General Information Guide for Families of Offenders

Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Executive Services
Published July 2008
The Texas Department of Criminal Justice operates the state’s system of facilities for the confinement of adult felony offenders.

This information guide is intended to provide the public with a brief description of principal program areas.

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INTAKE

Upon admission to a designated TDCJ intake center, offenders are photographed and fingerprinted as part of the identification process. Physical, dental and eye examinations are conducted. Various tests are administered to detect medical or mental health problems and to determine educational and intelligence levels. Interviews with offenders gather information relevant to family structure, criminal and social behavior, drug and alcohol involvement, military and institutional experience, as well as education and employment history.

The results of the tests and interviews are the basis for classification decisions that determine the unit of assignment, the level of security supervision, housing and job assignments and time-earning category. Recommendations concerning treatment for identified special needs may also develop from the intake process.

MAIL

The families and friends of offenders are encouraged to write often. Letters sent to offenders should include the offender’s name, TDCJ number and unit address on the envelope. All mail addressed to offenders must be received through authorized channels. Letters for different offenders should not be included in the same envelope.

Mail is forwarded to offenders who transfer from one unit to another within TDCJ. Letters will be forwarded to offenders who are released from prison, if the offender provides a forwarding address at his last unit of assignment.

Offenders may not write to minors whose parents disapprove, with the exception of an offender’s own children or stepchildren.
Unauthorized materials or contraband found in mail addressed to offenders will be rejected. Individuals who carry out serious violations of the correspondence rules may not be allowed to write to an offender.

Newspapers, magazines and books may be mailed directly to offenders only by the publisher, publication supplier or bookstore; subject to review and rejection in accordance with the correspondence rules. Stationery (defined as white, undecorated paper, not to exceed the size of 8½” x 11”, or unstamped white envelopes, including carbon paper and white envelopes with the offender’s commitment name and TDCJ number preprinted in the return address portion of the envelope, but excluding any paper with names, addresses or letterhead and excluding tablets or writing pads with stapled binding) may be mailed to offenders only from legitimate vendors or suppliers of stationery. Items such as food, clothing, jewelry and toiletries may not be mailed to offenders. Individuals may not mail packages to offenders.

Additional information is available on the agency web site at www.tdcj.state.tx.us.

VISITATION

Visitation plays an important role in upholding the association between offenders and their families and friends. However, offenders are not assigned to specific TDCJ units for the convenience of visitation. Copies of the I-218, Offender Rules and Regulations for Visitation Booklet are to be prominently displayed in areas accessible to visitors.

♦ Visitation Hours: Visits are normally conducted on Saturdays and Sundays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The names of all visitors, 18 years old and older (except the offender’s attorney), must be on the approved Visitors’ List, which is limited to ten (10) individuals.
Visits Requiring Advance Scheduling:
Visits may occur on Agency-closed holidays (except Christmas Day) that fall on Mondays or Fridays, if scheduled in advance. Arrangements to schedule these visits may not be made on any state holiday. All arrangements to schedule visits must be made through the Warden’s office between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at least one (1) day, but not more than seven (7) days, prior to the visit. Visitors arriving late (i.e.: more than 15 minutes past the beginning scheduled visit time) may not be allowed to visit during any of the scheduled time. Unit administration shall make every effort to accommodate late arrivals, if time and space is available.

Number of Visitors: All offenders, except those in the intake process solitary confinement, G5, lockdown status, or administrative segregation, are allowed one visit every weekend, normally two (2) adults for two (2) hours. Children under the age of 18 are not counted in this number, and must be accompanied by an approved adult visitor (18 years or older). The number of children allowed per visit will be based on the amount of space available for visitation and on the visitor’s ability to manage and control the children. Additional adult visitors may be allowed at the Warden's discretion if special circumstances arise and space permits.

Visitor Identification: For visitors 18 years of age and older, a pictured and signed identification (ID) of one (1) of the following is required: 1) valid state driver’s license; 2) valid state Department of Public Safety (DPS) ID card; 3) valid
Armed Forces ID card; 4) passport; or
5) ID card issued by the United States
Department of Homeland Security, United
States Citizenship and Immigration
Services (USCIS) (i.e.: Visa Border
Crossing ID Card [USA B1/B2 Visa BCC]).

If the visitor’s ID is questionable or not
acceptable, further verification shall be
required (e.g., birth certificate, pictured
credit card or other official ID). Children
17 years of age and younger may be
required to provide an ID (e.g., birth
certificate, DPS ID, or student ID) if the
child’s age is questionable due to
physical maturity of the child. Valid
student ID shall be used only for children
17 years old and younger.

Identification is required for hardship
visitors. “Hardship Visits” allow children,
ages 16 and 17, who are on the
offender/parent Visitors’ List and do not
have an adult to accompany them, to visit
parents who are incarcerated in the TDCJ
(with the Warden’s prior approval).

