

Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures

10.6 Visits by chaplains

Policy summary

This policy is about the authority of accredited chaplains and their assistants to visit correctional centres under clause 67 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*.

It sets out the accreditation process and the approval a chaplain must have before they can visit a correctional centre as a clause 67 visitor. It also explains the conditions or restrictions that will apply to them, along with their responsibilities, powers and privileges.

The Commissioner of Corrective Services (the Commissioner) can revoke an accreditation at any time.

Unless Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) has accredited a chaplain, priest or spiritual advisor, they must not be allowed access under clause 67. However, they may visit as a family member or friend under clause 74.

Management of Public Correctional Centres Service Specifications

Service specifications	Decency and respect
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Scope

This section applies to all correctional centres and other facilities administered by or on behalf of CSNSW.

It also applies to all CSNSW employees, and where relevant to other personnel such as, contractors, subcontractors, and visitors.

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1 Visits by chaplains

1.1 Accreditation of chaplains

A chaplain must be accredited by the Commissioner to have access to inmates in line with clause 67 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*.

Approved organisations may run specific programs in the correctional centre like KAIROS and Prison Fellowship under the guidance of the Accredited Chaplain.

Accreditation of chaplains is set out in clause 63 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*. A chaplain must be accredited before being permitted to visit a correctional centre for religious purposes. The CSNSW chaplaincy coordinator is responsible for administering this process.

People seeking accreditation must contact the chaplaincy coordinator for CSNSW by email to: ChaplaincyCSNSW@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Chaplains must obtain written approval, in addition to the accreditation, from the Commissioner to have access to visit Extreme High Security (EHS), Extreme High Risk Restricted (EHRR) and National Security Interest (NSI) inmates.

1.2 Procedures for accreditation of chaplain

A chaplain applying for accreditation must complete and submit a *Criminal record inquiry (non-offender) (CRI)* form. This will allow a criminal background check to be completed. The accredited chaplain must also complete the online security awareness course before commencement of their duties.

Chaplain accreditation and approval can be revoked at any time. Consequently, the validity of a person's accreditation must be checked on Offender Integrated Management System (OIMS) each time they attempt to enter a correctional centre.

A chaplain, priest or spiritual advisor must not be allowed to access inmate visits under clause 67 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* if they do not have a current approved accreditation, however, they may visit as a family member or friend as part of a normal contact visit.

2 Access to inmates by religious visitors

2.1 Chaplain

A chaplain is allowed to visit the correctional centre they have received accreditation for at all reasonable times, but must not disturb the operational routine or security of the correctional centre. An accredited chaplain who is attached to a particular correctional centre must, on entry, be issued keys with an appropriate level of access for that centre to complete their service.

A visit by a chaplain to an inmate is in addition to an inmate's usual entitlement to visits by family and friends. An inmate can refuse a visit from an accredited chaplain.

Where no minister of religion of a particular denomination has been accredited for a particular correctional centre, a minister of religion of that denomination may, in consultation with the chaplaincy coordinator, and with the approval of the Governor, visit the centre. The minister of religion can have access to inmates of that denomination.

On request by an inmate belonging to a denomination for which no minister of religion has been accredited, the Governor in consultation with the chaplaincy coordinator may arrange for the inmate to be visited by a minister of religion of that denomination.

2.2 Chaplains assistants

Chaplain’s assistants are volunteers to the correctional centre and are supervised and accountable to the accredited chaplain. Chaplain’s assistants are approved locally by the Governor of the correctional centre after a *CRI (non-offender) form* has been completed, and the online security awareness course has been completed. After approval, chaplain’s assistants are processed as an authorised visitor.

2.3 Religious visitors

A person who is, or who claims to be, a minister or advisor of religion and wishes to see individual inmates in a religious capacity will not be admitted into the correctional centre until the Governor has consulted a chaplain accredited to that centre.

A religious visitor may be approved by the Governor of the correctional centre under certain circumstances to visit an inmate of that faith.

