# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1 INTRODUCTION
- Introduction
- Acknowledgements

## 2 INTAKE

## 3 MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH YOUR INCARCERATED LOVED ONE (S)
- Tablets
- E-Messages
- Video Visitations
- Mail
- Phone Calls
- Calling Accounts and Rates
- Visitation
- Hospitality Houses
- Denial of Visits or Visitors
- Medical Visitation
- Getting Married in TDCJ

## 4 TRUST FUND AND COMMISSARY
- Commissary and eComm Spent Allowances
  - for Incarcerated Persons
- eComm Spend by Quarter

## 5 ADVOCATING WITHIN TDCJ

## 6 TRANSFERS
- Hardship Transfers
- Medical Transfers
- Education Transfers
- Custody Transfers
- Program and Rehabilitative Transfers

## 7 MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH
- Notification of Critical Illness
- Advocating for your Loved ones’ Medical Care
- Medical 911
- Therapeutic Diets

TPCA Basic Survival Guide REV 1 2024
TABLE OF CONTENTS

8  PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT PREA)  28

9  LIFE IN DANGER  29

10  OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG)  30

11  DISCIPLINARY PROCESS  31

12  LOSS/DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY  32

13  160S AND GRIEVANCES  33
     Grievable/Non Grievable issues  34
     Forms Availability  35
     Writing Grievances  35
     Step 2 Grievances  36
     Language Assistance  37

14  IF YOUR LOVED ONE DIES IN TDCJ  38

15  SELF CARE  40

16  CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENT/SIBLING NEED ...  43

17  SUMMARY  44

18  USEFUL RESOURCES
     Phone Numbers  45
     TDCJ Regions and Units  46
     Glossary  47
INTRODUCTION

With more than 135,000 (and rising) people in Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) facilities and nearly half a million children in Texas who have experienced a parent being incarcerated, incarceration is a harsh reality for many Texans. At TPCA we realize that navigating the Texas carceral system is often confusing and intimidating. Our volunteers developed this guide to serve as a general reference tool for those who are trying to be present for their incarcerated loved ones. For a deeper dive into some of the topics in this document please consider attending our trainings and check out some of our other deliverables via our website and groups. Also, keep in mind that TDCJ policies are subject to rapid change, so please refer back to the TDCJ website for current happenings. We hope that this information guide brings you resources that are beneficial to you and your incarcerated loved ones. Please reach out to let us know if this resource has assisted you in your journey.

Acknowledgements

TPCA is a volunteer based organization. Special thanks to our hardworking volunteers who complied this document to assist impacted family and friends in their journey to be supportive of their Texas incarcerated loved ones. Special thanks to Director of Impacted Family and Friends, Kathy Dunbar for her empathetic and compassionate direction and tireless efforts. A big thank you to additional volunteers: Brittany Robertson, Ashleen Gaddy, Brandi Gray, Jane Corley, Donna Ellis for their vast contributions. Finally, Thank you to the many impacted family members, incarcerated individuals and formerly incarcerated whom have shared their success, struggles, questions and cries for help.

DISCLAIMERS:

- **TPCA is a nonprofit organization that consists of primarily volunteers. We are NOT attorneys therefore we cannot give legal advice. This document does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available are for general informational purposes only. If you or your loved one feel that you need legal advice, you should consult with an attorney.**
- **Much of the information here was gathered from the TDCJ website, but may not be current at the time you read this.**
- **TDCJ rules and policy documents continually change so please refer to TDCJ policies for updated information.**
- **Texas Prisons Community Advocates, Inc. 2024 All rights reserved.**
When an individual is first transferred from county jail to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, they go to a transfer unit. Some examples of transfer units are:

- Beto Unit (male)
- Dominguez State Jail (male)
- Duncan Unit (male)
- Garza East and Garza West Unit (male)
- Gurney Unit (male)
- Holliday Unit (male)
- Marlin (female)
- Plane State Jail (female)
- San Saba (male)

Upon arrival at the prison Reception Center, the individual is required to go through the reception and classification process. This could take up to 90 days.

Once admitted to their designated intake/transfer facility, each person is:

- Photographed
- Iris Scanned
- Fingerprinted

As part of the identification process:

- Physical, dental, and eye examinations are conducted
- Several tests are conducted to detect any medical or mental health issues and/or cognitive impairments

Interviews are also conducted to gather information on:

- Family structure
- Past criminal and social behaviors
- Drug and/or alcohol dependency
- Education and employment history
- Military history

The results obtained from these tests and interviews are the basis of assigning a classification score and will determine the unit of assignment, level of security, housing, and job assignments.
MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH YOUR INCARCERATED LOVED ONE

Regular contact helps maintain and strengthen your relationship with your incarcerated loved one.

Tablets

- Tablets are now available throughout TDCJ units.
- These tablets will have access to informational, educational, and recreational applications. Some recreational applications may require fees for rental or subscription services, to be determined by the vendor and subject to change.
- Tablets and applications will be made available to incarcerated persons depending on their custody level, disciplinary history, and other criteria.

If your loved one is having problems with their tablets

**STEP 01**

They are to use the communications app on their tablet to turn in a ticket. Then assigned onsite personnel will address the issue with them.

**STEP 02**

They can put in an I60 request to Securus stating the problem that they are having.

**STEP 03**

Incarcerated persons can only submit one ticket every 30 days.

**STEP 04**

They need to put a 160 request to the mailroom informing them that their tablet is not working and requesting that their mail be printed out for them.

**STEP 05**

Loved ones can email offenderphones@tdcj.texas.gov or call 972-734-1111
E-Messages

- Incarcerated people with a tablet may send and receive E-messages to their loved ones. To register, please visit https://securustech.net/ to set up an account.
- Electronic stamps must be purchased to send e-messages. The vendor sets stamp prices that are subject to change. The messages are completed online and sent to the Securus facility interface.
- Loved ones may either purchase stamps or transfer stamps.
- The messages are reviewed and, upon approval, printed and delivered to the incarcerated person’s tablet and/or the recipient’s email.
- Family and friends who are on their loved one's approved phone and visitation list can add money to their loved one’s Securus Accounts by adding money to Securus Debit.

Video Visitations

- 60 minutes long.
- Cost $10.00.
- Incarcerated people will be limited to one remote video visitation per month.
- Remote video visits are on a set schedule that will begin and end at the scheduled times.
- Visitors may log into the remote video visitation one minute before the scheduled start.
- Sessions will not be extended due to delayed start times.
- Any session not started within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time will require rescheduling.
- In the event of issues or technical difficulties, visitors may log out and log back in during the visit. Please refer to Video Visitations for additional information.

Mail

- Incarcerated people who do not have a tablet will receive black-and-white printed copies of their correspondence. If your loved one's tablet is broken, while they are waiting for the matter to be resolved, they need to send an I60 to the mail room requesting that their mail be printed out during this time frame.
- Incoming mail: All general mail, photographs, and greeting cards for all incarcerated persons should be sent to the digital mail processing center where it will be sorted, scanned, and uploaded to the incarcerated person’s secure tablet. These messages and photos will be scanned in color and can be saved to the tablet to be permanently available. Exceptions to this include legal mail; certified mail; media mail; and books, magazines, packages, and other subscriptions from verified publishers, which should be sent directly to the unit where the incarcerated person is being housed.

