



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
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OUTSIDE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EVALUATIONS BY VIDEO
Standard Operating Procedure To
103 DOC 650, Mental Health Services

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I. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes guidelines outlining access to the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions, except for the Massachusetts Treatment Center and Bridgewater State Hospital. For purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure, the term “Evaluation” includes any of the services listed in [103 DOC 650.20 \(C\)](#) or for services as per [103 DOC 650.20 \(E\)](#). The Massachusetts Treatment Center and Bridgewater State Hospital have institution-specific procedures and nothing in this Standard Operating Procedure is intended to modify or otherwise change those procedures.

II. Cancellation

[103 DOC 650](#) cancels all previous Departmental policy statements, bulletins, directives, orders, notices, rules and/or regulations governing controls which are inconsistent with this policy.

III. Severability Clause

If any article, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of [103 DOC 650](#) is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, contrary to statute, in excess of the authority of the Commissioner or otherwise inoperative, such decision shall not affect the validity of any other article, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of [103 DOC 650](#).

IV. Request For Evaluation By Video

- A. Outside Mental Health Professionals shall follow the procedure specified in [103 DOC 650.20](#), On-Site Evaluations by Outside Qualified Mental Health Professionals, including the completion of the Request to Perform Outside Mental Health Services Form ([103 DOC 650, Mental Health Services](#), Attachment #13) and the Authorization to Release Sensitive Medical Information ([103 DOC 607, Inmate Medical Records](#), Attachment #2). The Outside Mental Health Professional shall also provide a copy of a valid license to provide services consistent with the discipline in which the professional is trained to practice.
- B. Outside Mental Health Professionals must request evaluation by Video as a special accommodation as specified in 650.20 (E), and this request must disclose why the evaluation must be done by Video as opposed to in-person at the correctional institution.
- C. Where the nature of the service to be rendered is for any other reason than those cited in Section 650.20 (C), the Outside Mental Health Professional shall follow the procedure specified in [103 DOC 650.20 \(F\)](#), and shall include the request for evaluation by Video as a special accommodation.
- D. If the Superintendent authorizes the special accommodation for evaluation by Video, the Superintendent's Office shall forward the authorization to the institution's point of contact and backup point of contact for Video Visits. The Superintendent's Office shall notify the Outside Mental Health Professional whether the requested special accommodation has been authorized or denied.

V. Scheduling And Procedures

- A. Authorized Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video shall only be conducted via authorized virtual meeting platforms.
- B. Each Department of Correction institution shall identify an institution point of contact (POC), and a backup POC, for Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video.
- C. Each institution will identify a secure area for the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video to occur.

- D. Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video will generally be made available between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., subject to the operational needs of the institution, and subject to the scheduling of other video conferences which shall take precedence, such as court and administrative proceedings, and Attorney Video Visits.
- E. At least one (1) business day in advance of the requested Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluation by Video, the Outside Mental Health Professional shall send an email to the institution's email account listed in the attached Point of Contact spreadsheet requesting to schedule an Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluation by Video with an incarcerated or civilly committed individual.
- F. The institution POC will retrieve the email and schedule all Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video.
- G. It will be the responsibility of the Outside Mental Health Professional to set up the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video Visit and to provide the institution POC with the Meeting ID Number and Password. If the Evaluation will be attended by a participant whose access is governed by [103 CMR 486, Attorney Access at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions](#), attorneys, paralegals, interpreters, and private investigators as are defined in this policy, the Outside Mental Health Professional shall disclose the names and titles of all participants. Only the Outside Mental Health Professional and participants specified in [103 CMR 486, Attorney Access at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions](#) are allowed to participate in an Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluation by Video.
- H. Fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluation by Video, the institutional POC will ensure that the pre-designated room and equipment is working and functional.
- I. All Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video shall be scheduled in one-hour blocks. Additional Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video may be requested but will be scheduled based on the operational needs of the institution or requests from others for such visits.

VI. Security Procedures

- A. All Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video will be monitored by security staff, in the same manner as contact attorney visits/attorney video visits.
- B. Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video may not be recorded by the Outside Mental Health Professional or any other participant. Screen shots may not be taken by the Outside Mental Health Professional or any other participant.

- C. Prior to the incarcerated or civilly committed individual entering the secure area, a clothed pat search shall be conducted by the officer monitoring the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video.
- D. The institution POC will establish video contact with the incarcerated or civilly committed individual and mental health professional. Once contact is established, the keyboard and wireless mouse will be removed from the secure room. The computer monitor and desk top computer are the only pieces of equipment that will remain in the room. At no time will the incarcerated or civilly committed individual be allowed to have access to the keyboard or mouse.
- E. The equipment must be positioned in the secure area in such a manner as to allow the officer monitoring the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video a clear line of sight to the incarcerated or civilly committed individual and the mental health professional on the monitor.
- F. Officers shall position themselves in such a manner that they maintain visual observation of the incarcerated or civilly committed individual and the mental health professional on the monitor. If more than one video visit of any kind is occurring simultaneously, assigned officer coverage shall be appropriate to ensure that the monitoring requirements of this SOP are met.
- G. Incarcerated or civilly committed individual and mental health professional privacy will be the same as if it were a contact visit. The door will remain closed, and correctional staff must maintain visual observation of the incarcerated or civilly committed individual and mental health professional on the monitor. Staff must remain vigilant in their observation skills during this process.
- H. At the conclusion of the Outside Mental Health Professional Evaluations by Video Visit, the incarcerated or civilly committed individual will be processed in the same manner as if it were a contact visit. Staff will conduct an unclothed search and the incarcerated or civilly committed individual will be returned to their unit.

VII. Responsible Staff

Reviewing Authority: Deputy Commissioner of Clinical Services and Reentry

Responsible Staff:

- Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Clinical Services
- Director of Behavioral Health

VIII. Access to Policy

Department's Central Policy File

Each Institution's Policy Files

Institution Library

IX. Information Sources

Legal Authority:

[M.G.L., c. 124, § 1 \(c\) and \(q\).](#)

[M.G.L. c.127, §16A](#)

Other Related Policies:

[103 CMR 486, Attorney Access at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions](#)

[103 DOC 607, Inmate Medical Records](#)

[103 DOC 650, Mental Health Services](#)

Applicability: All Staff

Attachments: None