

Communications, Mail, and Visiting

1900.1 INMATE MAIL/GENERAL

Inmates will be permitted to send and receive unlimited correspondence to maintain communication with their families, friends, business associates and government authorities, except when there is reasonable cause to justify limitations for reasons of public safety or facility order, security, or to stop a state or federal crime.

- (a) All incoming and outgoing inmate mail is governed by federal law, state jail standards and jail procedures.
- (b) There are no limits placed on the number of letters an inmate may send or receive.
- (c) Mail may not be dropped off at a facility.
- (d) All incoming mail will be screened by mailroom CSAs.
- (e) Federal law prohibits malicious tampering or mishandling of mail.

1900.2 UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS RECEIVED IN THE MAIL

- (a) All incoming mail will be screened for unacceptable materials. The following items will be deemed unacceptable and will be processed out accordingly:
 - 1. Mail that violates federal or state law.
 - 2. An addressee not in custody at any of the Orange County Jail facilities. (Returned via U.S. Post Office or another original carrier).
 - 3. Any books, magazines or newspapers not received directly from a source deemed secure by jail administrators. (Note: If an inmate can show special circumstances, the inmate may petition the Division Commander for permission to receive the published materials from other sources).
 - 4. Obscene publications or items as determined by the Division Commander and mail containing obscene publications or items are not permitted. Obscene publications or items include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Photographs or pictures of any kind showing complete nudity, partial nudity, sadomasochism, bestiality, penetration, oral copulation, defecation, urination, or ejaculation.
 - ii. Personal photographs that display nudity of any kind or items that are sexual in nature are not permitted.
 - 5. Material promoting illegal activity to include, but not limited to:
 - i. Any representation tending to incite murder, arson, riot, violent racism, or any other form of violence.
 - ii. Any matter concerning unlawful gambling or an unlawful lottery.
 - iii. Any publication concerning the cultivation or illegal production of narcotics or drugs.

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6. Oversized packages or boxes will not be accepted and will be returned to the sender unless previously approved by the Division Commander. (A package is defined as any item larger than a 9"x12" legal size manila envelope). Boxes will not be accepted unless they are from an approved secure source.
7. A CSA will make an entry in the logbook whenever a package or box is returned to the sender.
8. Mail containing correspondence material (envelopes, paper, pencils, stamps, etc.) will not be accepted. All correspondence material must be purchased through commissary or ordered and shipped directly from the United States Postal Service online store (www.USPS.com). Only stamps, envelopes and postcards are accepted directly from the USPS online store.
9. There is a maximum limit of 10 items of correspondence per envelope. Refer to [CCOM Section 1600.3\(b\) - Mail](#) for further details.
10. Items that cannot be inspected by normal means or without damaging the item such as:
 - (a) Multilayered cards, multilayered photographs (e.g., Polaroids), laminated items.
11. Greeting cards, cardstock paper and colored paper, except for postcards. Only mail written on postcards or white paper (plain or lined, not cardstock) is permitted.
12. Items containing foil or metal of any type, glass, wood, hard plastic, rubber, or other prohibited substances.
13. Items that may compromise the security of the facility.
14. Wall posters, travel brochures, wall calendars, or any other item larger than a legal-size piece of paper.
15. Credit cards, personal checkbooks, original certificates (e.g., marriage, driver's license, diplomas, etc.).
16. Any unlawful item or any item that could constitute a security hazard or tend to incite violence or other prohibited conduct.
17. Any food item.
18. Any article of clothing, hygiene item or other personal property.
19. Any item that contains any unknown substance (e.g., stains, perfume, lipstick, etc.).
20. Any outgoing or incoming mail containing writing, marks, or artwork other than the inmate's name/address and the name/address of the person to/from whom the letter is being sent. Only proper directions to the Post Office will be permitted in the envelope.
21. Torn pages or torn articles from publications are not allowed.

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- (b) If an item is received that is deemed unacceptable, the employee determining unacceptability shall complete a "Rejection of Mail Item" in triplicate.
 - 1. The employee shall fill in all blank spaces on the form and shall check the appropriate reason for rejection. If the item is rejected for any reason other than those explained, the "OTHER" section shall be checked, and the reason shall be written legibly in that space.
 - 2. Mail without a return address will not be accepted.
 - 3. The Correctional Services Assistant (CSA) shall sign legibly and enter their badge number in the appropriate spaces.
 - 4. The original of the form shall be inserted into the mail item. The mail item will be resealed and stamped "Return to Sender". The "Not Here" or "Unacceptable" area of the stamp will also be checked. The second copy of the form will be forwarded to the inmate; the third copy is filed in the mailroom. The copy for the Mailroom will be stored for one (1) year then destroyed.