♦ Contact Visits: Limited physical contact
between eligible offenders and their
visitors may be allowed if the visitors are
immediate family: spouse (ceremonial,
proxy or common-law), natural, adopted
mother and stepmother; natural, adopted
father and stepfather; natural, adopted
children, stepchildren, grandchildren and
step-grandchildren; natural adopted
siblings and stepsiblings; natural,
adopted grandparents and step-
grandparents; aunt; uncle; and persons
related by marriage (in-laws: father,
mother, daughter, son, brother, sister,
grandchildren and grandparents).
With prior approval from unit administration, non-immediate family members may be allowed contact visits if immediate family members are unable to visit the offender. Due to the nature of their offense, some offenders cannot have contact visits with children. In addition, these same offenders will not be allowed a regular visit with children unless they are the legally recognized parent of that child and the child is not the victim of the offense.

♦ **Search of Visitors and Vehicles:** Visitors and their vehicles can be searched before entering the unit. Any visitor refusing the search procedure will have to leave the property. All visitors will be screened by a metal detector prior to visiting an offender. Cash (except coins), alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cell phones, drugs, firearms, escape implements, or dangerous weapons are strictly prohibited by statute and TDCJ rules and policies.

♦ **Dress Code:** Visitors must follow the dress code. Shirts and shoes must be worn. Shirts and blouses of fishnet, transparent material, sleeveless or open midriff are not allowed. Male visitors must wear long pants, and female visitors must wear dresses, skirts, Capri pants or long pants. Exceptions for pre-adolescent boys and girls may be made. If a dress, pants, skirt or any attire appears to be inappropriate, the Duty Warden shall be contacted for a decision. Hats may be worn, but will be searched. Visitors are not permitted to wear all white. Clothing marked by words or pictures considered profane or offensive by current public standards will not be allowed.
♦ **Carry-in Items:** Visitors may bring only specific items into the unit. These items include a small wallet or change purse containing no more than $20.00 in coins. Only visitors may purchase soft drinks to be consumed by offenders during the visit. Visitors with infants or small children may bring no more than three (3) diapers, a supply of baby wipes and two (2) baby bottles (“sippy” cups for toddlers). Visitors are not permitted to bring items of any kind to offenders. These items shall be stored in a clear plastic bag.

♦ **Tobacco Policy:** TDCJ units are tobacco free. Visitors are not permitted to bring cigarettes, cigarette lighters, matches or any tobacco products into TDCJ units.

Visits must be orderly to assure that visitors and offenders are not disturbed. Visitors who cannot control their children will be escorted out of the unit. Children shall not be left unattended.

Ex-offenders, unless immediate family, will not be allowed to visit for a period of 24 months following their release date.

Visitors are not allowed to switch from visiting one (1) offender to another. This conduct may cause the visit to be terminated and possibly the visitor’s name removed from the offenders’ Visitors’ List.

Visitors are prohibited from loitering, walking the perimeter road or taking photographs. Radios played at a high volume and shouting at offenders will not be allowed.

Visits may be cancelled and future visits may be denied for security reasons or because of improper conduct by the visitor or the offender.
TRUST FUND

The Inmate Trust Fund, authorized by Section 501.014, Texas Government Code, provides a place of safekeeping for funds an offender may have access to, but not physical control of during their confinement.

Several Trust Fund deposit options are now available and include:

♦ MONEY ORDERS OR CASHIER’S CHECKS
♦ MONTHLY CHECKING ACCOUNT DEBIT (ACH)
♦ WESTERN UNION QUICK COLLECT
♦ WESTERN UNION CONVENIENCE PAY
♦ AMERICA’S CASH EXPRESS (ACE)
♦ JPAY
♦ MONEYGRAM® EXPRESS PAYMENT®

Note: Sender’s name and address is required when making a deposit to an offender’s account.

♦ Money orders or cashier’s checks made payable to “Inmate Trust Fund for Offender Name and Number”; obtain deposit slips from offender or by sending an addressed, stamped envelope to Inmate Trust Fund; send deposits and/or requests for deposit slips to Inmate Trust Fund, P.O. Box 60, Huntsville, TX 77342-0060, Phone number: (936) 438-8990.

♦ Monthly Checking Account Debit (ACH), (Free service provided by TDCJ.) complete an ACH authorization form and have a set amount automatically debited from a personal checking account once each month for deposit to a specified offender; attach a voided check on the account to be debited; debit transaction will occur on the 5th of each month; submit form with voided check to Inmate Trust Fund, P.O. Box 60, Huntsville, TX 77342-0060.
♦ Western Union Quick Collect (fees vary) from anywhere in the United States; all three (3) Quick Collect products are subject to different fees, send amounts and other restrictions in certain states; standard fee for over-the-counter Quick Collect transaction at a Western Union location is $8.95. Deposit will post to offender’s account within 24 hours. **Western Union Quick Collect**, call Western Union at 1-800-325-6000, or visit [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com) to find the nearest Western Union location; **Western Union Quick Collect by Phone**, for credit card transactions call Western Union at 1-800-634-3422 (press 2 to send Q/C payment); **Western Union Quick Collect Online**, for web transactions visit [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com). For each Quick Collect transaction the following information must be provided:

- **Pay to**: TDCJ - Inmate Trust Fund
- **Code City and State**: TDCJ/TX
- **Account number with facility**: Offender’s TDCJ number and offender’s last name
- **Attention**: Offender’s last name and offender’s first name

♦ Western Union Convenience Pay ($3.00 fee) offered at select locations within the state of Texas. Send up to $200 to an offender’s trust fund account for a service fee of $3. Call 1-800-354-0005 to find a Convenience Pay agent location.

