

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)
TO 103 DOC 751, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY**

PURPOSE: This standard operating procedure (SOP) establishes guidelines for conducting official Department business utilizing Virtual Meeting Platforms (VMP) for Department of Correction staff members, contractors, vendors and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS:

Virtual Meeting Platform (VMP): A real time interaction tool that takes place over the internet using integrated audio and video, chat tools and application sharing.

SECTION I: APPLICABILITY

This SOP shall apply to all VMP on which Department employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers, and inmates appear, including but not limited to appearances that individuals make while acting in an official capacity from a remote location.

SECTION II: ALLOWABLE UTILIZATION OF VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORMS

- A. The Commissioner has approved utilization of a VMP for the following:
1. Meetings between Department of Correction staff including but not limited to approved contractors, vendors, and volunteers.
 2. Trainings for Department of Correction staff including but not limited to approved contractors, vendors, and volunteers.
 3. Communication between Departmental staff and inmates housed within other jurisdictions (i.e. County, Federal Interstate inmates.)
 4. Communication between attorneys and inmates as outlined in the SOP to 103 CMR 486, *Attorney Access at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions*.
 5. Communication between inmates and outside mental health professionals as outlined in the SOP to 103 DOC 650, *Mental Health Services*.
 6. Communication between inmates and employees of other state agencies including but not limited to Parole, Probation and Department of Children and Families.

7. Communication between inmates and approved contractors, vendors and volunteers.
 8. Reentry Community Outreach – A laptop will be issued to the Director of Treatment specifically for this purpose only.
- B. In circumstances, not outlined above, where a staff member determines the utilization of a VMP is necessary to complete essential duties, the following procedures shall be completed. Approval must occur prior to implementing any VMP.
1. The staff member initiating the VMP shall submit a request (Attachment #1) to the Superintendent/Division Head.
 2. The request shall outline why the VMP is necessary, the names of all participants, and the frequency with which the VMP will be utilized. The initiating staff member should include any other information which may be relevant to the Superintendent/Division Head’s decision-making process.
 3. Once approved, the VMP shall only be utilized for the reason that was requested and approved.
- C. Laptops and/or computer equipment provided by the Reentry Services Division shall only be utilized with the approval of the Reentry Specialist and for the sole purpose of reentry initiatives.

SECTION III: RULES FOR EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, VENDORS AND VOLUNTEERS UTILIZING VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORMS

- A. VMPs shall only be utilized when necessary and with the least amount of participants needed to accomplish the goal of the meeting.
- B. The host of the meeting shall ensure that the meeting has been “ended for all” prior to logging out.
- C. VMP Participants shall be dressed appropriately for meetings between Departmental staff including but not limited to contractors, vendors and volunteers (i.e. Departmental issued uniform, visitor dress code outlined in 103 CMR 483, *Visiting Procedures Attachment #6*, 103 DOC 224, *Uniforms* and 103 DOC 225, *Professional Boundaries Policy*).
- D. VMP Participants both inside and outside of Department property shall be aware of their surroundings and ensure the meeting is being conducted in an area with as much privacy as possible due to the sensitive nature of the

material that could be discussed.

- E. VMP Participants shall be aware of the physical surroundings from which they are participating and ensure that no offensive or inflammatory items are within view of other VMP Participants.
- F. VMP Participants shall not record or otherwise photograph screens during meetings.
- G. A passcode must be utilized to participate in the meeting.

SECTION IV: RULES FOR COMMUNICATION WITH INMATES UTILIZING A VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORM

- A. When communicating with inmates via a VMP, Departmental staff, contractors, vendors, and volunteers shall dress in the same attire (i.e. Departmental issued uniform, visitor dress code outlined in 103 CMR 483, *Visiting Procedures Attachment #6*, 103 DOC 224, *Uniforms* and 103 DOC 225, *Professional Boundaries Policy*) that would be required for entrance into a Department institution.
- B. All institutions shall identify a point of contact (POC) who is responsible for scheduling meetings via a VMP with inmates.
- C. When inmates are participating in a meeting via a VMP the following security measures shall be adhered to. Meetings between an inmate and an attorney or an inmate and an outside mental health professional shall be conducted in accordance with the SOP to 103 CMR 486, *Attorney Access at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions* and 103 DOC 650, *Mental Health Services*, respectively.
 - 1. All VMP meetings will be monitored by a Department staff member as determined by the Superintendent/designee.
 - 2. Prior to the inmate entering the secure VMP area, a fully clothed (personal) search shall be conducted by a security staff member.
 - 3. The institution POC will establish video contact with the inmate and the meeting participants. Once contact is established, the keyboard and mouse shall be removed from the secure room.
 - 4. The computer monitor and desktop computer are the only pieces of equipment that will remain in the secure room. At no time will the inmate be allowed to have access to the keyboard or mouse. If a laptop is being utilized, a piece of plexiglass shall be secured over the keyboard and touchpad to ensure that the inmate does not have

access to either device.

5. The equipment must be positioned in the secure area in such a manner as to allow the staff monitoring the VMP meeting a clear line of sight to the inmate and the participants on the monitor.
6. Staff shall position themselves in such a manner that they maintain visual observation of the inmate and the VMP participants on the monitor. If more than one (1) meeting is occurring simultaneously, assigned staff coverage shall be appropriate to ensure that the monitoring requirements of this SOP are met.
7. The privacy of the VMP meeting will be the same as if it were a contact visit. Staff must remain vigilant in their observation skills during this process.
8. At the conclusion of the VMP meeting, security staff will conduct a fully clothed (personal) search and the inmate will be returned to their unit.

SECTION IV: VMP ETIQUETTE

- A. VMP Participants shall ensure that they are on time for a scheduled VMP meeting. Additionally, when an inmate is scheduled for a VMP meeting the supervising staff member shall ensure that, at least five (5) minutes prior to the meeting, the equipment is functioning, and the inmate is in the designated secure area.
- B. When participating in a VMP meeting, participants should be on camera. Still photos or blank screens shall not be utilized.
- C. Staff shall ensure that background distractions are kept to a minimum while participating in a VMP meeting.
- D. Inmate VMP Participants shall adhere to all applicable Department rules and regulations and policies while participating in a VMP meeting and may be subject to discipline in accordance with 103 CMR 430, *Inmate Discipline*, or 103 CMR 431, *Observation of Behavior Reports*, as appropriate, for violations of Department rules, regulations or policies while participating in VMP meetings.
- E. Staff VMP Participants shall adhere to all applicable Department rules, regulations, and policies, while participating in a VMP meeting, and may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for violations of Department rules, regulations, or policies during a VMP.

VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORM REQUEST

To: _____
Superintendent/Division Head

From: _____

I am requesting to utilize a virtual meeting platform for the following purpose:

This meeting will include the following individuals:

This meeting will commence _____ and will conclude on _____

This meeting will occur at the following frequency: _____

If approved, this virtual meeting platform approval will only be utilized for the reasons outlined above, include only the outlined individuals, and occur only at the times identified.

Requesting Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____ Denied: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Superintendent/Division Head