion of the youth's flesh and evidence of breathing.
- If the youth's flesh and evidence of breathing is not visible, staff must take additional measures to verify the youth is safe and well. This may mean standing at the doorway longer. We should avoid sleep disruption as much as possible.

- If a youth appears to be in distress, immediately contact security and wait to enter the room or unlock the door until another staff arrives. We will not go in single staffed.

➤ **IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Youth Safety Welfare Checks (formerly called headcounts) must be conducted *randomly* at least four times per hour and no more than 15m apart when youth are in their rooms.

- **Safety Welfare Checks must be documented on the appropriate form.**
- Staff conducting a **Safety Welfare Check** on youth who appear to be sleeping must see a portion of the youth's flesh and evidence of breathing.
- If the youth's flesh and evidence of breathing is not visible, staff must take additional measures to verify the youth is safe and well.
- If a youth appears to be in distress, immediately in enter the room and begin emergency measures (e.g. Narcan, CPR, call 911, call for backup, etc.).

PROHIBITED ITEMS – APPLIES TO ALL JR EMPLOYEES

In order to establish the proper guidelines for possession of staff property and clearly describe the nature of unauthorized property, alcohol, drugs, or weapons into a JR facility, office, or any state-owned vehicles in use, the following will apply:

- Staff are prohibited from bringing drugs, prescriptions, or over the counter medications into a JR facility or state vehicle with the exception of the following:
 - Staff may bring personal prescriptions and over-the-counter medication in sufficient quantity to sustain them for the equivalent of two shifts (or longer when traveling), but must secure them in a location inaccessible to youth.
 - Staff must inform their supervisors if taking any prescription or medication that require larger doses or that may cause side effects that could affect their performance. In these cases, a locking medication box would be provided.
- Staff assigned to or temporarily working in a JR facility are prohibited from bringing the following items into a facility or state vehicle:
 - Personally-owned restraint devices, restraint device keys, or radio equipment.
 - Personal tools, knives, box cutters, similar cutting instruments, or any similar item that could be misused to jeopardize safety and security.
 - Electronic devices or materials that, when used, could lessen alertness or reduce the ability to immediately respond to an emergent situation and/or interfere with their ability to effectively complete their job duties, unless required to perform the essential functions of their job and pre-approved by the Appointing Authority or delegate. Examples include laptops or tablets.
 - Audio and video recordings or games that are rated R, X, or NC-17, or pornographic material of any kind.

- Staff may bring personal cell phones into a JR facility or state vehicle [according to Policy 1.20](#) with the following restrictions:
 - Staff are only allowed to use personal cell phones while on break, and not while supervising youth.
 - Staff must store phones in a secure location not accessible to youth.
 - Staff will not take pictures or videos with their personal cell phones at any time at work. Pictures of youth, facilities, locking devices and security devices are strictly prohibited.
 - Staff will not share content on their cell phone of any kind with youth.

SEARCHES

➤ **IN SECURE FACILITIES**

People

- Staff will follow local standards and search all youth upon entering or leaving a secure facility or program area as appropriate.
- Staff bags are searched randomly and regularly, and whenever possible, may be searched every time they enter a facility. Additionally, institutions will use the body scanners set for random intervals for all staff, and at random times will conduct scans of 100% of a shift.
- Visitors, contractors and volunteers' persons and bags are searched 100% of the time, unless a contractor spends more than 50% of their working week at a secure facility, in which they would go through randomizer.

Places

- Perimeter searches must be conducted and documented as per local standard.
- Training on perimeter searches will be provided by the Security Manager or a designee.

Things

- In addition to searches initiated for reasonable suspicion of contraband or visitations, staff must conduct periodic facility-wide searches of resident rooms and common areas in all JR facilities randomly at least once per week for 100% rooms and spaces.
- Staff must document searches as required in standard.
- Expectations about room searches will be posted in common areas.

DOCUMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Living Unit Manager and/or Supervisor must verify the **Safety Welfare Checks and Searches** are conducted and documentation is accurate. The review of safety welfare checks should be documented on the form at least once per day per sheet.
- Security Manager and Supervisor must verify staff, visitor, volunteer, and contractor searches are conducted and documentation is accurate at all times.
- The completion rate and results must be reported to the appointing authority at the end of each month. Appointing Authorities will share this information with JR Executive Leadership in monthly updates.
- All JR leadership is responsible to assess effectiveness in conducting welfare checks, searches, scans, and absence of prohibited items during onsite visits.

➤ **IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

People

- Staff will follow local standards and search all youth upon entering the community facility.
- Staff should bring no more than what is necessary for their shift onto the premises and personal belongings must be stored in a secure location as determined at each community facility.
- Visitors, volunteers, and contractors are asked to leave all personal belongings (including purses, backpacks, etc.) in their vehicles. All items brought into the facility will be searched.

Places

- Perimeter searches must be conducted and documented weekly.
- Training on perimeter searches will be provided by Community Facility Administrator or designee. Notes: this is separate from the CF graveyard building check list.

Things

- In addition to searches initiated for reasonable suspicion of contraband or visitations, staff must conduct periodic facility-wide searches of resident rooms and common areas in all JR community facilities randomly at least once per week for 100% of youth.
- Staff must document searches as required in standard.
- Expectations about room searches will be posted in common areas.

DOCUMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Community Facility Administrator, and/or Supervisor must verify all **safety welfare checks**, and **youth** and **facility searches** are conducted, and documentation is accurate at least weekly. This can be documented on the forms or in the legal log book.
- The completion rate and findings results must be reported to the appointing authority at the end of each week. Appointing Authorities will share this information upon request with JR Executive Leadership.
- All JR leadership is responsible to assess effectiveness in conducting welfare checks, searches, scans, and absence of prohibited items during onsite visits.