

Australian Capital Territory

# Corrections Management (Detainee Mail – Screening and Vetting) Operating Procedure 2021

Notifiable instrument NI2021-332

made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, s14 (Corrections policies and operating procedures)

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## 1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Detainee Mail – Screening and Vetting) Operating Procedure 2021*.

## 2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

## 3 Policy

I make this operating procedure to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

Ray Johnson APM  
Commissioner  
ACT Corrective Services  
25 May 2021



<b>OPERATING PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Detainee Mail – Screening and Vetting</b>
<b>OPERATING PROCEDURE NO.</b>	<b>D13.2</b>
<b>SCOPE</b>	<b>Alexander Maconochie Centre</b>

## PURPOSE

To provide instructions to staff on the correct protocols around the vetting and searching of detainee mail.

## PROCEDURES

### 1. Detainee mail

- 1.1. All mail received must be x-rayed and may also be searched by the Passive Alert Detection dog when available.
- 1.2. Gate staff must place the mail in the Gate office for the night shift to collect.
- 1.3. Night staff must screen all incoming mail.
- 1.4. Unit staff must screen all outgoing mail.

### 2. Screening of ordinary mail

- 2.1. Officers must screen ordinary mail to identify:
  - a. Any item that may be stuck to them other than a stamp
  - b. Slogans or symbols that are considered offensive or gang related
  - c. Any signs of tampering.
- 2.2. Beside things identified as prohibited or restricted, staff must also identify:
  - a. Cash (only money orders or bank cheques will be receipted via the mail)
  - b. Letter/envelope/card with the following:
    - Glitter/glue/paint
    - Food
    - Maps
    - Material/ thread/ ribbon/ metal/ string/ feathers/ beads/ foam/ magnets/wood
    - Lottery/racing tickets
    - Home-made puzzles, crosswords, games etc.
    - Any types of tapes e.g. sticky, masking, electrical, stickers etc.
    - Lipstick/lip-gloss
    - Correction fluid/BluTac/unknown substance.
  - c. Property via the mail (prior approval required)
  - d. Graffiti/tags/personal logos/Gang related logos, slogans, acronyms
  - e. Polaroid photos
  - f. Laminated item/blank cards/musical cards/oversized card or paper (A4 max only)
  - g. Naked images/inappropriate pictures, photos or drawings
  - h. Magazines/books.

- 2.3. Incoming mail that is identified as per 2.2 must be withheld and returned to sender. A Returned Mail Chit must be included to explain why the mail is being returned (Appendix A).
- 2.4. The Unit Officer must take all screened mail to Operations.

### **3. Screening of protected mail**

- 3.1. Officers must screen protected mail to ensure:
  - a. It is legitimately protected mail, in other words, stamped, printed or otherwise officially marked to identify it as from a source that would make it protected.
  - b. It does not include any prohibited items.
- 3.2. An officer must cease screening mail immediately upon identifying it as protected where there were no markings to identify it as such. In these circumstances an entry in the detainee Case Notes must be made that protected mail was not identified as such and was opened.
- 3.3. The screening officer must send any protected mail to the Area Manager Operations where there is a suspicion it is not legitimately protected mail.
- 3.4. The Area Manager Operations will take the suspicious mail to the detainee and invite them to open it in front of them to confirm that it is protected. Where it is discovered to not be protected the letter must be seized.
- 3.5. Where mail purporting to be protected mail is seized a Security Information Report must be completed. The mail must be placed in the detainee's property designated as not for issue.

### **4. Vetting of mail**

- 4.1. Vetting of mail means the reading of ordinary mail to ensure the prevention of:
  - a. The entry, or the arrangement of entry of:
    - o A prohibited item
    - o Anything that may pose a risk to the security or good order at a correctional centre
    - o Anything that appears is being used, or is intended, for the commission of an offence or disciplinary breach.
  - b. Threatening or otherwise inappropriate correspondence (including mail to a detainee's registered victim)
  - c. A detainee obtaining or buying goods without the General Manager's approval
  - d. Re-victimising a victim
  - e. Circumventing the process for investigating complaints or reviewing decisions under the Corrections Management Act 2007
  - f. The commissioning of a crime
  - g. The incitement of, or promotion of, extremism, racial or religious hatred or intolerance, or furtherance of gang activities.
- 4.2. Night Officers must select at random 10 letters to be read from the incoming and outgoing ordinary mail. This must be recorded on the electronic record of the detainee to whom the mail pertains.

- 4.3. Where ordinary mail pertaining to any Persons of Interest is identified from the list provided by the Intelligence and Integrity Unit every month, it must be forwarded to the Security Unit.
- 4.4. Any ordinary mail being vetted or screened must take no more than one week to be released if it is not being seized.

## 5. Recording

- 5.1. In all instances where mail is returned or seized the detainee must be advised by using the Withheld Detainee Mail Form ([Appendix B](#)).

## RELATED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

- Detainee Communications Policy
- Detainee Communications Operating Procedure
- Security Information Report

Corinne Justason  
 Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations  
 ACT Corrective Services  
 17 May 2021

### Document details

Criteria	Details
Document title:	Corrections Management (Detainee Mail – Screening and Vetting) Operating Procedure 2021
Document owner/approver:	Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations, ACT Corrective Services
Date effective:	The day after the notification date
Review date:	3 years after the notification date
Responsible Officer:	Senior Director Operations
Compliance:	This operating procedure reflects the requirements of the <i>Corrections Management (Policy Framework) Policy 2020</i>

Version Control			
Version no.	Date	Description	Author
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