



**Ashland County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division
Standard Operating Procedures**

Subject: Inmate mail	Policy Number: 208	
Related Directives: OAC 5120:1-8-06 ORC 341.25	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permanent: Issued 2011
Jail administrator: Captain David Blake	<i>Capt D Blake</i>	Review Date: <i>3-25-18</i>
Sheriff: E. Wayne Risner	<i>E. Wayne Risner</i>	Review Date: <i>3-25-15</i>

Purpose: The Jail reasonably allows eligible inmates to correspond with their attorney, family, friends, officials, and other significant contacts and to receive appropriate publications with a minimum of interference, as long as the correspondence is carried on in a manner consistent with the rules of the facility. There shall be no limitation on the amount of incoming or outgoing mail or correspondence when the inmate is responsible for the costs of postage. 5120:1-8-06

Policy: It is in the penological interest of this jail to provide inmates with reasonable means of written communications (incoming and outgoing) with others outside of the facility, as long as the communication is consistent with security, safety, and other objectives of the operation.

Procedure: No inmate is allowed access to another inmate's mail, nor do inmates deliver or handle mail in any manner whatsoever. The correspondence program of this jail is the responsibility of the jail administrator, who provides convenient deposit and distribution of mail and publications without unnecessary delay.

I. 208.01 Inmate Mail

Indigent inmates shall receive writing materials, envelopes and postage for two letters per week from commissary. 5120:1-8-06

Inmates are permitted to retain writing material and stamps in reasonable amounts. If requested, indigent inmates will be furnished paper, pencils, envelopes, and stamps to correspond with their attorney(s) and the courts. Additionally, indigent inmates will be furnished paper, pencils, envelopes, and stamps to post at least two letters a week. A negative balance may be maintained on the inmate's commissary account for indigent postage and correspondence supplies.

A. Inmates may send or receive an unlimited amount of first-class mail or correspondence when the inmate is responsible for the costs of postage. Inmates are not permitted to write to or receive mail from any Ashland County inmate.

1. Inmates may receive newspapers, publications, letters, paid and unpaid subscriptions, magazines and soft-back books.

2. All items mentioned in 208.01A1 above must come through the mail from the publisher or a vendor.

3. When any item mentioned above arrives, it will be inspected for inappropriate content and checked for contraband.

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4. If the item is considered inappropriate, it must be returned to the vendor with the reason. A notification will also be given to the inmate. These items will not be placed in the inmates' property.
5. If the item is approved, it will be red-stamped "This belongs to:" on the inside cover. The staff member will write in the inmate's name that it belongs to.
6. The inmate may not possess more than three of any combination.
7. The inmate may donate the books to the library or send them home through the mail at their own expense.
8. Any newspaper more than three days old will be thrown away.
9. If any part of the newspaper, publication, letters, paid and unpaid subscriptions or soft-back book is altered or defaced, it will be considered contraband.

B. Incoming non-privileged mail:

Incoming and outgoing inmate mail, correspondence and packages shall be opened and inspected to intercept contraband or non-permitted items. The jail shall document procedures for the appropriate disposition of intercepted items.

C. Inmate-to-inmate correspondence:

Inmates are not allowed to correspond with any other inmate of this facility.

A detainee may not correspond with jail employees, contracted staff or volunteers unless authorized in advance by the jail administrator.

1. Incoming mail from the U.S. Postal Service will be sorted and delivered to the inmates once per day on days the U.S.P.S. has regular mail delivery.
2. Letters and envelopes with any type of tape, glue, glitter, glitter glue, white-out, labels, lipstick, perfume, body fluids or any type of foreign substance will be returned to the sender. We will accept letters, cards, money orders and non-Polaroid® photographs, not to exceed 5" by 7". Stationary or writing paper is not accepted. Paper sent through the mail will be placed in the inmate's property with notification given to the inmate.
3. All stamps, labels or stickers shall be removed and discarded for institutional safety and security reasons.
4. All incoming packages must have prior approval from the jail administrator.
5. All incoming mail and correspondence shall be opened and inspected to intercept cash, checks and money orders to make sure that no contraband enters the facility. See 208.02B3 regarding depositing funds received.
 - a. Any contraband in the mail shall be confiscated and placed in the inmate's personal property and an incident report will be completed. If the contraband is illegal by nature, the contraband will be confiscated as evidence for prosecution. The inmate will be notified in writing that contraband has been confiscated. At the discretion of the jail administrator the matter may be referred to the U.S. Postal Inspectors.