To send mail to the Digital Processing Center, please address it to:

Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Your loved one's Full First and Last Name + TDCJ Number
PO Box 660400
Dallas, TX 75266-0400

UNIFORM INMATE CORRESPONDENCE RULES
To receive calls from your loved one, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) requires that you register at

**Texas Inmate Telephone, Friends and Family Enrollment**

and meet the following requirements:

1. The name on your driver’s license must match the name on your telephone service enrollment. If you don’t possess a Texas Driver’s License or State ID, you will be asked to upload a photo or photocopy of your out-of-state driver’s license. *NOTE: Passports and international Driver’s License/identification numbers are not accepted at this time.*

2. You must agree to the following conditions:
   - You are the registered owner of the phone number that will accept calls from any person you register to receive calls from (on TDCJ terms).
   - Incarcerated people are only permitted to call registered telephone and cell phone numbers within the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii.
   - Violations may result in a temporary or permanent block placed on the account.
   - You are at least 18 years old.
   - You will not forward calls, make 3-way calls, or use a speakerphone on calls received from any TDCJ incarcerated person you register for (on TDCJ terms).
   - You understand that eligible incarcerated persons are not allowed to speak to any adult who is not listed on their Approved Calling List.
   - Calls are limited to 30 minutes.
   - All calls, except to the attorney of record, are recorded and subject to monitoring.
   - An incarcerated person who is not eligible for the ITS due to custody level shall be authorized access to state-owned telephones, designated by the warden, if the inmate has not been found guilty of any major disciplinary violations within the last 90 days (30 days for state jail and substance abuse felony punishment inmates). To request a telephone call, incarcerated persons shall submit an I-60, “Inmate Request to an Official” form for approval by the warden. These phone calls are shorter in duration (5 minutes) and can be offered either monthly or every 90 days.
   - Incarcerated persons in TDCJ can make calls on their tablets. After completing the registration process with Texas Prison Phones, you must set up a separate TDCJ AdvanceConnect with Securus which prepaid account to receive calls from inmates housed in TDCJ facilities.
AdvanceConnect (A Family & Friends Prepaid Account)

- An AdvanceConnect prepaid account ensures you are always ready to receive calls. Since you pay before being called, there is never a service disruption if the account has funds available. You can add multiple TDCJ registered phone numbers to this account and your loved one can call any of these numbers as long as there is a sufficient balance to pay for the call. You can manage your account online or by using your Securus Mobile App to add phone numbers, set up automatic payment options, and perform other account management functions.

Securus Debit Account

- This account is the incarcerated person's Securus account that they use to pay for their calls or other available Securus services like messaging and tablet content (movies, games, music). You can deposit money directly into your loved one’s Debit account. You do not need to be on the incarcerated person’s Visitor List to make a deposit. Note that funds placed in an incarcerated person's account become the property of this individual. Friends and family members cannot request refunds from these accounts. Go to View Accounts to find your inmate and add funds to their Securus Debit account.

Go to Add funds to your loved ones' account to find your loved ones’ names and add funds to their Securus Debit account.
Visitation

Visitation plays an important role in maintaining the connection between incarcerated people and their loved ones.

TDCJ may take up to 4 to 6 weeks to approve initial visitations

Visitation Hours

- **Contact, restricted, and regular visits** - are normally conducted on Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 5:30 pm.
- **Video visits** are generally conducted on Saturday and Sunday from 7 am to 5:30 pm.
- **Death Row** visits are normally conducted on Tuesday and Thursday from 1 pm to 5 pm and Saturday from 6 pm to 8:30 pm. Death Row is not eligible for video visitation.
- **The regular visit** period is two hours in duration and begins when the incarcerated person and the visitor(s) are present.
- **The special visit** period is four hours. Special visits may be granted to visitors traveling 250 miles or more in distance, one-way, as indicated by Google Maps. The frequency of visitations is dependent on the classification level.
- **Visitation List** The incarcerated person can have up to 10 people on their visitation list and update their visitation list every 6 months.

Scheduling Visits

- All TDCJ units use an advanced scheduling system.
- Visitiation Portal instructions [https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/visitation/portal/index.html](https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/visitation/portal/index.html)
- Visitiation Portal [https://visitation.tdcj.texas.gov/Visitation/startLoginAction.action](https://visitation.tdcj.texas.gov/Visitation/startLoginAction.action)

Visitor Checklist

- Confirm your loved one is assigned to the unit you are planning to visit, that they have visitation privileges, and that you are on the Visitors List.
- Bring a Valid ID.
- Call before leaving. If you have made special arrangements with the unit, ensure that plans for your visit have been made and are in place.
- Check clothing for compliance with visiting rules and regulations. *It is always a good idea to bring extra clothes just in case your clothes are not compliant.*
- Before leaving home, check your vehicle for contraband and/or hazardous items. This includes but is not limited to, implements of escape, drug paraphernalia, illegal narcotics, intoxicants, poisons, any items that pose a danger to others, weapons, knives, scissors, firearms, and any item used to show gang affiliation. Remove these items before entering the correctional facility grounds.
- Arrive on the scheduled day and time during proper visiting hours.
- Do not have any contraband on you when you enter the facility.
- Leave purses, food items, diaper bags, briefcases, cameras, baby strollers, toys, dolls, photographs, tobacco, lighters, matches, cell phones, pagers, or any other type of electronic/wireless device in your vehicle.
- Lock your vehicle.
- Remember to treat correctional staff with respect.
- Do not bring anything to the visiting room to give to the incarcerated person. Incarcerated individuals are not permitted to take anything from the visiting area or receive any item from visitors.
- Ensure that you have NO paper money on you. **A maximum of $35 in coins is allowed per person.** Coins must be carried in a clear plastic bag.
- Power off your phone and store it in the center console or the trunk so it is away from windows where sunlight cannot reach it.
HOW OFTEN CAN I VISIT?
The number of contact visits allowed each month shall count toward the total number of visits. Except in unusual circumstances, an incarcerated person shall not be scheduled for both a contact visit and a general (non-contact) visit on the same day or during the same week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSTODY LEVEL/CLASS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (G1, J1); Level 2 (J2 only)</td>
<td>One contact visit/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 &amp; 3 and Protective Safekeeping (with SAT 3) (G2, G3, P2, P3, P6 and P7)</td>
<td>One contact visit/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 &amp; 3 (G2, G3, P2, P3)</td>
<td>Three contact visit/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 -(G4, J4, P4) State jail and institutional SAT 3 and 4 incarcerated persons with no disciplinary convictions for one year</td>
<td>Two contact visits/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other Level 4 (G4, J4, P4)</td>
<td>One general visit/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 (G4) Special Penalty</td>
<td>Two general visits/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAD inmates (CG)</td>
<td>One contact visit/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Safekeeping (P6 and P7)</td>
<td>Three contact visits/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Trusty (OT), ISF (IP/IS), SAFP (FT), &amp; IPTC (IT)</td>
<td>One general visit/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical (MD), Mental Health (MH), &amp; Intellectually Impaired (II)</td>
<td>Based on computer recommended custody, which determines the type and frequency of visits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visitation Hotline:

Toll-free at (844) 476-1289

- Members of the public may call this line to inquire about an incarcerated person’s location,
- This number is the one to call for basic visitation policy questions, unit family liaison officer information, and how to appeal a visitation denial.
- The hotline will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Additional information can be found at [Inmate Rules and Regulations for Visitation English.pdf](Inmate_Rules_and_Regulations_for_Visitation_English.pdf)
Hospitality Houses

Having a loved one incarcerated may be a time of financial pressure on family members. A Hospitality House is typically a ministry that provides physical and spiritual needs of families of prisoners incarcerated in Texas. Hospitality houses offer a warm, friendly, and peaceful environment where impacted families can relax and rest while visiting their incarcerated loved ones. Here is a list of hospitality houses. Please click on each link for details and rules on each hospitality house or check our website for updated information https://www.tpcadvocates.org/hospitality-houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>NAME OF HOSPITALITY HOUSE</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abilene</td>
<td>Eunice Chambless Hospitality House</td>
<td>(325) 548-2180</td>
<td>13378 FM 3522 Abilene, Texas 79601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarillo</td>
<td>Hope Welcome Center</td>
<td>(806) 378-9967</td>
<td>9400 Amarillo Blvd East, Amarillo 79017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont/Port Arthur</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Inn Hospitality House <a href="mailto:patricia@clei.biz">patricia@clei.biz</a></td>
<td>(409) 736-3980</td>
<td>2689 65th St Port Arthur, TX 77640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Spring</td>
<td>Big Spring Hospitality (no website)</td>
<td>(432) 263 5752</td>
<td>1202 West 4th Street Big Spring, Texas 79720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado City</td>
<td>Samaritan Hospitality House (no website)</td>
<td>(325) 728 2399</td>
<td>1325 Westpoint Ave, Colorado City, TX 79512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatesville</td>
<td>Central Texas Hospitality House</td>
<td>(254) 644 1411/ (254) 644-2584</td>
<td>708 Texas 36 West Gatesville, 76528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntsville</td>
<td>Huntsville Hospitality House</td>
<td>(936) 291 6196</td>
<td>912 10th St. Huntsville 77320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Boston</td>
<td>Haven of Hope FB Page</td>
<td>(806) 378-9967</td>
<td>214 N. Lindsey, New Boston 75570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Colony</td>
<td>East Texas Hospitality House</td>
<td>(903) 928-0116</td>
<td>406 FM 2054, Tennessee Colony 75861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Network To Churches That May Provide Hospitality House

REGIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY CENTER OF SOUTH TEXAS
Highway 202 at Entrance to Chase Field
P.O. Box 4056
Beeville, Texas 78104-4056
Denial of Visits or Visitors

According to Inmate Rules and Regulations for Visitation English.pdf a visitor may have their visiting privileges suspended if there is a reason to believe that forthcoming visits or a particular visit may compromise the safety and security of other incarcerated people, visitors, and staff of the unit.

