

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Brandon S. Wood



P.O. Box 12985
Austin, Texas 78711
Voice: (512) 463-5505
Fax: (512) 463-3185
<http://www.tcjs.state.tx.us>
info@tcjs.state.tx.us

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Sheriffs and Jail Administrators
FROM: Brandon Wood, Executive Director
REGARDING: Visitation
DATE: January 14, 2019

Recently, we have received complaints of visitation phones and/or video equipment stops working. After concluding our investigation, it was determined that the allegations were founded. Even when equipment fails, jails must continue to offer visitation. Minimum Jail Standards do not allow jails to discontinue visitation while the equipment is repaired. Alternative means of visitation shall be provided.

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS) Minimum Jail Standards, Chapter 291.4 require that inmates shall be allowed a minimum of two in-person, noncontact visitation periods per week of at least 20 minutes duration each. Jails are also required to define procedures where contact visitation is permitted. The only facilities exempt from the visitation requirement are those that as of September 1, 2015, have incurred significant design, engineering, or construction costs to provide prisoner visitation or that do not have the physical plant capability to provide in-person visitation (Government Code 511.009 (20) (a-1)).

If your jail's equipment used for visitation is not working properly or is not working at all, TCJS recommends the following:

1. Notify your TCJS field inspector;
2. Offer in-person, face-to-face visits until the equipment is repaired; or,
3. Provide visitation in an area where visitation equipment is operational.

Unless exempted from visitation for the reasons described above, the jail must find alternative means for inmates to have visitation until the equipment is repaired.

Thank you for your attention to this important minimum jail standard.

Judge Bill Stoudt, Longview, Chair
Jerry W. Lowry, New Caney, Vice Chair
Larry S. May, Sweetwater

Sheriff Dennis D. Wilson, Groesbeck
Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Lubbock
Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, M.D., Parker

Commissioner Ben Perry, Waco
Duane Lock, Southlake
Melinda E. Taylor, Austin

"The Commission on Jail Standards welcomes all suggestions and will promptly respond to all complaints directed against the agency or any facilities under its purview."
To empower local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas