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Inmate Rights
Rights of Inmates

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INMATE RIGHTS

I. POLICY

- A. The Mendocino County Jail recognizes inmates have certain rights relative to the conditions of an inmate's confinement, and to provide inmates with a safe environment and one that provides for basic constitutional rights.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The recognized inmate rights are as follows:
1. Single cell, double-cell, triple-cell dormitory, and multi-cell occupancy.
 2. Clean and orderly surroundings.
 3. Adequate toilet, bathing, and laundry facilities.
 4. Adequate lighting, heating, and ventilation.
 5. Compliance with federal, state and local fire and safety laws and regulations.
 6. Wholesome, properly prepared, nutritionally adequate diet.
 7. Clean and seasonable clothing, bedding, and linen.
 8. Basic medical and dental services comparable in quality to those available to the general citizen populace of the state.
 9. Access to both recreational opportunities and equipment, (if available).
 10. Access to clergy which allows inmates to practice their legitimate religious practices, subject only to the limitations necessary to maintain institutional order and security.

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11. Visitation with family members and friends in a visiting area, which is limited only by those facility requirements necessary to maintain order and security. Private areas are available for confidential visitation between inmates and attorneys except where substantial justification for restriction is provided.
12. Send sealed letters to a specified class of person or organization, including but not limited to: courts, counsel, officials of the confining authority, government officials, administrators or grievance systems and members of the parole authority. Inmates seeking judicial or administrative redress are not subjected to reprisal or penalties as a consequence.
13. Maintain contact with attorney, their representatives or experts retained by them. This will be accomplished through uncensored correspondence, telephone communications and official visits, limited only as necessary to maintain order and security. Inmates will have the right to request assistance in preparing and filing legal papers. This will include assistance from persons with legal training, law school legal assistance programs, the Public Defender's Office and law library facilities.
14. Freedom from discrimination based on the inmate's race, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or political belief.
15. Protection from personal abuse, corporal punishment, personal injury, disease, property damage and harassment.
16. A dignified conversational form of address. All inmates will be addressed by name rather than ID number or any other derogatory manner.
17. Availability of a written grievance procedure will include at least one level of appeal.
18. Personal grooming choices regarding appearance. Interpretation of these regulations will be the least restrictive necessary to the security level of the inmate and the facility. This choice is limited only by facility requirements for:
 - a. Safety;
 - b. Security;
 - c. Identification; and

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d. Hygiene.

19. Expectation of unnecessary force, embarrassment, or indignity to the inmate is avoided during searches.
20. Participate in local, state, and federal elections, pursuant to election codes. This can be done by requesting a registration form and/or an absentee ballot from Corrections Division personnel and/or the Mendocino County Elections Department.
21. Access to written rules and regulations specifying prohibited behavior and penalties.
22. Freedom from being subjected to medical or pharmaceutical testing for experimental or research purposes.
23. Access to the public through the media, subject only to the limitations necessary to maintain order and security.
24. To make at least three local or collect long distance telephone calls to family members, friends, bail bondsmen, or attorneys during the admissions process. To make at least two additional calls to provide for the care of minor children if a custodial parent.
25. Access to the courts to challenge the legality of their conviction or confinement, present any issue, or seek redress for illegal conditions or treatment.
26. To be handled in accordance with the "Inmate Discipline Procedure" of the Mendocino County Jail upon being charged with major or minor violations of facility rules.

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