The Warden or designee has the authority to cancel the visit or deny a particular person to visit on that day. Additionally, the Warden or UCC may remove an individual’s name from an incarcerated person’s visiting list if the visitor:

- Appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Refuses or fails to produce identification and/or falsifies identification information.
- Refuses to be searched or refuses to allow correctional staff to search their vehicle.
- Misrepresents their relationship.
- Knowingly violates any TDCJ visitation rule.

What do I do if my visits are taken away?

- If the visitor is removed from the Visitors List or denied visitation for any of the above reasons, the visitor’s name shall be placed on the Disapproved Visitors List by designated unit staff.
- All written notices to incarcerated persons shall include the specific reasons for the administrative action taken, except in those instances when disclosure of the reasons to the incarcerated person would create an immediate and serious threat to the physical safety or security of the staff, incarcerated person, or other incarcerated persons or jeopardize an ongoing criminal investigation. In such cases, the reason may be stated as follows: “For the security and safety of staff, inmates, and the institution or to protect the integrity of an investigation.”
- An incarcerated person may appeal the decision through the grievance procedures or by submitting a written appeal to the Director's Review Committee (DRC).
- The warden or designee shall notify the unit staff member responsible for updating the computerized incarcerated person.
- A denied visitor shall be notified by the warden or designee of the right to appeal the decision to be removed from an incarcerated person's Visitors List to the DRC. The appeal must be submitted within 14 days of the date on the written notice. If the appeal is denied, the individual may submit another appeal six months after the denial.
Example Sample Letter To DRC regarding
Suspension of Visiting Privileges

Date
Address
Re: Suspension of Correspondence/Visiting Privileges

Dear -,

I hope that you are in good health and spirits. I received your letter dated (DD/MM/Year) that informed me that I am not permitted to visit my (r/ship to incarcerated person) who is housed at the TDCJ Unit, effective immediately.

Per Inmate Rules and Regulations for Visitation, I am appealing this decision within 14 days of the date on the written notice. Therefore, please consider this letter as my appeal of your decision and I would like to state that I am submitting it within the allocated period per your guidelines.

In your letter paragraph number, you stated that I participated in, e.g., knowingly did not adhere to TDCJ policy/visitation rule/ etc.). *(state here what policy was not adhered to)*

I humbly request that I be provided with a statement of facts upon which your decision was based. *(ask for specific information related to why you were removed from your loved one’s visitation list,)*

**If** there is no direct evidence linking you to the charge/and that you are not guilty of the charge, state this. *(I did not do whatever you are being blamed for)*

**If** you were unaware that you were breaking a policy, state: *(I was unaware that I was breaking policy)* that you were not aware of the policy. **If** you deliberately and intentionally brought contraband into a unit and you were caught with it either in your possession or you were caught handing it over to your loved one, explain why you did what you did what you did and what you have *learned from this, and how you can be trusted not to do something similar again. (I am aware that I did break policy and give the reason why you broke policy) and (I apologize for my actions) policy) and (I apologize for my actions)*

Please provide this information in writing, with any supporting documentation, to my address above. Also, please deliver a copy of this letter to Mr./Ms./Mx, so that she/he/they are aware of the suspension and my response to it.

I would appreciate a prompt response to these requests.

Sincerely, (Name)
Medical Visitation

- Critically ill incarcerated people at Hospital Galveston may be allowed family visits.
- The determination of whether the incarcerated person is seriously or critically ill is determined by the presiding physician.
- Upon notification from the doctor, the unit health administrator shall notify the Warden.
- The Warden, or designee, will then make the appropriate notifications to the person designated by the incarcerated person as the emergency contact.
- Incarcerated persons who are placed on the Seriously/Critically Ill List by a licensed physician are allowed to receive visitors in the unit infirmary or medical department at the warden’s discretion with the presiding physician’s medical consensus.
- The presiding physician shall determine the incarcerated person’s ability to receive visitors.
- The warden may provide alternate means for visiting these incarcerated individuals on a case-by-case basis, for example scheduling a visit during the week by special arrangement.

*For a detailed report on Visitation in TDCJ please refer to the TDCJ website and Inmate Rules and Regulations for Visitation*
GETTING MARRIED
IN TDCJ

TDCJ does permit incarcerated persons to be married on TDCJ property. Each warden will ensure that the proper procedures are in place to provide for the safety of the public, staff, and incarcerated persons.

**Officiant** - TDCJ requires that you find your officiant (person legally authorized to perform marriages) and that they are approved to go onto TDCJ prison property by TDCJ.

As a **non-incarcerated spouse**, you are required to obtain the required licenses.

You MUST have a copy of the inmate's TDCJ ID card, birth certificate, or both depending on which county clerk's office is being used to obtain the marriage license. If your loved one has not been incarcerated for an excessive period and you have access to their driver's license or ID card that is still current and valid, you may also use that as acceptable ID (in most cases) and arrange payment and payment for the officiant. And make all other necessary arrangements.

The **incarcerated spouse** must be eligible for visits and submit an Inmate Request to an Official (I60). The unit warden schedules all weddings based on the approval of the I60.

The **warden** shall review the request and approve or deny the marriage request on the Offender Marriage Verification Worksheet.

Each unit shall provide two non-visitation workdays per month for offenders to be married in the visitation area of the offender’s assigned unit. Any exceptions shall be made on a case-by-case basis as authorized by the warden.
The Inmate Trust Fund, authorized by Texas Government Code § 501.014, provides safekeeping of an incarcerated person’s funds, to which an incarcerated person may have access, but not physical control of it during their incarceration.

With this money your loved one can buy personal items and food at the commissary.

The “Inmate Trust Fund” has several deposit options available for family and friends to send funds to their loved ones.

- Money orders or cashier’s checks
- Monthly Checking Account Debit (ACH)
- Electronic Deposits Vendors: Western Union Convenience Pay: Western Union Quick Collect, ACE Cash Express: eCommDirect, Securus Debit

**Commissary**

- While incarcerated people are provided meals, some personal hygiene items (grocery items, specific personal hygiene items), and other goods may be purchased by incarcerated persons from unit commissaries.
- Payment for commissary items is completed by transferring funds from the incarcerated person's trust fund account to the agency’s commissary account.
- The incarcerated person may spend up to $105.00 on commissary items every two weeks. However, this amount may be less as determined by the inmate’s custody status.

**eComm Direct**

- TDCJ has initiated eCommDirect, an online program through which friends and family who are on their loved ones' visitation and/or phone list may purchase certain commissary items every calendar quarter for eligible incarcerated persons.
- The following incarcerated persons are not eligible to participate in the eCommDirect Program:
  - Incarcerated persons on commissary restriction.
  - General population and state jail levels 4 and 5.
  - Security detention levels 2, 3, and transient.
  - Death row levels 2 and 3.
Commissary and eComm Spent Allowances for Incarcerated Persons

G1, G2, G3 and Death Row level 1 $105

Ad Seg Level 1 $80

Ad Seg Level 2, 3 and Death Row Level 2,3 $65

G4 $40

Items that do not count toward an incarcerated person's regular spend

- OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS
- VITAMINS
- SENSODYNE TOOTHPASTE
- TAMpons
- PANTY LINERS/PADS
- HYGIENE PACKS
- REGISTERED PROPERTY ITEMS
- TENNIS SHOES
- WORK BOOTS
- RADIO
- HOT POT
- WATCH
- ALARM CLOCK

- FAN
- LAMP
- TYPEWRITER
- HAIR DRYER
- STORAGE BOX (FEMALES)
- RELIGIOUS MEDALLIONS
- TYPEWRITER RIBBONS
- POSTAGE STAMPS
- EMERGENCY ITEMS TO INCLUDE:
  - CHILL TOWELS
  - COOL SHIRTS
  - GYM SHORTS
  - SHOWER SHOES
  - WATER
  - ELECTROLYTES
  - SUNBLOCK
  - PASSOVER ITEMS
Note:
If you can only add deposits to your loved one's account, it may be due to the following reasons
- If your loved one's unit is on lockdown, you will not be able to purchase any items from eComm for the duration of the lockdown.
- Your loved one may be on commissary restriction.
- You may have accidentally hit backspace when placing your order and therefore you will have to wait until the next business day for the system to reset.
- Signing into the site is only allowed once a day and to purchase items or deposit money.
- There is a small fee, generally under $5.
ADVOCATING WITHIN TDCJ

You are your loved ones best advocate. There may be times when policies and procedures are not being adhered to and will need to partner with your incarcerated loved one to resolve situations as they arise. We have provided some basic information for advocating for your loved one in this document. Please refer to some of our other documents, TDCJ website and our trainings for more detailed information. TPCA also has a team of volunteer Mediators to assist in guiding you through some of your advocacy needs. You may reach out for their assistance by using our REQUEST FOR ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE LINK.
1. Contact the Warden or Unit Family Liaison. Inform them of the situation.

