



### HOW VISITATION WORKS

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Prison visitation has a LOT of red tape, just like everything, and that's understanding--considering how some prisoners seek to manipulate ANYTHING they can--and it leaves the nice guys like me to prove that I'm not a criminal-minded drone.

But, like phone calls, emails, etc., once it is set up, it's easy. Still a few hoops, but for the most part, prison employees are able to discern who is a criminal, and those that just miss their loved ones. If you're doing the right thing--it shows--and you have no problems.

Here's the breakdown of the process:

1. They prefer it if you knew the prisoner BEFORE their current imprisonment. It's ... suspicious otherwise, and may take additional explaining as to WHY you want to visit a prisoner that you didn't know. Approval is still possible though.
2. You are not just put on a list. You have to write the prisoner, and the prisoner has to send you a "Visitation Form" to fill out--and it requires the usual copy of I.D. etc.--and you mail it in to the address on the form.
3. The prisoner never sees the form; but, when (and if) you are approved, the prisoner is notified that you have been added to their approved visitation list--and it is then on the prisoner to let you know that you're clear to visit.
4. Visits are held certain hours, of certain days, for certain letters of surnames. For example A-K names might be that morning (8AM-12PM), with L-Z prisoner last names that evening (1PM-5PM). And, you come early, because there's usually a line.
5. There is a search (you walk through a metal detector), and you can't bring anything into the prison. No phones! It's best women don't dress sexy, no boob action AT ALL, no tight clothes, semi-transparent, etc. No short skirts or dresses. No unnecessary jewelry, hair pins, no watches. No sun dress. Nothing sleeveless! Just ... dress conservatively. No purse. You are only allowed to bring a single key, no cash, etc. You can bring what cash you plan to load onto the "keyfab"



The keyfab is purchased here (for \$5 -- a one time buy, it's yours to keep), and you then load whatever amount you want on it. The keyfab's purpose is for use in the vending machines. There is a large selection of foods, snacks, and refreshments. But, they are along the lines of gas station store prices! So, along with your one key, you are allowed to carry in the keyfab (it's about the size of a key too). You also carry in your I.D. (loose, not in anything). They will stamp your hand, just like they do at a club (or bar), but you can't see it unless it's under a blacklight--it washes off later in the day. With the jewelry ... it's best not to wear ANY, except maybe your wedding ring(s). In fact, if you're married, you want that known--marriage gets a lot of respect.

6. Once a month (or so) actual meals are sold. A nice dinner, that you can purchase a ticket for on your way in. It's usually a meal consisting of: fish, french fries, 1 oz. of coleslaw, and lemonade. Each plate is \$10 ... and they're cooked homestyle. The proceeds from the sales go to the "officers' fund": used to help guards & staff in need (i.e., victims of recent floods, hurricane, etc., stuff like that).
7. It is not uncommon for a count to be called at a random time, and interfere with visitation hours. You may arrive to visit at 8AM to discover there is a count in progress, and you will have to wait until it clears--or leave and come back another day, if waiting isn't your preference.
8. If you come in, and say, forget you have your credit card on you, or your watch, whatever. You will be asked to walk it back to your vehicle--if this happens, comply without question, don't give them any lip about it, as they have the authority to turn you around, and deny you completely for that day. Leaving you to come back another day. This happened to one of my very close friends, Jennifer, who forgot about a gas station credit card in her back pocket--they made a big deal about it, and suspended her from visiting for a little while--she is now back on my approved visitation list, to see me when she wants. So, my advice to anyone, is **double check ALL** your pockets just to be safe.
9. Sometimes the prison goes on an unexpected "lock-down", and it will be up to the warden, or headquarters, about whether visits will take place.
10. During visit, loved ones get a hug, and a kiss--at the beginning, and end, of each visit. It's a large open room with tables and chairs--like a cafeteria--and photos can be made and purchased. There are card games and board games. All-in-all, it's well worth it. Visits are precious. Family and friends are priceless!