♦ America’s Cash Express (ACE) ($3.00 fee) from anywhere in the United States. Deposit funds to an offender’s trust fund account. For the nearest ACE location, call 1-866-734-2306 or visit their website at [www.acecashexpress.com](http://www.acecashexpress.com).

♦ Jpay ($1.95 to $8.95 fee) allows you to send money to an offender for service fees ranging from $1.95 to $8.95. Visit their website at [www.jpay.com](http://www.jpay.com) or call 1-800-574-JPAY to send funds using Visa,
Discover or MasterCard credit/debit cards. Senders can make cash deposits at MoneyGram locations nationwide using an Express Payment form. Senders may also make cash deposits from their home after setting up a cash collection account with a Jpay customer service representative.

♦ MoneyGram®ExpressPayment® ($6.95 fee) available nationwide at over 26,000 retail agent locations, including Wal-Mart. To deposit money to an offender account, call 1-800MoneyGram for the nearest MoneyGram agent location or visit www.moneygram.com. Bring cash to the MoneyGram agent location and fill out the blue form with the following information:

   Receive Code: 5203  
   Company Name: Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
   City: Huntsville  
   State: TX  
   Account Number, Offender Name: Offender ID#, Offender Last Name (01234567, Smith)

   Pay the low $6.95 fee and keep the reference number that confirms your transaction.

Cash and personal checks are not accepted and will be returned to the sender. Single transaction deposits of $500.00 or more and/or insurance, company, payroll, estate checks and other like disbursements are held 14 days before offender access is authorized. Forwarding cash through the mail is not recommended.

Do not send trust fund deposits to offender’s unit of assignment and do not send offender’s personal mail or other items to the Inmate Trust Fund.
The Inmate Trust Fund can respond to inquiries concerning the receipt of a deposit, but cannot release information regarding the offender's account or balance to anyone except the offender. Offenders receive monthly statements listing all trust fund account transactions for that period.

The Inmate Trust Fund does not pay interest; therefore, the account should hold no more than what is required to meet the offender’s immediate needs. Offenders with funds in excess of their immediate needs are encouraged to open an account with, and transfer excess funds to a banking facility of their choice. Offenders may use funds in their trust fund accounts to make purchases from the unit commissary, or through approved vendors and to send funds to family or friends. An offender’s trust fund balance is refunded upon release.

COMMISSARY

No offender is allowed to possess money while in confinement. Offenders are provided meals, certain personal items and clothing. Grocery items, personal hygiene items and other goods may be purchased by offenders from unit commissaries. Payment for commissary items is completed by transferring funds from the offender’s trust fund account to the agency’s commissary account.

The offender may spend up to $75.00 on ordinary merchandise every two weeks. However, this amount may be less as determined by the offender’s custody status. The spend limit does not apply to special items such as radios, some clothing items, fans or hot pots. These special purchase items are made specifically for an institutional environment. They must be bought directly from the commissary by the offender for the offender’s personal use.
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 offender. Generally, transfer facility, state jail, intermediate sanction facility, substance abuse, Pre-Parole and Pre-Release offenders shall not be eligible for transfer consideration. Requests from the offender family member for an inter-facility transfer should be directed to the appropriate unit Warden or to the Assistant Director for Classification and Records. The Assistant Director for Classification and Records may grant an inter-facility transfer if the following criterion is met. Hardship transfer requests may be submitted to the Assistant Director for Classification and Records at P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, Texas 77342-0099; Attn: Hardship Transfer.

♦ Requests must come from an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as natural or adoptive mother and stepmother; natural or adoptive father and stepfather; natural or adoptive children or stepchildren; natural or adoptive stepsiblings; spouse (common law or ceremonial); grandparents and grandchildren; persons related by marriage; aunt or uncle; or foster parents, the guardian of an offender’s minor child, to include parent of the child.

♦ Requests made on medical hardship must pertain to a family member and documentation from the attending physician of the family member’s inability to travel long distance is required. Such documentation should be on the physician’s letterhead and signed by the physician.

♦ The offender’s currently assigned facility must be greater than 200 miles from the requested area.
♦ Prison sentenced offenders should be Line Class I or higher.

♦ Offenders who are G4 or a more restrictive custody are ineligible unless the G4 custody is due to a security precaution designator.

♦ Prison sentenced offenders should have no major disciplinary punishments for the preceding twelve months.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

Offenders are encouraged to attempt problem resolution at the unit level by utilizing the Offender Grievance Process. If, after the offender has exhausted administrative remedies, there still appears to be questions or concerns, families should contact the unit directly.

Staff at TDCJ units are encouraged to handle questions from offenders’ families if at all possible. Each unit has a Family Liaison Officer, available during visitation hours, who answers questions and concerns of families and friends. If, however, no resolution can be reached or if the person insists on talking to someone else, they can contact a TDCJ Ombudsman.