2. If no response in 48 hours, forward them your original email, and say, “I am contacting you once again in relation to my loved one’s issue.” CC the Office of Family Support.

3. If there is still no response, forward your email to the Regional Director.

4. Contact the Office of the Independent Ombudsman or departmental directors.
Sometimes incarcerated people within TDCJ are transferred between different units. The main reasons for incarcerated people to be transferred are Hardships.

- Medical Needs.
- Educational Opportunities.
- Program access.
- Change in custody level.

**Hardship Transfers**

- A hardship transfer is usually considered when there is a medical condition that impacts the immediate family member’s ability to travel to visit the incarcerated person.
- As a rule, state jails, intermediate sanction facilities, substance abuse, pre-parole, and pre-release incarcerated persons shall not be eligible to be considered for transfer.
- Requests for medical hardship must pertain to an immediate family member who is currently on their loved one’s approved visitor list. Requires documentation from a medical provider that the family member is unable to travel long distances (200 miles or more from the unit of assignment to the family home).
- Additional criteria to be eligible for a hardship transfer are.
  - Incarcerated persons should be Line Class 1 or higher.
  - Incarcerated persons should have no major disciplinary convictions for the preceding twelve months.
  - Incarcerated persons who are G4 and have higher custody levels are ineligible unless the G4 classification is due to a security precaution designator.
- Requests from the incarcerated person’s family member for an inter-facility transfer should be directed to the director for Classification and Records. Hardship transfer requests may be submitted to the Director for Classification and Records, P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099. Attn: Hardship.

**THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

- The transfer occurs three weeks to six months after approval.
- It’s harder to get a transfer to a metroplex area like Houston or Dallas.

_TDCJ Transfers (Hardship)_
Attn: Hardship Transfer  
Assistant Director for Classification and Records  
PO Box 99  
Huntsville, TX 77342-0099

{Your Name}  
{Your Address}  
{Your Phone Number}  
{Date}

Dear {Name}:

I am writing to request a hardship transfer for my {family member} from {his/her} current facility.  
{Name} is presently in {facility,} which is {number} miles away from my home. I have recently been 
diagnosed with {medical} condition and can no longer travel that distance to see my {family 
member,} so I hope {he/she} can move closer to me.
{Name} has been incarcerated at {place} for the required 12 months and has a clean record of good 
behavior.  It is so important for my {children, in-laws, etc} to see their {parent, child, sibling, etc.}, 
however up until now I have been the only one who could drive the distance, and now that ability is 
beyond me. I was diagnosed with {condition} on {date} and I find myself severely limited. I am 
attaching a letter from my doctor outlining my medical condition and the restrictions it puts upon me. 
This has already been a very trying, difficult time. I love my {family member} and the thought of no 
longer being able to see {him/her} frequently is heartbreaking to me. I sincerely hope that you will 
understand the hardships that we as a family have gone through and grant this transfer request. 
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
{Senders Name}
Education Transfers

An incarcerated person can request a transfer to access educational programs that aren’t available in their current unit.

- The incarcerated person submits an I60 form to the unit education department requesting to take a course. If the course is not offered on their current unit of assignment, the education department will advise the incarcerated person on what units offer the course and what requirements need to be fulfilled by the incarcerated person.
- If the incarcerated person meets the requirements, the incarcerated person submits another I60 form to the unit education department requesting transfer.
- If the transfer is approved, the Windham School District submits a transfer request to the State Classifications Committee (SCC). This approval has a date the incarcerated person must be transferred by.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- The incarcerated person must be at custody level G1, G2, or G3.
- Disciplinary problems can impact approval for educational transfers. Incarcerated people must be free of major tickets for twelve months and minor tickets for three months.
- Education transfers are more likely to be approved within 24 months of parole eligibility.
- The transfer occurs one week to four months after approval.
- Incarcerated persons may be transferred back to their original unit of assignment once they complete a course.
- The Rehabilitation Programs Division (RPD) serves as the centralized administration and management of activities related to incarcerated persons programs within TDCJ, which includes some college courses. There are college interest forms for males and females. The form is on the RPD website. The incarcerated person must request this form from either a college counselor or Windham counselor. The form is to be turned in to RPD whose address is on the form. Form is onsite.

Medical Transfers

An incarcerated person can be transferred for medical reasons at any time. For a medical transfer: An incarcerated person will need to ask for a medical exam from the unit health care provider if the provider finds a medical issue that requires a transfer, the provider files a request with the Health Service Liaison, who sends approval to the SCC.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- The incarcerated person's custody level, sentence length, and disciplinary history DO NOT affect a medical transfer.
- The transfer occurs within a week of the request.
- If a medical transfer is not approved and the inmate or family member has concerns or questions, file a grievance and/or write a letter:

  Office of Professional Standards  
  P.O. Box 99  
  Huntsville, TX 77342
Custody Transfers
- An incarcerated person can be transferred to another unit if their custody level is changed based on a demotion for disciplinary action or a promotion for good behavior. The Unit Classification Committee (UCC) automatically reviews an incarcerated person’s custody status every six months.

Program and Rehabilitative Transfers
An incarcerated person can request a transfer to access programs that aren’t available in their current unit. For a program or rehabilitation transfer, the incarcerated person submits an I60 form to the Unit Classification Committee (UCC) requesting a transfer to another unit.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:
- The incarcerated person needs to be at custody level of G1, G2, or G3. Disciplinary problems can affect approval for program or rehabilitative transfers.
- Rehabilitative and program transfers are more likely to be approved within 24 months of parole eligibility.
- The transfer occurs two to four months after approval.
- Incarcerated persons can be transferred back to their original unit of assignment once they complete a program.
Under the policies of the Correctional Managed Health Care Committee which manages health care in Texas prisons, incarcerated people have rights regarding access to medical care. However, there is often a big difference between written policies and what happens in reality.

The following is a summary of patients’ rights under the receiver’s policies:

- Access to Care A-01.1
- Right To Refuse Treatment, Department's Right to Compel Treatment I-71.1
- Certified American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Services G-51.5
- Confidentiality And Release of Protected Health Information H-61.1
- All competent incarcerated persons have the right to make certain decisions about their health care. I-71.2

Medical, dental, and mental health care is primarily provided to incarcerated persons via a managed health care system utilizing the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in the northern, eastern, and southern portions of the state; and by Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) in the western portion of the state. When needed, a full range of specialty consultations are available, and hospital services are provided by either the TDCJ Hospital Galveston, the Montford Unit in Lubbock, or local hospitals.

For family members and/or friends to discuss their loved one's medical needs with medical personnel, their loved ones will need to sign a HIPPA PHI form. The HIPPA PHI form is valid for 730 days and is valid across all TDCJ units after it is signed by the incarcerated person unless the incarcerated person revokes it.

It is also advisable for a loved one to have Medical Power of Attorney for their loved one. A Medical Power of Attorney comes into effect if their loved one becomes unable to make their own decisions regarding their health care. A physician needs to certify in writing that their loved one is incompetent to make these decisions.

CORRECTIONAL MANAGED HEALTH CARE POLICY MANUAL Policy A-10.1 mandates that if an incarcerated person becomes critically ill or when a pregnant inmate experiences a fatal demise, the Warden/Facility Administrator shall make the appropriate notifications of the incarcerated person’s emergency contact per the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Administrative Directive (AD) 06.10, “Notification Requirements Regarding Critically Ill Inmates.” Critically ill is defined as any illness or injury that is life- or limb-threatening as determined by licensed health care staff. Therefore, loved ones are not routinely contacted by the warden or medical unless the loved one is near death. This can and does include instances where an incarcerated person has been brought to the hospital for a medical emergency. It is therefore advisable to have a buddy system in place with someone on the inside being able to get the word out to a person's family.