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6. Incoming and outgoing correspondence is censored or rejected on a case-by-case basis; if it contains items including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Information regarding manufacture of explosives, weapons, or drugs;
 - b. Material that may tend to encourage or assist in disrupting the orderly operation of the facility that would achieve the breakdown of jails through inmate disruption such as strikes or riots, work stoppage, or other breach of institutional rules;
 - c. Material that would encourage deviant sexual behavior;
 - d. Pornographic, sexually explicit or sexual material;
 - e. Gang or hate-oriented material;
 - f. Relating to law enforcement, military, or jail procedures or operations; or any other material deemed inappropriate.

D. Rejected Mail and Publications:

Mail, correspondence and packages shall only be withheld, read or rejected based on legitimate jail interests of order and security and is justified and approved by the jail administrator or designee in writing. The inmate shall be notified if mail is withheld or rejected. 5120:1-8-06

1. The inmate shall be notified if mail is withheld or rejected. Every effort must be made to notify the inmate and the sender when a correspondence has been rejected and the reasoning for such rejection.
2. If at any time, publications or the contents of the mail have been deemed inadmissible, a written Incident Report must be completed. The officer will seize the inadmissible items and forward them to the Shift supervisor. The Shift supervisor will forward the written report along with the seized correspondence to the Jail administrator. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Jail administrator to either accept or reject the correspondence in question.
3. The sender of the rejected correspondence or publisher of the rejected publication will be sent a form letter listing the publication and the inmate's name, stating the publication has been rejected and the grounds for rejection. The correspondence or the publication shall not be returned to the sender or the publisher until all appeals have been exhausted. This will allow the persons involved in the appeal process the ability to view the items in question.
4. Material determined to be obscene or pornographic shall not be forwarded to the inmates. The sender of the rejected material will be sent a form letter listing the material and the inmate's name, stating the reasons for the rejection. The material shall not be returned to the sender until all appeals have been exhausted. This will allow the persons involved in the appeal process the ability to view the items in questions.
5. The jail staff is prohibited from establishing an excluded list of publications: each issue of a subscription publication is to be reviewed separately.
6. The jail administrator must advise the inmate promptly in writing of the reasons for the rejection, and must provide the publisher or sender with a copy of the rejection letter. The notice must refer to "the specific article(s) or material(s) considered objectionable."
7. An inmate may appeal through the inmate grievance procedure.

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8. The sender of the rejected material will be provided with information on how to appeal the rejection through the jail's grievance procedure. Appeals must be referred to a jail official other than the person who originally rejected the correspondence. In many cases the sheriff, as the final decision maker, should review the appeal.
9. The jail administrator shall permit the inmate to review the rejected material for the purpose of filing an appeal "unless such review may provide the inmate with information of a nature which is deemed to pose a threat or detriment to the security, good order or discipline of the institution or to encourage or instruct in criminal activity."
10. In cases where the material cannot be returned to the sender, such material shall be placed in the inmate's property, noted in their property record and returned to him/her at time of release. A written report will be generated listing the items placed in property and the reason for such placement.
11. Decisions to withhold, read or censor any incoming inmate mail must be made by a supervisor and forwarded up the chain of command for final approval by the Jail administrator.
12. If any incoming mail is undeliverable because the inmate is no longer incarcerated in the facility, the materials shall be marked "Return to Sender" and placed in the outgoing mail. If there is no return address or the mail cannot be returned to the sender, it will be mailed to the last address in JMS and the jail address and USPS bar codes will be blacked out.

E. Privileged Mail:

Legal mail or correspondence shall be opened and inspected in the presence of the inmate to intercept contraband. The jail shall document procedures for the appropriate disposition of intercepted items.

1. Privileged correspondence if so marked may be opened only in the presence of the inmate and then only to detect the presence of contraband; it may not be read except by the prisoner. Privileged correspondence is defined as incoming and outgoing mail to or from:
 - a. An attorney;
 - b. A judge;
 - c. The governor of Ohio;
 - d. Local courts and Government; and
 - e. A member of the state or federal legislature.
2. If contraband is found, follow policy section 208.01B5a. If permissible, place contraband in the inmate's personal property.
3. Mail and correspondence shall only be withheld, read or rejected based on legitimate jail interests of order and security and is justified and approved by the jail administrator or designee, in writing. The inmate shall be notified in writing if mail is withheld or rejected.
 - a. An inmate's mail shall only be read, censored or withheld unless there is reason to believe that there is information in the mail pertaining to security of the facility such as jail escape plans, conveying of contraband or well-being of any corrections staff or inmate.

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4. Any mail received for an inmate who is no longer in the facility shall be marked "Return to Sender" and placed into the outgoing mail. If there is no return address or the mail cannot be returned to the sender, it will be mailed to the last address in JMS and the jail address and USPS bar codes will be blacked out.

F. Outgoing Mail:

The inmate is responsible for the costs of postage. The inmate may send an OC to the commissary email and request to purchase postage. Someone will make contact with the inmate and get the item to be mailed and determine the cost of postage. If the inmate approves the cost, the money will be deducted from his commissary account. This jail has no right or responsibility to regulate or control the amount of postage required for mailing, or what the US Postal Services does with inmate mail once it is placed in their control.