The TDCJ Ombudsman Program ensures that TDCJ is responsive to the public, elected officials and other state agencies; helps offenders’ families understand TDCJ policies and procedures; and attempts facilitating conflict resolution between TDCJ and the public. Ombudsmen gather information from many sources within TDCJ to provide clear, correct answers.

TDCJ Ombudsmen are the contact points for members of the general public. These offices do not answer questions from incarcerated offenders or agency employees.
HOW TO CONTACT A TDCJ OMBUDSMAN

(Please submit inquiries in writing)

For expediency, it is best to attempt to resolve issues and obtain information at the unit or parole office level. However, if this is not possible, contact one of the following:

**Ombudsman Coordinator**
General issues concerning the agency’s operation and policy and procedures.

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099
(936) 437-8035  (936)437-8097 fax
ombudsman@tdcj.state.tx.us

**TDCJ - Correctional Institutions Division Ombudsman Office**
Issues from the public relating to secure units (prison units, state jails and substance abuse felony punishment facilities), and any specific concerns regarding offenders confined in these types of facilities.

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099
(936) 437-6791  (936) 437-6668 fax
ci.div@tdcj.state.tx.us
**Bilingual Staff Available – Se habla Espanol.**

**TDCJ - Parole Division Ombudsman**
Issues from the public relating to the parole process and parole supervision. May also respond to concerns from offenders on parole or mandatory supervision.

P.O. Box 13401, Austin, TX 78758
(512) 406-5795  (512) 406-5858 fax
parole.div@tdcj.state.tx.us

General offender status information may be obtained at: [www.tdcj.state.tx.us](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us)

Agency Toll-Free Telephone Number
1- 800- 535- 0283
EDUCATION

Windham School District (WSD) provides a variety of academic classes, life skills, and career and technology education classes for offenders who are confined in units operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Offenders are selected for enrollment in WSD programs based on the Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) process. The ITP outlines programmatic activities and prioritizes participation in recommended programs based on the offender’s needs, program availability and projected release date.

The Literacy Program provides adult basic education for offenders functioning below the sixth grade level, and secondary level adult education for those who are working toward attainment of a high school equivalency (GED) certificate. Based on individual achievement, students are assigned to beginning (Literacy I), intermediate (Literacy II), or advanced (Literacy III) level classes. Students needing help with basic reading skills may be enrolled in Literacy I–reading. Literacy teachers use an interdisciplinary approach to promote workplace competencies and learning in real-world contexts. Emphasis is placed on the skills employers demand, such as personal qualities, cultural sensitivity/tolerance, teamwork, decision-making and problem solving.

Special Education services are provided for eligible students with disabilities. An English as a Second Language (ESL) program is available for students with limited English proficiency.

The Career and Technology Education (CTE) program offers vocational training in approximately 34 occupational areas to prepare offenders for today’s workforce.
Additional vocational training opportunities may be available through apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training.

Life skills programs are available to help offenders learn to make better, pro-social decisions. The WSD Cognitive Intervention program is available at many units. This program addresses personal accountability and responsibility through instruction and exercises in interpersonal problem solving, anger management, impulse control, overcoming criminal thinking, creating positive attitudes and beliefs and goal setting.

Likewise, a reintegration program, entitled Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES), offers a life skills curriculum to prepare offenders for release. CHANGES includes parenting, civic and legal responsibilities, victim sensitivity, health maintenance, employability, money management and other related life skills.

For offenders with a GED or high school diploma, academic and vocational post-secondary educational opportunities are available through the Division of Continuing Education which contracts with community colleges and universities.

The Division of Continuing Education has numerous programs to serve needs of offenders. Associate (two (2) year) and Baccalaureate (four (4) year) degrees are awarded upon completion of degree requirements. A certificate of completion is awarded after satisfactory completion of a vocational program. College credit may be awarded for vocational courses.

In order to participate in a college academic or vocational program, eligibility requirements set by the WSD, the TDCJ, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and admission and registration requirements of the college must be met by all students. College expenses
utilizing state funds must be repaid by the offender upon release as a condition of parole. Those offenders who do not qualify for state funds must pay college expenses at registration or qualify for grant funding. The Youthful Offender Grant for 25 year olds and under and within five (5) years of release or parole eligibility is not required to be repaid. An offender who is assigned to a unit that does not offer the college academic program for which he/she qualifies may contact the current unit education staff to request a transfer to a unit that does offer the program. The TDCJ State Classification Committee will make all decisions on unit assignments.

WSD strives to offer a comprehensive guidance program that assists the offender with vocational assessment and career guidance. Project RIO (Re-Integration for Offenders) is administered by the Texas Workforce Commission in collaboration with TDCJ and WSD. Project RIO provides a link between education, training and employment during incarceration and after release.

WSD is committed to providing a positive environment where offenders can improve their educational achievement. By taking advantage of the academic, life skills and vocational educational opportunities offered by WSD, offenders are better prepared to successfully reintegrate back into society.