Incarcerated people and their loved ones can request examination by a Private Practitioner (E 44.2), this cost is paid by either the incarcerated person or their loved ones.
Notification of Critical Illness

In the event an incarcerated person becomes critically ill while incarcerated in a TDCJ prison facility, the facility medical department shall notify the inmate’s Warden/Facility Administrator, who shall make the appropriate notifications of the inmate’s emergency contact following AD 06.10, “Notification Requirements Regarding Critically Ill Inmates.”

Critically ill refers to any illness or injury that is life- or limb-threatening as determined by licensed health care staff. Emergency contact is the individual(s) identified whose name(s) and contact information have been documented in the inmate’s permanent classification file as the person to contact in the event of a medical emergency. Fetal demise (or stillbirth) is defined as fetal death occurring during pregnancy at 20 weeks gestation or later.

It is therefore to have a buddy system with some family members who can be contacted by their loved ones to pass on emergency information.
ADVOCATING FOR YOUR LOVED ONES’ MEDICAL CARE

**DO YOUR RESEARCH**
- What are the details of the incarcerated person's medical condition?
- Have they filed I60s, medical requests, and Grievances?
- Is there up-to-date HIPAA/PHI (2yr) and Medical Power of Attorney?
- Request medical records

- Contact medical at the unit explain the issue and request a resolution.
- Contact the Family Liaison Coordinator at the unit.
- Contact the Warden at the unit.
- Contact Medical Liaison.

**Contact UTMB/Texas TECH/TDCJ**
- Texas Tech 806.743.2513 or email cmhc.third.party.inquiries@ttuhsc.edu
- UTMB 409.747.2727 or email utmbcmcq@UTMB.EDU
- TDCJ Nurse Ms. Myra Walker- Explain the situation and quote all grievances your loved one has filed concerning their issues. Email healthervices@TDCJ.texas.gov. Phone 936-437-3003

**Medical Boards**
- **TX Board of Nursing**
  Guadalupe, Suite 3-460
  Austin, TX 78701-3944
  Phone (512)305-4700
  Fax (512)305-7401
- **Texas Medical Board**
  Guadalupe, Suite 610
  Austin, TX 78701-3944
  Phone (512)305-7030
  Fax (512)305-7009 / (888)550-7516

**Additional Contacts Include**
- Office of Family Support Services ofs@tdcj.texas.gov
- Ombudsman@TDCJ.texas.gov
- Health Services Division Dr. Linthicum 936-437-3542

*KNOW YOU CAN REQUEST A PRIVATE PROVIDER TO VISIT YOUR LOVED ONE.*
Medical 911

Please ensure that you are on your loved one’s HIPPA/PHI 2 yr. form.

Contact the unit for a Wellness Check
- Ask Chaplain.
- Unit Family Liaison.
- Ask to speak to Rank.

Request to be updated

For further details please refer to
- Advocating For Your Loved One's Medical Needs.
Therapeutic Diets

Therapeutic diets are provided at all facilities for patients whose medical and/or dental conditions require dietary management as ordered by a qualified healthcare provider (physician, dentist, or midlevel practitioner). Qualified healthcare staff will consult with the patient within 30 days of ordering the therapeutic diet. Dietary literature will be made available during these consultations.

If your loved one is not receiving their special diet:

1. Contact family liaison coordinator/warden.
2. Contact family liaison/warden again if no response after 24 hrs., and cc The Office of Family Services.
3. Contact the Regional Director if no response after 24 hours.
4. Contact the Director of Laundry and Food Supplies if there is still no resolution.
5. Contact UTMB and Ms. Myra Walker and inform them of the situation.
Responsibilities of the PREA Ombudsman

- Monitor the agency's efforts to eliminate sexual abuse and sexual harassment in TDCJ correctional facilities.
- Ensure the agency's policies and procedures are in compliance with federal and state laws and standards.
- Respond to public inquiries regarding allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in TDCJ correctional facilities.

Reporting Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

- Family and friends of incarcerated person, and the general public are encouraged to report allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment that occur in TDCJ correctional facilities to the PREA Ombudsman Office or the TDCJ Ombudsman Office.
- All allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment received in the PREA Ombudsman Office are referred to the Office of the Inspector General for possible criminal investigation.

When reporting allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, please provide the following information, if possible:

- Name of the unit where the alleged victim is assigned.
- Date and time the alleged incident occurred.
- Name and TDCJ number of the alleged incarcerated person victim.
- Name and TDCJ number of the alleged assailant and witnesses.
- A brief summary of the allegation.
- Copies of any correspondence that could assist in the investigation.

When contacting PREA it is advisable to use their standards and/or TX Penal Codes to explain the details as to what happened. For example, if your loved one informs you that they were forced to give or receive oral sex and when they reported what happened to them nothing was done, it is beneficial to say: On the date, [name] was forced to perform oral sex. According to PREA § 115.6 Definitions related to sexual abuse and Texas Penal Code, Title 5. Offenses Against the Person, Ch. 21. Sexual Offenses, this is defined as a sexual assault, and upon reporting this incident to Officer [Name], these allegations were not taken seriously, which is a violation of § 115.61 Staff and agency reporting duties.

PREA Ombudsman Office
PO Box 99
Huntsville, TX 77342-0099
Phone: (936) 437-5570
Fax: (936) 437-5555
prea.ombudsman@tdcj.texas.gov

Please see TDCJ (PREA) Website
https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/tbcl/prea.html
Life In Danger

- Fear of Incarcerated Persons
- Fear of Staff
- Medical Emergency
- Sexual Assault  Sexual Abuse
- Extortion

Fear of Incarcerated Persons: Contact the Warden or Rank and Unit Chief of Classification requesting an immediate OPI.

Fear of Staff: Contact the Warden/PREA/OIG/Ombudsman Regional Director concerning sexual abuse and/or misconduct.

If there is a medical emergency, contact the Warden or Rank for a wellness check, and the Unit Practice Manager, Unit Health Authority, Director of Nursing, or Nurse Administrator.

For Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse immediately notify the Warden, OIG, and the Safe Prisons Coordinator (PREA).

Extortion: notify the Warden, the Major, the Regional Director, the Unit Chief of Classification, and the Unit Safe Prisons Coordinator.

Follow up and escalate if needed.
The Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) created the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to serve as the primary law enforcement and investigative entity of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The OIG is an independent office that reports to the TBCJ, with the Inspector General reporting directly to the TBCJ chairman.

What OIG does

- The OIG investigates allegations of criminal activity and misconduct that have an impact on TDCJ programs, personnel, and resources, including allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse.

- The OIG furthers its law enforcement efforts through task force partnerships with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and the United States Marshal’s Service. These partnerships bind a commitment to sharing information and reinforce a law enforcement allegiance when dealing with escapees, fugitives, parolees, and organized prison gangs.
TDCJ has numerous policies to:

- Establish a uniform disciplinary process.
- Discipline offenders and staff fairly.
- Maintain order and control of institutional safety.
- Protect offenders’ constitutional rights.
- Positively modify offender behavior.
- Maintain an official record of an offender’s disciplinary history.
Administrative Directive 03.72
“Offender Property” permits offenders to utilize the “Offender Grievance Procedure” to resolve claims involving the loss, or damage of personal property. Property is defined as any item authorized by TDCJ policy for possession by an offender, including a Trust Fund account.

**STEP 01** Advise your loved one to file a grievance

**STEP 02** Contact the Warden

**STEP 03** Contact UGI at your loved one's unit

**STEP 04** Contact the Regional Director

**STEP 05** Contact the Ombudsman

If property is lost/delayed during transportation

1. Contact the family liaison coordinator of your loved one's previous unit, and inform them what has happened.

2. Contact your loved one's previous unit, ask to speak to property and obtain a tracking number.

3. Contact Huntsville property and ask to track your loved one's property.

4. Contact the Regional Director of your loved one's previous unit.
Encourage your loved one to use the administrative process initially to resolve their issues informally. To help your loved one in this process, there are details on how they can self-advocate in the Grievance Tool kit and the Offender Handbook. However, in emergencies, loved ones should step in and speak to the relevant TDCJ officials on their loved one's behalf.