1900.3 INCOMING INMATE MAIL

- (a) Incoming and outgoing mail will be picked up and delivered to each facility by one of the Mailroom CSAs. Outgoing mail will be personally delivered to the U.S. Post Office representative Monday through Saturday. A staff member will sign for and accept all certified letters, special deliveries, and postage due mail.
 - 1. If for any reason the mail is not delivered or picked up, the Mailroom CSA will have the responsibility to contact the Post Office and find out why the mail was not delivered or picked up. The CSA will make a log entry detailing the reason(s) why the mail was not delivered.
- (b) Incoming and outgoing mail will not be held for more than twenty-four (24) hours. Mail will be processed and distributed daily, excluding Sundays and holidays.
- (c) All incoming inmate mail will be separated into legal mail and regular mail to ensure that no legal mail will be opened by mistake.
- (d) All incoming mail from state and federal courts, state and federal elected officials, attorneys, legitimate legal service organizations that consist of an established group of attorneys involved in the representation of offenders in judicial proceedings (including the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers), the Corrections Standards Authority and the Division Commander or the Captain, shall be considered "legal mail," and shall only be opened and inspected in the presence of the inmate by a Deputy in the inmate's housing area. This mail shall not be read or copied but may be inspected in the presence of the addressee for contraband. **STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS PROCEDURE IS MANDATORY.**
 - 1. **EXCEPTION:** When legal mail is first received by the Mailroom, the type of postage will be noted. Any mail received with "bulk rate" postage will NOT be deemed legal mail and may be opened and inspected along with regular mail. Per County Counsel, "bulk rate" postage will be prima facie evidence that its contents are advertisement in nature, and not true legal mail.

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- (e) All incoming mail other than from state and federal courts, any member of the State Bar or holder of public office, and the State Board of State and Community Corrections will be opened and inspected for contraband and money prior to delivery to the intended inmate. Mailroom CSAs will also scan letters for words such as, "Kill," "Escape," etc.
 - 1. Mail will not routinely be read. However, if at any time a Deputy has reason to believe that reading the mail of a certain inmate is necessary in the interest of jail security or the prevention of criminal activity, the Deputy may do so with the approval of the Watch Commander or their designee.
- (f) When suspected drugs or narcotics are found, a Sergeant will be notified. At the Sergeant's direction, a Deputy will be assigned to take custody of the evidence. The evidence will be booked at the Sheriff's Property/Evidence Room and a DR will be written. The assigned Deputy will be from the facility that houses the inmate. This will expedite any interview and search of the inmate and their cell.
- (g) Incoming mail will be handed only to the addressed inmate by a Deputy or CSA. Mail for inmates released prior to delivery shall be returned to the Post Office. Mail for inmates temporarily out of the housing area will be retained by the Deputy in the housing area and given to the inmate at the earliest opportunity.
- (h) Mail for inmates who have transferred to another facility will be returned to the Mailroom CSA for delivery via the "pony" system.
- (i) Currency, Money Orders or Checks Received in the Mail
 - 1. If any cash, money orders, cashier's checks or checks are received in the mail, the Mailroom CSA will first verify that the inmate is still in custody, then:
 - i. Verify booking number
 - ii. Verify name
 - iii. Obtain housing location
 - 2. Cash: If cash is received in the mail, the CSA will prepare a receipt in triplicate documenting the inmate's name, booking number, housing location, amount received, and received from whom and sending party. Cash will be hand carried to the Cashier's Office no later than 1615 hours, the same day it was received. Under NO circumstances will the cash be left in the Mailroom overnight.
 - i. One (1) copy - stapled to cash
 - ii. One (1) copy - to inmate
 - iii. One (1) copy - Mailroom
 - 3. Government Checks: If a government check is received in the mail, the CSA will take it to the inmate in their housing unit and obtain the inmate's signature/endorsement prior to delivery to the Cashier.
 - 4. Personal Checks/Payroll Checks: These items are not acceptable for deposit to the inmate's account unless they are from a government agency. If the check is unacceptable, the CSA will return the check to the sender.
 - 5. Cashier Checks: Cashier checks will not be accepted.

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6. Inmate Funds Received in Mail Log: All currency forwarded to the Cashier for deposit to the inmate's account shall be recorded on the Inmate Funds Received in Mail Log. One copy shall accompany the cash, money orders, and government checks sent to the Cashier's Office; the second copy will be retained by the Mail Room. Each entry shall indicate the type of deposit (e.g., cash, money order, etc.).
 7. Mail received for inmates no longer in custody will be returned to the sender via the post office. A stamp will be placed on the envelope by the CSA stating the "subject is no longer in custody."
 - i. Anytime a "Rejection of Mail Item" form is prepared with cash or checks being returned to sender, the amount and check number will be recorded on this form.
 8. The Intake/Release staff member will place the items in the inmate's property and note the additional property on the property receipt.
- (j) Mail Requiring Special Handling
1. Occasionally, mail is received that requires special handling. This mail is generally delivered by Postal Service Express Mail, UPS, or Federal Express and requires a signature by the receiving party.
 2. All special handling mail will be accepted/signed for by the warehouse CSA or designee.
 - i. The signature represents acceptance of the mail for further delivery and does not transfer responsibility for the contents.
 3. Mail will not be accepted for anyone not in the custody of the Sheriff.
 4. This procedure applies only to mail delivered by an official source requiring a signature.