**JOB TRAINING**

In addition to the programs offered through Windham School District, job training is available to offenders who work in the various operations of TDCJ.

The mission of the **Manufacturing and Logistics Division** is to benefit the State of Texas by providing quality service in warehousing operations, freight transportation, the management of TDCJ vehicles and by providing quality manufactured
products and services to TDCJ, other state agencies and political subdivisions, while affording rehabilitative opportunities for incarcerated offenders. The objective is to provide work program participants with marketable job skills through coordinated programs of job skills training, documentation of work history, access to resources provided by Project RIO and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and to share with the TWC information regarding offender participation in the Work Against Recidivism (WAR) Program.

The Manufacturing and Logistics Division partners with the Windham School District, colleges and other TDCJ divisions to optimize certified training programs, when appropriate. Nationally accredited certification programs are available to eligible offenders such as A+, Network +, Braille transcription at both entry and advanced levels, GEOMedia Professional, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 608 and 609, National Center for Engineering and Educational Research (NCEER), Outdoor Power Equipment and Engine Service Association (OPEESA), American Welding Society (AWS) and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

The **Agribusiness, Land and Minerals Department** operates farms and ranches throughout the state to produce as much as possible of the food and fiber requirements of the TDCJ. Offenders have the opportunity to participate in these programs and learn marketable job skills.

Offenders learn animal husbandry through participation in cattle, swine, poultry, horse or dog programs. They can gain experience in farming and equipment operation by participating in the field and/or edible crop programs and in mechanical skills in the farm shops. Offenders can also learn warehousing and plant operation skills by working in the food processing plants, cotton mills, feed mills or in the local food bank programs. Formal training and/or certification is available through many of these jobs.
The **Facilities Division** utilizes offenders in construction and building maintenance.

The most commonly utilized trades are electrician; heating, ventilation and air conditioning mechanic; plumbing; painting; construction equipment operator; concrete finishing; and carpentry.

**RELIGION**

The religious needs of offenders are addressed by trained clergy who provide ministerial care to the entire criminal justice community. They encourage offenders to stay in touch with their particular faith by offering pastoral counsel and guidance. Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Christian Non-Roman Catholic and Native American faiths are represented. Other religions may be served by faith group volunteers.

The schedule of religious programs and events is posted on unit bulletin boards and in the chaplain’s office. Offenders who are unable to attend scheduled religious services because of illness or disciplinary reasons are visited on a regular basis by unit chaplains, certified volunteer chaplain assistants or approved volunteers.

Family members who experience an emergency crisis (death, hospice care and other such personal matters) can contact the unit chaplain, who in turn will advise the offender of the situation. Other inquiries should be addressed to the Warden.

**TREATMENT**

Through the Rehabilitation and Reentry Programs Division, eligible offenders may be provided treatment during incarceration for addiction to or abuse of substances or alcohol.
Additionally, certain sex offenders may participate in treatment, either in designated sex offender treatment group or an education group.

Other programs, which are also cognitive-based, include the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) for eligible male administrative segregation offenders who are within two (2) years of release; the faith-based InnerChange Freedom Initiative for male offenders; the Youthful Offender Program (YOP) for offenders under the age of 18; and the Gang Renouncement and Disassociation (GRAD) process for male offenders who work towards reentering the prison general population.

HEALTH
Through a managed care system, health care (medical, dental and mental health) is provided to offenders by the University of Texas Medical Branch in the northern, eastern and southern portions of the state; by Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for the western portion of the state; and by private corporations. Primary outpatient care is provided at all units where sick call is held at least five days per week. When needed, a full range of specialty consultations is available, and hospital services are provided by either the TDCJ Hospital Galveston, the Montford Unit in Lubbock or local hospitals. Inpatient and outpatient treatment programs are provided for offenders with mental health needs. Special programs are also available for physically handicapped and mentally retarded offenders. The Patient Liaison Family/Public Hotline number is 936-437-4271.

RECREATION
Offenders are afforded opportunities to engage in non-programmatic and programmatic recreation activities.
Non-programmatic recreation activities may include:
- Television viewing
- Dayroom games such as chess, checkers and dominoes
- Team sports including basketball, softball and volleyball
- Individual sports such as table tennis, handball, horseshoes and weightlifting
- Basic in-cell craft activities

Programmatic recreation activities may include:
- Intramural games
- Tournaments and league play
- Craft shop participation, where available

Facilities and equipment for these activities are provided and maintained by TDCJ and the staff assigned to recreation oversight.

NON-MEDICAL EMERGENCY ABSENCES

A non-medical emergency absence is a privilege granted to an offender who demonstrates trustworthiness and industriousness, and who is considered by TDCJ to be an acceptable security risk for temporary release under escort for a particular period allowed by law. Granting a request for a non-medical emergency absence is a discretionary decision made by TDCJ with public safety being the prime consideration. The offender absent on emergency leave under escort is considered to be in the custody of TDCJ and the offender must be under constant physical guard while absent.