Your loved one should also keep a daily diary but ask them to do this in code. For example, when not being allowed to shower in several days they could write “I have not heard from Grandma Suzie in X days,” and remember that journals may be read and taken during shakedowns.

**I60s**

- These are request forms that incarcerated persons are mandated to fill out whenever they have a request.
- An incarcerated person when asking for assistance should briefly write out their request or problem on one side of the I60, and fill out their name, TDCJ number, date of request, the unit of assignment, living quarters, and work assignment. The incarcerated person should also complete side two of the form by checking the box to indicate if the request is to a particular individual or department. If the incarcerated person does not know where to send their request, they should address it to the Chief of Unit Classification who is the appointed person of contact in this scenario.
- These forms should be obtained from the Duty Officer at their unit.
- The I60 can be sent by truck mail to the appropriate person/department or placed in the appropriate box in their unit.
- If your loved one chooses to submit their I60 by placing it in the unit box, it is advisable if they adhere to the following guidelines.
- Follow up with the unit grievance coordination within 48 hours.

**If in General Housing**

- Inform your loved one to place the I60 in a receiving box that has a camera facing it.
- Ask them to wave at the camera.
- And to note the box they placed it, the time and the date they did this.

**If in Restrictive Housing**

- Inform your loved one to take note of the name of the correctional officer to whom they submitted their I60 along with the date and the time.
Grievances
The purpose of the grievance is to officially complain about some form of injustice, such as a violation of policy or law, or to let the administration know that certain conditions of confinement, or actions by another are unacceptable.

Grievable issues

1. Policy violations.
2. Denial of grievance process and incarcerated persons/officials actions.
3. Retaliation for utilizing the grievance process.
4. The loss or damage of property as defined in AD-03.72.
5. Any other matter within the authority of the TDCJ.

Non grievable issues

1. State and federal court decisions, as well as laws and regulations.
2. Parole decisions.
3. Time-served credit disputes.
4. Any matter beyond the control of TDCJ.
5. Matters for which other formal appeal mechanisms exist.

*Matters concerning time-served credit disputes should be directed to the Classification and Records Office, Time Section.
*Unit grievance files are confidential and shall be always secured. Unit Grievance Staff and the warden will have the only keys to access grievance files.
Forms Availability

- Requests for Step 1 and Step 2 grievance forms shall be made available to all incarcerated persons within a reasonable period. A supply of both forms shall be maintained in centrally located areas, for example in housing control pickets, security posts, law library, and supervisor offices.
- Grievance staff must ensure that incarcerated persons have access to grievance forms.
- Grievance staff will maintain a supply of forms in the grievance office and routinely check the unit to ensure that forms are available.
- Grievance staff shall correct any shortages immediately.
- In the event of an incarcerated person not being able to access a grievance form despite attempting to do so, they can write their grievance on a piece of paper, stating their grievance and explaining that they are submitting their grievance on a piece of paper as they were denied a grievance form.
- Incarcerated persons then can grieve the fact that they were denied access to grievance forms.

Writing Grievances

Step 1 Grievances

- Grievance form (called an I27) from the law library, in housing areas, a shift supervisor, or from the unit grievance office.
- Fill out the form completely and do not leave any parts blank. Use dark ink or a typewriter.
- If your loved one requires help, they can contact their unit's grievance investigator.
- Only one issue can be grieved on a grievance form. If your loved one has more problems, they need to file a grievance form for each problem. Tell them to make and keep copies of all grievances filed.
- Only one grievance form can be filed a week.
- Tell your loved one to cite policy violations, and state how they want the issue resolved.
- Tell your loved one not to use vulgar, threatening language, and to only write in the space provided.
- Grievance forms must be submitted no later than 15 days after the incident that is being grieved.
- For General Population: Tell your loved one to place their grievance form in the grievance box in front of a camera, keep note of the time and the date, and wave to the camera.
- For Restricted Housing: Tell your loved one to give their grievance to the officer who collects their grievance and to keep a record of the date, time, and name of the officer to whom they handed their grievance.
- TDCJ has 40 days after receiving the grievance to respond, and 45 days if it is a medical issue. TDCJ might take more time to complete an investigation. They must notify of an extension in writing.
- If 40 days have passed and you have not received a response or a notice of extension, your loved one can still file a Step 2.
- If your loved one's Step 1 does not meet all the requirements, TDCJ does not have to process it. Your loved one will usually have a chance to correct it and resubmit.
- Your loved one will have 15 days after the “Date Returned to the incarcerated person” written in the “OFFICE USE ONLY” box on the back of the grievance form that they get back.
Step 2 Grievances

- Follow the steps as to how to submit and write a Step 1 grievance form.
- TDCJ has **40 days** to respond to Step 2 grievances in writing and **45 days** if it is a medical issue.
- TDCJ might decide to conduct an investigation. TDCJ must notify your loved ones of this in writing.
- If your loved one is not satisfied with TDCJ’s response, they can appeal. To appeal they must file a Step 2 (called an I-128).
- Your loved one has 15 days to file a Step 2. They should count the days from the “Date returned to the Offender” written in the “OFFICE USE ONLY” box on the front of the Step 1 form.
- They need Fill out the form completely and do not leave any parts blank, dark ink, or a typewriter.
- If they need help, they can contact their unit grievance investigator.
- Only put one issue on a grievance form
- If your loved one requires assistance, they can contact the unit grievance investigator.
- If your loved one's Step 2 does not meet all the requirements, TDCJ does not have to process it.
- Your loved one usually has the chance to correct it and resubmit it.
- Your loved one has **5 days after the “Date Returned to the Offender” to resubmit.** Return of date is written in the “OFFICE USE ONLY” box, found on the back of the returned grievance form.
- If your loved one is not satisfied with the answer to Step 2, they can consider filing a lawsuit. within two years of the incident.

If you wish to comment about the grievance procedure, write to:

Resolution Support Manager Offender Grievance Program  
P.O. Box 99  
Huntsville, Texas 77342-0099

Grievance forms and instructions on how to use them are available from staff in each housing area or at the law library. Please see our Document on how to write grievances on our Facebook FILE section at the TPCA website.

Some information about grievances and making complaints:

- If a TDCJ employee exhibits “Use of Offensive Words or Actions that humiliate or show hostility or animosity toward an incarcerated individual because of race, color, religion, sex (gender), national origin, age (40 or above), disability, or genetic information” this is a **violation of PD22 14C.**
- If a TDCJ employee exhibits “Use of words or actions that humiliate or show hostility or animosity toward an individual or an individual’s relative, friend, or associate because of race, color, religion, sex (gender), national origin, age (40 or above), disability, or genetic information” this is a **violation of PD22 14B.**
- 14a. Use of Offensive Words or Actions - Violation Level 3: When words or actions that would not violate Rule Number 14b are used as part of a verbal or physical altercation or an act of insubordination, the employee shall be disciplined per **Rule Number 15 or Rule Number 36.**

If your loved one or you would like to file a grievance or make a complaint against a TDCJ who is not wearing a name tag tell your loved one to use the following information when writing their grievance:

- A physical description of the individual.
- The shift that they were working, including time, date, and location.
- Are they well-known officers? Or a new/temporary officer?
Additional useful information concerning the grievance process is available from TDCJ.

- **Grievance Pamphlet**
- **Inmate Grievance Program**
- **TDCJ Grievances**
- **Resolving Medical Concerns Pamphlet.pdf**
- **TPCA helpful documents**
- File Section on the TPCA Facebook group.
- **Offender Handbook**
- **Offender Grievance Manual.pdf**

Language Assistance (Asistencia de Lenguaje)

**Grievance Procedure**
Incarcerated persons who are involved in the grievance procedure and need language assistance, because they are having difficulty understanding the Grievance response, should contact a Spanish Staff Interpreter to request language assistance.