2.4 Other religious organisations

Representatives of religious organisations wishing to provide services other than chaplaincy services to inmates should be directed to make an enquiry through the Director, Correctional Practice, or the correctional centre’s Manager Offender Services and Programs (MOSP) or Functional Manager (FM).

2.5 Procedures for admitting chaplain’s assistant or religious visitor

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Approve chaplain’s assistant or other approved religious visitor.	Governor
2.	Check the chaplain’s assistant or approved religious visitor has been approved to visit that centre, on arrival.	Officer in Charge (OIC) visits/gate
3.	Advise the visits processing staff of the status of the visitor, if required.	Accredited chaplain of the correctional centre
4.	Check the visitor’s identification.	OIC visits/gate

	Procedure	Responsibility
5.	Process the visit and record as an authorised visit in OIMS.	OIC visits/gate
6.	Report the accredited visit and any request to bring in sacramental wine to FM or OIC of the centre.	OIC visits/gate

3 Religious items

3.1 Taking religious items into or out of a correctional centre

Accredited chaplains are subject to the same restrictions as any authorised visitor. Only approved items are allowed to be delivered to/from an inmate, from an accredited chaplain. With the approval of the Governor of the correctional centre this may include religious items (**refer to COPP section 11.2 Religious and cultural services**).

3.2 Sacramental wine

Approved chaplains, may take up to 300 ml of sacramental wine into the correctional centre for a religious service. The wine must be declared to the gate officer on entry to the correctional centre (**refer to COPP section 11.2 Religious and cultural services**).

3.3 Procedures for sacramental wine

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Declare any sacramental wine to the gate officer on entry to the correctional centre.	Chaplain
2.	Notify the FM each time an accredited chaplain wishes to bring sacramental wine to a correctional centre. This wine must be transported in a secure container.	Gate officer
3.	Take unused sacramental wine out of the correctional centre on departure.	Chaplain

4 Religious festivals

4.1 Policy

Many religious festivals are marked by preparing and/or eating particular foods, or by the use of particular items. These must be approved by the Commissioner before being made available to inmates during a religious festival.

4.2 Procedures for participating in religious festivals

To prevent the abuse of the privilege to participate in religious festivals the Governor must ensure the following procedures are completed:

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Ensure appropriate identification is produced by any person stating that they are representing a religious denomination.	OIC visits/gate
2.	Confirm with the chaplains/spiritual advisor or their governing bodies that a certain religious festival is forthcoming.	Delegated officer
3.	Search all parcels delivered to the correctional centre by a representative of a religious denomination. If the contents are permitted then give the parcel to the appropriate member of staff for distribution.	Gate/mail officer

5 Quick links

- [Related COPP](#)
- [Forms and annexures](#)
- [Related documents](#)

6 Definitions

COPP	Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures
CRI	Criminal Record Inquiry
CSNSW	Corrective Services NSW
Delegated officer	Any officer who occupies or acts in the following positions which the Governor has delegated certain Governor's functions to deal with correctional centre offences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manager of Security• Functional Manager.
EHS	Extreme High Security
EHRR	Extreme High Risk Restricted
FM	Functional Manager
MOSP	Manager Offender Services and Programs
NSI	National Security Inmates
OIC	Officer in Charge
OIMS	Offender Integrated Management System

7 Document information

Business centre: Custodial Operations

Approver: Kevin Corcoran

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EDRMS container: 8/7281

Version	Date	Reason for amendment
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1.0		Initial publication (<i>Replaces section 15.11 of the superseded Operations Procedures Manual</i>)
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1.1	12/03/20	General formatting update and improvements
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1.2	31/07/23	Addition at subsection 2.1 <i>Chaplain</i> to mandate issue of keys to Chaplain who is accredited and attached to a correctional centre.
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1.3	26/10/23	Removal of direct name and contact number for CSNSW chaplaincy coordinator.
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Updates in line with CSNSW restructure: renaming of Director, Offender Services and Programs (OS&P) to Director, Correctional Practice; removal of outdated address for OS&P; and removal of reference to OS&P.