Non-medical emergency absences may be granted to approved offenders for attending the funeral of an immediate family member, visiting a funeral home to view a deceased
immediate family member or visiting a critically ill immediate family member. An immediate family member is defined as the offender’s parents, spouse, siblings, half-siblings and children. Surrogate parents are included if the relationship of the surrogate to the offender is verifiable from established TDCJ files.

Offenders normally will not be approved for a non-medical emergency absence unless they meet strict guidelines. These guidelines include being at least Line Class 1, G3 custody with no major disciplinary penalties during the last six (6) months, no disciplinary history of assaults on staff, within 12 months of parole eligibility, in TDCJ custody for six (6) months and having no unresolved pending felony or U.S. Immigration detainer. Additionally the offender must not have been incarcerated in or sentenced to an adult correctional unit for committing, soliciting, attempting, conspiring or aiding others to commit, solicit, attempt, conspire to commit certain offenses to include:

a. Homicide, (Capital Murder; Murder; Voluntary Manslaughter; or any other homicide offense)

b. Kidnapping, (Aggravated Kidnapping; Kidnapping; False Imprisonment; or any other kidnapping offense)

c. Sex Assault, (Rape; Sexual Assault; Sexual Abuse; Aggravated Rape; Aggravated Sexual Abuse; or any other sexual assault offense to include Indecency with a Child)

d. Robbery, (Robbery; Aggravated Robbery; or any other robbery offense)

e. Assault, (Assault; Aggravated Assault; Injury to a Child; Injury to an Elderly Person; or any other assault offense)

f. Escape, (Any escape offense from an adult correctional facility)
g. Any offense in which the offender used or exhibited a deadly weapon during the commission of the offense or during the immediate flight therefrom and where an affirmative finding on use of a deadly weapon was made by the trial court or jury.

h. Stalking

State Jail offenders must be at a minimum J2 custody. Offenders must have been in TDCJ custody for six (6) months or for one-third of their sentence, whichever comes first.

All emergency absences are granted under TDCJ escort and must be completed within 24 hours of departing the unit. Emergency absences requiring an overnight stay may not be granted and no out-of-state emergency absences will be granted. An offender may be released on emergency absence two (2) times during a 12-month period.

Emergency absence requests should be directed by the attending physician or funeral home director to Classification and Records via FAX at 936-437-8721.

GOOD CONDUCT TIME

Many offenders may shorten their prison stay by earning time credit for good behavior and by participation in work and other programs. This privilege is not available to State Jail offenders (Article 42.12, Section 15 (h) (1), Code of Criminal Justice). Accumulated good conduct time may be forfeited as punishment for violation of institutional rules or refusal to participate in required treatment programs.

The two (2) principal time-earning categories, state approved trusty and line class, each have different time-earning levels with a specific number of days that can be earned for each month actually served. Besides behavior in prison, the amount of good time that can be
earned is also affected by the circumstances of the offense of conviction as determined by the sentencing court and by the State laws relevant to good conduct time that were in effect when the offense was committed.

Good conduct time may apply to an offender's prison confinement in terms of eligibility for release to parole or mandatory supervision. For certain offenders serving sentences for assaulitative offenses, good conduct time is not used to calculate parole eligibility. Offenders are not allowed to regain that good conduct time that was lost due to disciplinary action.

**DISCIPLINE**

All offenders are required to obey the rules established by TDCJ and by the unit to which they are assigned. Offenders receive information concerning rules soon after they arrive.

Depending on the degree of seriousness, violations of rules may be handled informally by counseling and verbal reprimand, or formally through disciplinary hearings. Hearings are classified as major or minor, based on the seriousness and frequency of rule violations. In a minor hearing, a finding of guilt can result in punishment ranging from extra duty, restriction to living quarters, suspension of recreation, restriction from making commissary purchases and contact visitation. Under a major hearing, the available penalties include solitary confinement, loss of accumulated good conduct time and/or demotion in time-earning class (except for State Jail offenders, who earn no good conduct time).

Trained personnel, called counsel substitutes, are assigned to units to represent offenders at major hearings who are charged with disciplinary violations.
GRIEVANCES

The TDCJ Offender Grievance Program provides offenders with a formal procedure for presenting written complaints on matters relating to their confinement. All offenders, regardless of custody or disciplinary status are entitled to utilize the grievance procedure. When a concern arises, offenders are required to attempt to resolve the issue informally before submitting a grievance. If informal resolution is not successful, a grievance form and instructions for completing the form may be obtained from any staff member or from the unit law library. Each unit has a Unit Grievance Investigator (UGI) who is responsible for, not only processing and resolving offender complaints, but also assisting offenders who experience difficulties associated with the grievance process. The UGI works closely with the warden and other department heads to consider offender input derived from grievances when addressing concerns on the unit. If an offender is not satisfied with the response to a grievance, he may appeal the decisions to the Central Grievance Office in Huntsville, Texas. Central and regional directors, as well as many other departmental specialists, are available to review the appeal and take additional corrective action, if necessary.