- Step 1 and Step 2 grievances written in Spanish must be translated to English in order to identify emergency concerns that require immediate attention.
- The translation will only be completed by an agency-certified interpreter. The certified interpreter will be provided a narrative copy of the grievance in order to complete the translation.
- The translation will not be paraphrased.
- The certified interpreter should be informed about grievance procedures, with respect to time limit requirements and confidentiality.
- The translation must include the certified interpreter’s name, title, and the date the translation was completed.
- Both documents are to be returned to the Unit Grievance Investigator (UGI).
- Upon receipt of the interpreted grievance, the UGI will process it according to normal procedures.
- At no time should a grievance written in Spanish not be interpreted just because a certified interpreter is not available on the unit. If no certified interpreter is available, the UGI is to contact the regional grievance supervisor for assistance.
- A Step 2 grievance written in Spanish must be translated to English prior to being mailed to the Central Grievance Office.
- If an emergency issue is identified in the grievance, the UGI shall proceed as directed in Chapter V and the TDCJ Safe Prisons Plan.
- All translations will be retained with the file copy and not returned to the incarcerated person, maintained in the incarcerated person’s grievance file at Step 1 and imaged in the computer imaging system at Step 2.
If your loved one dies in TDCJ

01

The Chaplain or Warden will inform the next of kin of an increased person's time of death. The Chaplain or Warden will explain that unless the next of kin objects within eight hours of the stated time of death, an autopsy will be conducted on their loved one. If you would like a private autopsy performed ask that your loved one’s remains are NOT EMBALMED.

02

The Warden/Facility Administrator should then notify the contracted funeral home to make preliminary arrangements for the removal of the body from the facility.

03

When an incarcerated person’s death occurs under any circumstances (such as suicide, homicide, accident, unexpected death, or any death the physician is not willing to certify, or similar situations) other than those referenced in II.A.1.above, the Warden/Facility Administrator shall contact the precinct Justice of the Peace, or the nearest Justice of the Peace serving the county.

04

You have the right to your loved one’s property.
ASK THE WARDEN TO RELEASE YOUR LOVED ONE’S PROPERTY TO YOU.
Contact the Ombudsman to have the property released
Note: if there is an investigation, this process may be delayed. If you want to receive copies of any grievances, etc., your loved one submitted, you need to put in an information request.

05

You have the right to your loved one’s remains.
Consider getting an attorney immediately.
Having a MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY will help dramatically in this process.
Listing a next of kin or designated emergency contact should be done in advance.

Please see AD-03.29 “TDCJ Procedures to be Followed in Cases of Offender Death for attentional information”
You have the right to make a complaint against a correctional officer. The Texas Government Code, Section 614.022, provides that all complaints to be considered on law enforcement officers must be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint.

**OIG Complaint Investigation and Resolution**

TDCJ policy Texas Department of Criminal Justice Ethics Policy ED-02.01 mandates that all employees “Be firm, fair, and consistent in the performance of my duties, without retribution, retaliation, harassment, or abuse toward others.” See Ethics Policy and Rules of Behavior for examples.

Use of Offensive Words or Actions - See 14a, 14b, and 14c: Use of words or actions that would offend a reasonable person is prohibited. A gesture, isolated remark, or comment not directed to anyone may be considered a violation of this rule. An employee shall not respond in like terms to offensive or insulting words or conduct. The specific words or actions shall be identified when charging an employee with this violation.

14a. Use of Offensive Words or Actions - Violation Level 3: When words or actions that would not violate Rule Number 14b are used as part of a verbal or physical altercation or an act of insubordination, the employee shall be disciplined under Rule Number 15 or Rule Number 36.

14b. Use of Offensive Words or Actions – Protected Class - Violation Level 2: Use of words or actions that humiliate or show hostility or animosity toward an individual or an individual’s relative, friend, or associate, because of race, color, religion, sex (gender), national origin, age (40 or above), disability, or genetic information are a violation of this rule. A supervisor shall report conduct that may violate this rule to Employee Relations Intake, Human Resources Division, under PD-31, “Discrimination in the Workplace.” A Rule Number 14b violation shall be supported by an EEO prehearing investigation conducted under PD-31, and a disciplinary hearing held by an EEO-DAO.
Self Care

Take care of your emotional health

Remember, you are not alone

Make time for yourself

Accept your feelings

It is ok not to be ok

Meditate

Pray

Listen to music

Read a book

Know you will get through this
Self Care

Take care of your physical health

Eat healthy
Exercise
Get enough sleep

Stay hydrated
When in doubt leave it out
Drugs/alcohol are not a solution

Go for regular check ups
Manage your mental health
Breathe
Self Care

Building a supportive network

- Reach out to friends
- Reach out to family
- Contact an advocacy group
- Speak to your pastor/priest etc.
Children of incarcerated parent/sibling need...

- To know what is happening to their parent/sibling and where they are. Explain prison life such as uniforms, where people eat, sleep, work, etc.
- When discussing a conviction, it is recommended to do so with simple facts and age-appropriate details.
- To know that they can have contact with their incarcerated parent/sibling through visits, phone calls, and emails. And if their parent/sibling cannot have contact visits the child must be informed of this in advance, and maybe some role play could be beneficial as this allows them to be prepared.
- To know that they do not have to have contact with their incarcerated parent/sibling.
- To be given time and space to process what has happened to their parent/sibling and offer them ways in which they can express their fears and concerns.
- To be informed about where they are going to live, go to school, etc.
- To know that it is ok to be angry with their incarcerated parent/sibling.
- To know that their parent's/siblings' incarceration is not their fault.
- To know that their parent/sibling made a bad choice that led to their incarceration.
- To know that they are safe and can trust you.
- To know that they can still have fun.
Summary

Learn TDCJ Policy

Keep records

Go up the chain of command

Encourage your loved one to file grievances

Be polite

Remember you are not alone

Contact your legislator
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<th>Name of Department</th>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Classification</td>
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<td>Transfers (Hardship)</td>
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<td>Commissary</td>
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<td>Region 1 Directors Office</td>
<td>936-437-1770</td>
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<td>Health Services</td>
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<td>Region 2 Director’s Office</td>
<td>903-928-2623</td>
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<td>Laundry &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>936-437-8351</td>
<td>Region 3 Director’s Office</td>
<td>281-369-3736</td>
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<td>Mail System</td>
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<td>Region 4 Director’s Office</td>
<td>361-362-6328</td>
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<td>Region 5 Director’s Office</td>
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<td>Region 6 Director’s Office</td>
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<td>Ombudsman</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation Programs Division</td>
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<td>PREA</td>
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<td>UTMB</td>
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<td>Texas Tech</td>
<td>915-215-4487</td>
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<td>Property</td>
<td>936-437-6706</td>
<td>Windham School District</td>
<td>936-291-5303</td>
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TDCJ REGION MAP

Unit Directory
TDCJ REGIONS AND UNITS

Region I
Bell Unit (Cleveland)
Byrd Unit (Huntsville)
Diboll Correctional Center (Diboll)
Duncan Unit (Diboll)
Ellis Unit (Huntsville area)
Estelle Unit (Huntsville area)
Ferguson Unit (Midway)
Goodman Unit (Jasper)
Goree Unit (Huntsville)
Holliday Unit (Huntsville)
Huntsville Unit
Lewis Unit (Woodville)
Polunsky Unit (Livingston)
Wainwright Unit (Lovelady)
Wynne Unit (Huntsville)

Region II
Beto Unit (Palestine Area)
Boyd Unit (Teague)
Coffield Unit (Palestine area)
Cole State Jail (Bonham)
Estes Unit (Venus)
Hodge DDP Unit (Rusk)
Hutchins State Jail (Dallas)
Johnston SAFPF (Winnsboro)
Michael Unit (Palestine area)
Moore, C. Unit (Bonham)
Powledge Unit (Palestine)
Skyview Psychiatric Unit (Rusk)
Telford Unit (New Boston)

Region III
Clemens Unit (Brazoria)
Gist State Jail (Beaumont)
Henley State Jail (Dayton/Female)
Hightower Unit (Dayton)
Hospital Galveston (Accredited by Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care)
Jester III Unit (Richmond)
LeBlanc Unit (Beaumont)
Lychnner State Jail (Humble)
Memorial Unit (Rosharon)
Plane State Jail (Dayton/Female)
Ramsey Unit (Rosharon)
Scott Unit (Richmond)
Stiles Unit (Beaumont)
Stringfellow Unit (Rosharon)
Terrell Unit (Rosharon)
Young Medical Facility (Dickinson)
Vance Unit (Richmond)

Region IV
Briscoe Unit (Dilley)
Connally Unit (Kenedy)
Cotulla Unit
Dominguez State Jail (San Antonio)
Fort Stockton Unit
Garza West Unit (Beeville)
Glossbrenner SAFPF (San Diego)
Lopez State Jail (Edinburg)
Lynbaugh Unit (Fort Stockton)
McConnell Unit (Beeville)
Ney Unit (Hondo)
Sanchez State Jail (El Paso)
Segovia Unit (Edinburg)
Stevenson Unit (Cuero)
Torres Unit (Hondo)