1. Outgoing mail shall only be read, censored or withheld when there is reason to believe that there is information in the mail which is obscene, libelous or pertains to the security of the facility such as jail escape plans, conveyance of contraband or threats against any corrections staff or other inmates or is in violation of a court order. Mail will be held upon request from a prosecutor's office, law enforcement or parole authority and probation as evidence for prosecution.
 - a. Only the jail administrator has the authority to open outgoing mail for inspection when it meets the above criteria.
2. All outgoing mail must be stamped with the facility's return address and an "Uncensored Mail" stamp.
3. At the end of each shift, all outgoing mail will be placed in the U.S. Postal Service mail box outside the jail's night lobby.
4. Indigent inmates may receive the necessary writing materials, envelopes and postage for two letters per week through the facility's commissary.

G. Handling Inmate Money received in the U.S. Mail and/or visitors:

Money will only be accepted for the inmate commissary system in the form of a money order or cashier's check. Cash is not accepted except from an inmate being booked in.

Only money orders or bank checks received through the U.S. Mail will be entered into the commissary system and deposited into the inmate's account.

Inmate visitors will enter all cash into the kiosk in the night lobby under the inmate's name for the inmate's use.

The kiosk will print a receipt from all transactions for the depositor.

H. Email:

The Ashland County Sheriff's Office uses an innovative electronic mail system to allow family and friends to use modern day email applications to correspond with their incarcerated loved one. To be clear, this program does NOT provide inmates with direct email access. Rather, it allows those who wish to correspond with an inmate to enter into a subscription through the Access Corrections® website at a cost substantially less than the postal service, and that company will serve as the vehicle to manage emails between inmates and their loved ones.

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Access Corrections® is the vendor contracted by the Ashland County Jail for inmate emails. Family members of inmates may purchase email packages by calling Access Corrections® (866-345-1884) or by ordering online at www.AccessCorrections.com.

1. Inmates are able to respond to emails from family once a package has been purchased.
2. Family members must contact the vendor directly if there is a problem with the inmates' email package.
3. Any officer may log into AccessCorrections.com as an agency manager. Username and password are issued by the corrections secretary.
 - a. Click on 'Review Messages', then default. The website will generate a list of new emails.
 - b. All emails are graded from the Word Watch and given a color code.
 - c. Officers will review the email for any security violations.
 - d. The officer can approve the email and it will close out that email.
 - e. If an officer feels there is a security violation, they may reject with a reason or place it in the Escalation Queue.
 - f. If the email goes to the Escalation Queue, the officer must notify a supervisor by email that they placed an email in the Escalation Queue for their review.
 - g. The supervisor will review the email and either approve it or reject with a reason.
 - h. The sender will receive a notification that the email has been rejected.

II. 208.02 Attorney Mail

- A. Legal mail or correspondence shall be opened and inspected in the presence of the inmate to intercept contraband. The jail shall document procedures for the appropriate disposition of intercepted items.
- B. Indigent inmates are given 2 envelopes and sheets of paper each week to communicate with attorneys or public defenders.
- C. Attorneys or public defenders can use their Access Corrections and email inmates. All inmate emails are screened by staff for security violations and approved or disapproved.

III. 208.03 Offender Communications Center (OCC)

- A. The Ashland County Jail provides kiosks in most areas of the jail for inmates' use. Paper kytes will be given to inmates in holding cells. Paper kytes may be given only if the kiosks are not functioning. Offender Communications (OC) will be used to communicate with staff, detectives and municipal court probation. In an emergency or if an inmate feels threatened, he or she should contact the housing officer directly or in the case of a health emergency, another inmate would call for the housing officer.
- B. OCC will be used for general requests, sick call, property releases, grievances or other correspondence with staff.
- C. Judges will not be using the OCC due to constraints within the Ohio Administrative Code. Inmates wanting to contact common pleas court, municipal court, the county prosecutor or the city law director should write to them directly or contact them through their attorney.



Ashland County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division
 1205 East Main Street, Ashland, Ohio 44805
 Telephone: (419) 281-9009

NOTIFICATION OF MAIL WITHHELD

Date _____ Sender _____

Inmate _____ Address _____

Reason _____

Officer _____

✓ **File copy**

208.01D1 Notification of Withheld Mail

March 2019



Ashland County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division
 1205 East Main Street, Ashland, Ohio 44805
 Telephone: (419) 281-9009

NOTIFICATION OF MAIL WITHHELD

Date _____ Sender _____

Inmate _____ Address _____

Reason _____

Officer _____

✓ **Offender copy**

208.01D1 Notification of Withheld Mail

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