Protecting offenders’ rights to file grievances and promoting problem solving at all levels is very important to TDCJ. It is a violation of policy to subject any offender to harassment, retaliation or reprisal for using the grievance procedure.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

State Counsel for Offenders (SCFO) is the division responsible for providing limited legal services to offenders who cannot afford to hire outside counsel. SCFO cannot help offenders
with civil rights issues, TDCJ policy or procedure issues, fee-generating cases and various other legal areas depending upon the circumstances. SCFO attorneys provide legal aid to offenders in the following areas:

♦ **Trials:** SCFO represents indigent offenders indicted for felonies allegedly committed while the offender is confined within TDCJ.

♦ **Appeals:** SCFO may represent indigent offenders in the appeal of convictions of the above trial cases. SCFO may also represent indigent offenders in writ areas arising from those trials and/or convictions.

♦ **Civil Commitment:** SCFO represents indigent sex offenders targeted for civil commitment under the Sexually Violent Predator statute.

♦ **General Legal:** SCFO assists indigent offenders with questions about convictions after the appeal process is complete, writs of habeas corpus, parole and mandatory supervision eligibility issues and shock probation. They can also answer offenders’ questions about child custody cases and can help resolve problems offenders may have with pending charges and detainers (another agency’s hold on an offender prior to release). In addition, SCFO staff will investigate whether jail time credit was awarded to an offender and provide information regarding other time credit calculations.

♦ **Immigration:** SCFO is available to answer any questions regarding immigration law and to assist offenders who are scheduled for immigration court procedures.

Offenders can obtain assistance by writing to State Counsel for Offenders through the prison mail system. Prior to writing, offenders are encouraged to consult SCFO’s *Legal Handbook*. A copy of the Legal Handbook is available at all unit libraries.
The Access to Courts Program ensures that offenders, who are assigned to correctional institutions operated, managed or monitored by TDCJ, are provided their constitutional right of access to courts, counsel and public officials, and that access is “adequate, effective and meaningful” as required by state and federal law. Officers, employees or agents of TDCJ shall not obstruct, harass, punish or otherwise penalize any offender for seeking or gaining access to the courts.

Unit law libraries are composed of many publications, including court forms, digests, treaties, federal and state caselaw and various statutes and codes. In addition, each law library contains instructional and/or help publications on how to use this material. Offenders are allowed to utilize these facilities and resources to challenge their criminal convictions, or the conditions of their confinement. An Access to Courts supervisor is available on each unit to respond to offender inquiries regarding the use of court forms and legal research material maintained in the law library.

**RELEASE**

When the time for release from prison draws near, the offender who is eligible for parole, is interviewed by the institutional parole officer to determine residence and employment plans. Offenders with special medical or mental health needs receive information from a field services representative about medication and other relevant aftercare plans.

Most male offenders incarcerated in the Correctional Institutions Division prisons are released from the Huntsville Unit between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Female offenders are released from the Gatesville Unit. In addition to the remaining balance in the individual trust fund account, each offender is given a set of civilian clothing.
and a bus voucher. State Jail offenders are released from the unit in which they are incarcerated, or given a bus voucher to the county in which they were convicted. Correctional Institutions Division prison offenders receive $50 upon release and will receive another $50 upon reporting to his or her parole officer. State Jail offenders do not receive money upon release (Texas Government Code, Section 501.015 (b)).
## Texas Department of Criminal Justice

**Correctional Institutions Division**

**Prison Units**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<td>2101 FM 369 North Iowa Park, TX 76367</td>
<td>(940)855-7477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beto</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>P.O. Box 128 Tennessee Colony, TX 75880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boyd</td>
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<td>Freestone</td>
<td>200 Spur 113 Teague, TX 75860-2007</td>
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<td>Briscoe</td>
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<td>1459 West Highway 85 Dilley, TX 78017-4601</td>
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<td>21 FM 247 Huntsville, TX 77320</td>
<td>(936)295-5768</td>
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<td>Central</td>
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<td>1 Circle Drive Sugar Land, TX 77498</td>
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<td>4 Jester Road Richmond, TX 77406</td>
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*State-operated Intermediate Sanction Facility housing parole violators.*
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<td>P. O. Box 9000 Woodville, TX 75990</td>
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<td>Scott</td>
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<td>Segovia</td>
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<td>5509 Attwater Ave. Dickinson, TX 77539</td>
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<td>Cole</td>
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<td>Fannin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominguez</td>
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<td>Bexar</td>
<td>6535 Cagnon Road, San Antonio, TX 78252</td>
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<td>Formby</td>
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<td>Kegans</td>
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<td>Harris</td>
<td>707 Top Street, Houston, TX 77002</td>
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<td>Sanchez</td>
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Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
Correctional Institutions Division  
Transfer and Substance Abuse Facilities