Region V
Allred Unit (Wichita Falls Area)
Baten ISF (Pampa)
Clements Unit (Amarillo)
Dalhart Unit
Daniel Unit (Snyder)
Formby State Jail (Plainview)
Jordan Unit (Pampa)
Mechler Unit (Tulia)
Montford Psychiatric Unit (Lubbock)
Roach Unit (Childress)
Smith Unit (Lamesa)
Wallace Unit (Colorado City)
Western Regional Medical Facility-Montford (Lubbock)
Wheeler State Jail (Plainview)

Region VI
Crain Unit (Gatesville/Female)
Halbert SAFPF (Burnet/Female)
Hamilton Unit (Bryan)
Havins Unit (Brownwood)
Hilltop Unit (Gatesville/Female)
Hobby Unit (Marlin/Female)
Hughes Unit (Gatesville)
Luther Unit (Navasota)
Marlin Unit
 Middleton Unit (Abilene)
Murray Unit (Gatesville/Female)
O'Daniel Unit (Gatesville/Female)
Pack Unit (Navasota)
Robertson Unit (Abilene)
San Saba Unit
Sayle SAFPF (Breckenridge)
Travis Co. State Jail (Austin)
Woodman State Jail - (Gatesville/Female)

Private Facilities
Bradshaw (Henderson)
Bridgeport (Bridgeport)
Coleman Unit (Lockhart)
Kyle (Kyle)
Moore, B. (Overton)
Lindsey (Jacksboro)
Willacy County (Raymondville)

Multi-Use Facilities
East Texas Treatment (Henderson)

Parole Confinement Facilities
Kegans ISF (Houston)
Ad Seg Maximum Custody, Special Management Ad Seg Maximum Custody, Special Management, or Administrative Segregation (Ad Seg) refers to an individual who must be separated from the general population, as they are believed to be a threat to themselves, and/or others.

Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) The Board of Pardons and Paroles decides which eligible offenders to release on parole or discretionary mandatory supervision, and under what conditions. The Board uses research-based Parole Guidelines to assess each offender's likelihood of successful parole against the risk to society.

Board of Criminal Justice (TCJJ) The Board that governs the TDCJ. Its nine non-salaried members serve staggered six-year terms and are appointed by the Governor. The Board is required by statute to meet once per calendar quarter.

Chain means that an inmate is leaving (catching the chain) or the bus used to carry inmates (chain bus).

Chow Hall The dining room.

CO Correctional Officer, an employee of the TDCJ-CID who performs advanced work involving the direct maintaining discipline in conformance with strict rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures. May also be referred to as “boss.”

Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) The prison system for the confinement of adult felony inmates.

Cool beds Are in designated housing areas within a unit that has an Air-Conditioned environment.

Cool bed database The agency [TDCJ] recognizes that some offenders are potentially at a heightened risk of heat-related illnesses because of their age, health conditions, or medications. These offenders are identified through an automated heat sensitivity score that uses information from the offender’s electronic health record (EHR). Heat sensitivity scores are updated daily with changes to the EHR. For newly received offenders, health services staff use an intake heat sensitivity form to screen offenders as soon as they arrive. When new offenders receive their physical examination, their score is updated automatically. Offenders who have heat sensitivity scores receive priority placement in a housing area that is air-conditioned.

Cool Bed Priority (CPS) prioritizes getting into an air-conditioned housing unit for those with the highest probability of increased heat sensitivity, and generally reflects those suffering from heart disease, mental health disorders, dementia/Alzheimer’s disease, developmental disability, or are 65 years or older and are also prescribed certain medications or have certain medical conditions.

Correctional Institutions Division (CID) The TDCJ division is responsible for managing and operating the State's prison system for the confinement of adult felony inmates.

Correctional Managed Health Care Committee. (CMHC) The Health Services Division ensures access to timely health care for inmates incarcerated within TDCJ. The provision of health care is accomplished through a series of contracts between TDCJ, the Correctional Managed Health Care Committee, and its agencies, as well as contracts with private correctional corporations. The Health Services Division monitors the health care provided to inmates to ensure compliance with contractual terms, accreditation standards, and applicable state and federal laws. In addition, TDCJ Health Services provides technical assistance to other TDCJ divisions/departments on health-related matters.

CMHC Policy D-27.2 Heat Stress A policy designed to keep heat-related illness to a minimum. The names of offenders who are determined to be heat-sensitive are entered into a Medical Heat Restriction List, which is provided to officers who supervise housing areas. During their normal security checks, officers also conduct wellness checks on these offenders if any offender requests medical help or shows signs of illness.
Dayroom A designated common area with the unit where sixty to ninety inmates congregate. Seating is generally on metal benches bolted to the floor.

District Reentry Center (DRC) A highly structured, non-residential facility that supervises inmates on community supervision. Inmates report to the centers as part of the court-ordered conditions of their supervision. The centers also offer education, job training, counseling, and other services.

Grievance A formal written complaint from an offender.

Heat Directive Extreme Temperature Conditions in the TDCJ (TDCJ AD-10.64), the agency established policies AD-10.64 Excessive and Extreme Temperature Conditions in the TDCJ, Heat-stress precautions will be implemented by unit wardens or department heads from April 1 until October 31, unless unseasonably warm temperatures require an extension.

Heat Sensitive A medical condition that can make people susceptible to heat-related issues.

HIPPA/PHI. Medical Release of Information.

Johnny Sac: Bagged lunches that are served during a lockdown.

Lay-in A written leave of absence from an assigned program or activity for a specific purpose and period. The lay-in excuses an inmate from assigned work, treatment, educational, or vocational programs, provided the scheduled appointment is kept.

LO/Loved One can refer to an affected family member or incarcerated individual.

Lockdown - a temporary suspension of ordinary and routine activities. Generally, offenders are confined to their cell or dormitory.

Mandatory Supervision (MS). A type of release from prison provided by law for restricted categories of inmates. Eligible inmates are released on MS when their calendar time served added to their good time credit equals the length of their prison sentence. Under the law in effect until August 31, 1996, release to mandatory supervision was automatic, with no requirement for release approval from the BPP.

Medically Recommended Intensive Supervision (MRIS) is a program that was first created in 1987 to provide the opportunity for early parole for incarcerated Texans based on being significantly ill, elderly, and/or having physical or mental disabilities.

Mentally Impaired (MI). Classification identifying inmates with documented mental disabilities such as a major mental illness.

Mentally Impaired Offender Facility (MIOF). A facility designed to demonstrate a multi-service approach to treatment, along with appropriate and cost-effective alternatives to incarceration of inmates with special needs. TCOOMMI funding supports special needs services at the MIOF.

Mentally Retarded Offender Program (MROP). A program that places mentally retarded releases on a specialized caseload with a parole officer trained specifically for providing supervision and services that meet these inmates' special needs.
Next Review Date (NR). A BPP decision that stipulates an inmate is not ready for parole, but the case will be reviewed again within one to three years.

Offender/Inmate  Incarcerated Individual.

Offender Protection Investigation/Inmate Protection Investigation  Investigation if someone's life is in danger.

PREA  Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Protective Custody  Protective Custody is designed to provide the ultimate protection to inmates. For their safety, Protective Custody inmates are housed following the Administrative Segregation Plan. This status is usually associated with serious, direct, proven threats to an inmate's safety.

Respite Area  Any area within the unit that has air conditioning, as determined by the warden during periods of excessive heat.

Safekeeping  Safekeeping is designed for inmates identified as being more vulnerable than the average general population inmate. Unlike Protective Custody, Safekeeping inmates go to work, school, and other activities with general population inmates.

Security Threat Group (STG)  Any group of inmates that poses a threat to the physical safety of other inmates or staff.

State Classification Committee (SCC)  The Classification and Records Department schedules, receives, and processes inmates for intake; calculates inmates’ time; classifies and assigns inmates to their custody and units; places detainers; and facilitates inmate transfers and releases. The department uses a rational, objective classification tool to systematically group inmates concerning security, medical, treatment, and program needs. The Classification and Records Department is responsible for prison-sentenced inmate records and provides oversight, training, and technical support for all unit-based classification, count room, and intake functions and staff.

Store  The unit shop where incarcerated people can purchase personal items.

Violation or “catching a case”  Punishment for incarcerated persons deemed as not abiding by a rule or condition of their supervision. A violation may be either technical or criminal in nature.