1900.4 OUTGOING INMATE MAIL

- (a) There is no limit on the amount of outgoing mail or number of pages allowed to be sent.
- (b) Each housing unit will have a mailbox in which inmates will deposit their outgoing mail.
- (c) The mailroom CSA will collect all outgoing non-legal mail. Outgoing mail must be unsealed, have the correct postage affixed on the front, and have a mailing and return address including the inmate's name and booking number.
- (d) Deputies may inspect each envelope or contents for contraband and/or gang related material (e.g., monikers, gang symbols, coded writings, or admissions of gang membership or discussion of gang related business). In the event any gang related material is located, the following procedure will be followed:
 1. The material will be copied, and the copy forwarded to the Custody Intelligence Unit.
 2. The envelope will be sealed and mailed with all other outgoing mail.

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- (e) Inmates, in the presence of a Deputy, can seal outgoing legal mail only after the envelope has been checked for contraband. The Deputy will then initial the back of the envelope.
- (f) Outgoing mail, other than to state and federal courts, any member of the State Bar or holder of public office, and the State Board of State and Community Corrections may be read if at any time a Deputy has reason to believe that reading the mail of a certain inmate is necessary in the interest of jail security or the prevention of criminal activity, the Deputy may do so with the approval of the Watch Commander or their designee. No copies of such correspondence shall be furnished to any agency, unless:
 - 1. Ordered in writing by a court of competent jurisdiction.
 - 2. The reading and inspection disclosed planned criminal activity (e.g., solicitation of perjury, escape, etc.).
 - 3. Any violation of state/federal laws.
 - 4. An approved mail cover is on file.

1900.5 FREE POSTAGE

- (a) Those inmates who are without funds (verified by the cashier at time of submission) shall be permitted the following:
 - 1. At least four postage-free letters each week. (Personal Correspondence)
 - i. Four postage-free personal letters may be requested on the commissary order form ("Welfare Pack") once per week.
 - ii. When the inmate has funds placed in their jail account, the computer will automatically debit the inmate's account.
 - 2. Postage-free letters for legal correspondence as needed.
 - i. The request shall be made on an Inmate Message Slip addressed to the Mail Room.
 - ii. The Mail Room will provide the postage free envelope to the requesting inmate through the Guard Station or Module Staff.
 - iii. Staff will check the contents for contraband and verify the communication is for a legitimate legal purpose.
 - iv. The inmate will seal the envelope and staff will initial across the seal of the envelope.

1900.6 INMATE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

- (a) Inmates will be permitted to receive through the mail, any newspapers which are not provided by the jail, and magazines or paperback books that may lawfully be transmitted through the U.S. Postal Service. These items are subject to reasonable withholding for inspection for contraband and security purposes. Inmates may also receive hard cover books upon prior request and showing of need. The Division Commander will review any request.

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1. All books, magazines, correspondence, and other material received by the Mailroom for inmates shall be delivered as soon as possible. Module Deputies will adhere to the five (5) book/magazine limit set for inmates.
2. All books must be new and ordered through any publisher, bookstore or book distributor that does mail order business. Publications shall be shipped directly to the jail facility from the vendor. Torn pages or torn articles from publications are not allowed.
 - i. Books may not be purchased at a store and shipped to the jail facility.
 - ii. The package must be accompanied by an invoice listing the purchaser, recipient, contents, and the name of the online store.
 - iii. Exceptions to this policy must be made by the Division Commander.
3. Once the subscribed publication is received, it will be considered the personal property of the inmate and subject to Orange County Jail Rules. Inmates will not possess more than five books and/or magazines at one time. Excess items will be discarded or mailed out of the facility at the inmate's expense.
4. Upon delivery of the book, magazine, or newspaper and after verification of the identity of the ordering inmate, a staff member will write the inmate's name and booking number on the book, magazine, or newspaper in permanent marker.

1900.7 INMATE MESSAGE SLIPS

- (a) Inmates are permitted to send Inmate Message Slips to jail personnel, Sheriff's Department personnel, or other persons in agencies located in the Civic Center area where messenger service (pony) is available. Housing Deputies may answer routine inquiries addressed to Jail Administration, but all other inquiries shall be forwarded promptly to Inmate Records for distribution to the intended receiver.
 1. Inmates may correspond confidentially with the Division Commander.