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| Cotulla   | IV     | LaSalle | 610 FM 624  
Cotulla, TX 78014-8022        | (830)879-3077 |
| Duncan    | I      | Angelina| 1502 South First Street  
Diboll, TX 75941            | (936)829-2616 |
| Fort Stockton | IV | Pecos   | 1536 East IH-10  
Fort Stockton, TX 79735     | (432)336-7676 |
| Garza East | IV    | Bee     | 4304 Hwy. 202  
Beevile, TX 78102-8981    | (361)358-9880 |
| Garza West | IV    | Bee     | 4250 Hwy. 202  
Beevile, TX 78102-8982  | (361)358-9890 |
| Goodman   | I      | Jasper  | Route 1 Box 273  
Jasper, TX 75951          | (409)383-0012 |
| Gurney    | II     | Anderson| P. O. Box 640  
Tennessee Colony, TX 75861 | (903)928-3118 |
| Holliday  | I      | Walker  | 295 IH-45 North  
Huntsville, TX 77320     | (936)295-8200 |
| Marlin    | VI     | Falls   | 2893 State Hwy. 6  
Marlin, TX 76661-6588    | (254)883-3858 |
| Middleton | VI     | Jones   | 13055 FM 3522  
Abilene, TX 79601        | (325)548-9075 |
| Moore, C. | II     | Fannin  | 1700 North FM 87  
Bonham, TX 75418        | (903)583-4464 |
| Rudd      | V      | Terry   | 2004 Larnesia Highway  
Brownfield, TX 79316    | (806)637-4470 |
| San Saba  | VI     | San Saba| 206 S. Wallace Creek Road  
San Saba, TX 76877     | (325)372-4255 |
| Tulia     | V      | Swisher | 4000 Hwy. 86 West  
Tulia, TX 79088         | (806)995-4109 |
| Ware      | V      | Mitchell| 1681 S. FM 3525  
Colorado City, TX 79512 | (325)728-2162 |

| **SUBSTANCE ABUSE FACILITIES**                      |          |                                   |              |
| Glossbrenner | IV | Duval   | 5100 South FM1329  
San Diego, TX 78384     | (619)279-2705 |
| Halbert    | VI    | Burnet  | P. O. Box 923  
Burnet, TX 78611-0923  | (512)755-6171 |
| Jester III | Fort Bend | 1 Jester Road  
Richmond, TX 77406   | (281)277-3030 |
| Johnston   | II     | Wood    | 703 Airport Road  
Winnsboro, TX 75494   | (903)342-6166 |
| Seyle      | VI     | Stephens| 4176 FM 1800  
Breckenridge, TX 76424 | (254)559-1581 |

- 31 -
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<th>Address</th>
<th>Tele. No.</th>
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<td><strong>PRIVATE PRISONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>4000 North 10th Street Bridgeport, TX 76426</td>
<td>(940)683-3010</td>
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<td>P. O. Box 1678 Cleveland, TX 77328</td>
<td>(281)592-9559</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diboll</td>
<td>Angelina</td>
<td>1604 South First Street Diboll, TX 75941</td>
<td>(936)829-2295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estes</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>1100 Highway 1807 Venus, TX 76084</td>
<td>(972)366-3334</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Hays</td>
<td>23001 IH 35 Kyle, TX 78640</td>
<td>(512)268-0079</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lockhart</td>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>P. O. Box 1170 Lockhart, TX 78644</td>
<td>(512)398-3480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moore, B.</td>
<td>Rusk</td>
<td>8500 North FM 3053 Overton, TX 75684</td>
<td>(903)834-6186</td>
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<td><strong>PRIVATE STATE JAILS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bartlett</td>
<td>Williamson</td>
<td>1018 Arnold Drive Bartlett, TX 76511</td>
<td>(254)527-3300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bradshaw</td>
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<td>P. O. Box 9000 Henderson, TX 75653-9000</td>
<td>(903)655-0880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dawson</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>P.O. Box 650051 Dallas, TX 75265-0051</td>
<td>(214)744-4422</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lindsey</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>1620 Old Post Oak Road Jacksboro, TX 76458</td>
<td>(940)567-2272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willacy Co.</td>
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<td>1695 South Buffalo Drive Raymondville, TX 78580</td>
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<td><strong>CONTRACT TRANSFER FACILITIES</strong></td>
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<td>Bowie County</td>
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<td>105 W. Front Street Texarkana, TX 75501</td>
<td>(903)798-3530</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson County</td>
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<td>P. O. Box 3689 Beaumont, TX 77701</td>
<td>(409)832-5966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limestone County</td>
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<td>910 North Tyus Street Groesbeck, TX 76642</td>
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<td>Newton County</td>
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<td>Rt. 3 Box 22-100 Hwy. 87 N. Newton, TX 75966</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Texas</td>
<td>Tarrant</td>
<td>4700 Blue Mound Road Fort Worth, TX 76407</td>
<td>(817)740-0180</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>1511 Preston Road Houston, TX 77002</td>
<td>(713)223-0601</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>2002 Lamesa Hwy. Brownfield, TX 79316</td>
<td>(806)637-4032</td>
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<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>222 Lake Road Bridgeport, TX 76426</td>
<td>(940)683-2162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mineral Wells</td>
<td>Parker</td>
<td>759 Heintzelman Road Mineral Wells, TX 76067</td>
<td>(940)325-6933</td>
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<td><strong>MULTI-USE FACILITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>Rusk</td>
<td>900 Industrial Drive Henderson, TX 75653</td>
<td>(903)655-3300</td>
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