MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS **POLICY DIRECTIVE**	EFFECTIVE DATE 08/24/2026	NUMBER 05.03.118
SUBJECT PRISONER MAIL	SUPERSEDES 05.03.118 (02/09/2026)	
	AUTHORITY MCL 791.203; MCL 800.43; 39 USCA section 3403-3404; Administrative Rules 791.6603, 791.6605	
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POLICY STATEMENT:

Mail to and from prisoners in a correctional facility shall be processed as set forth in this policy.

RELATED POLICIES:

04.02.105	Prisoner Funds
04.02.120	Indigent Prisoners
04.07.112	Prisoner Personal Property
05.03.119	Electronic Messages (e-mail)
05.03.121	Prisoner-to-Prisoner Mail

STATEWIDE OPERATING PROCEDURES:

05.03.118	Expedited Prisoner Legal Mail and Court Filing Fees Process
05.03.118A	Handling Prisoner Incoming Mail
05.03.118B	Restricted Publication List

POLICY:

DEFINITION

A. Mail - Any written, typed, or printed communication of information, including magazines, catalogs, books, and photographs. Electronic messages (e-mail) shall be handled as set forth in PD 05.03.119 "Electronic Messages (e-mail)."

GENERAL INFORMATION

B. When in conflict with this policy, PD 05.01.142 "Special Alternative Incarceration Program" controls for prisoners in the Special Alternative Incarceration Program (SAI).

C. Mail addressed to staff members shall be searched for contraband by Mail Room staff before delivery. However, if the mail is addressed to Human Resources staff, Mail Room staff shall open the mail in the presence of a Human Resources staff member and search it for physical contraband. Mail Room staff shall not read or skim mail that is addressed to Human Resources staff.

D. Prisoners shall be permitted to send and receive uncensored mail to or from any person or organization unless the mail violates this policy or Administrative Rule 791.6603. Mail shall not be prohibited solely because its content is religious, philosophical, political, social, sexual, unpopular, or repugnant. Prohibited incoming mail shall be rejected as set forth in the rejected mail portion of this policy.

E. Prior to rejecting mail for violation of this policy, the prisoner is entitled to a fact-finding hearing conducted pursuant to Administrative Rule 791.3310 unless otherwise specifically stated in this policy.

F. The Inspector, or other individual as determined by the Warden, shall be notified if mail addressed to or sent by a prisoner contains a controlled substance or evidence of any illegal activity. Law enforcement shall be contacted by the Inspector, or other individual as determined by the Warden. Upon request of a law enforcement official and approval of the Warden, notices required to be issued and hearings required to be conducted pursuant to this policy may be delayed for a reasonable length of time to allow for a criminal investigation.

G. An item other than funds that is received through the mail that is alleged to be contraband but does not meet the definition of "mail" pursuant to this policy, shall be treated as property and processed as set forth in PD 04.07.112 "Prisoner Personal Property." However, if a prisoner receives a single stamped self-addressed #10 white business envelope or business reply card/envelope that is sent in the mail from an attorney, a court, or a legitimate religious organization they shall be provided with a photocopy of any portion of the envelope bearing writing, and facility staff shall issue a substantially similar white business envelope with matching metered postage. The prisoner and Prisoner Benefit Fund (PBF) shall not be charged for the replacement envelope, and the original envelope will be shredded. Additionally, free promotional items (e.g., compact discs; make-up samples) that are not authorized property pursuant to PD 04.07.112 that are attached to a publication, and fasteners holding mail together, may be removed and discarded upon receipt by the facility without notice to the prisoner if the item can be easily removed without risk of damage to the publication. If a fastener is removed that was holding mail together, the mail shall be securely sealed prior to delivery to the prisoner. Funds received through the mail shall be processed as set forth in PD 04.02.105 "Prisoner Funds."

Note: If an attorney, court, or a legitimate religious organization sends in an envelope that is not a #10 white business envelope, the prisoner shall still receive a photocopy of any portion of the envelope bearing writing, but facility staff shall only issue a white business envelope with first class postage.

WRITING MATERIALS AND POSTAGE

H. Each correctional facility shall have available a reasonable quantity of free writing materials for use by prisoners, i.e., graphite pencils or blue/black ink pens; white paper (for example, multipurpose "copy" paper). Paper provided free to a prisoner does not need to be lined or of typing quality. Funds to purchase standard-size envelopes (e.g., 3 5/8" x 6 1/2"; 4 1/8" x 9 1/2") shall be loaned to prisoners eligible to receive a postage loan under this section if the prisoner does not have, or does not have the funds to purchase, an envelope.

I. Additional writing materials, including typing paper for legal work, carbon paper, envelopes, and postage shall be available for prisoner purchase in correctional facilities as set forth in PD 04.02.130 "Prisoner Store." Funds to purchase a reasonable quantity of carbon paper and to purchase over-sized envelopes of a sufficient size to mail legal materials (e.g., 10" x 15"; 15" x 20") to a court, an attorney, or a party to a lawsuit due to pending litigation shall be loaned to a prisoner who lacks sufficient funds to purchase such items in the prisoner store. The prisoner must provide proof that the items are for litigation purposes. The funds shall be loaned by the PBF. The cost of envelopes and carbon paper provided shall be considered an institutional debt and collected as set forth in PD 04.02.105 "Prisoner Funds." Funds collected to repay a loan from a PBF shall be returned to that PBF.

J. A prisoner on indigent status pursuant to PD 04.02.120 "Indigent Prisoners" shall be loaned funds for postage as set forth in that policy.

K. Blind or other disabled prisoners may be eligible to send mail free of postage in accordance with 39 USCA Section 3403 or 3404.

L. Funds for additional first-class postage shall be loaned to prisoners who lack sufficient funds to send mail to a court, an attorney, or a party to a lawsuit due to pending litigation. The cost of certified mail shall be loaned only if the prisoner is required by court order to use certified mail (e.g., an order denying the prisoner's motion for substituted service by first-class mail). Postage shall be loaned to prisoners on indigent status pursuant to this paragraph only after the prisoner has used all postage available pursuant to Paragraph J.

M. Funds for additional first-class postage shall also be loaned to prisoners who lack sufficient funds to mail a grievance or a Class II and Class III Misconduct Appeal (CSJ-274) to another facility or to mail a Step III grievance or a Request for Rehearing to Central Office. Funds shall be loaned for these purposes only if there is not a Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB) interdepartmental mail run available and the mail must be posted before the prisoner will receive postage pursuant to Paragraph J.

N. A prisoner requesting a postage loan pursuant to Paragraph L or M may be required to present the mail unsealed to staff to verify that it qualifies for the loan. In such cases, staff shall read only those sections of

the mail that are necessary to make this determination. The mail shall not be read in its entirety. The cost of any postage or envelopes loaned to the prisoner shall be borne by the PBF. Any funds loaned for postage or envelopes shall be treated as an institutional debt and collected as set forth in PD 04.02.105 "Prisoner Funds." Funds collected to repay a loan from a PBF shall be returned to that PBF.

O. Prisoners shall not be loaned postage for any reason other than as set forth above.

PRISONER OUTGOING MAIL

P. Prisoners are advised that once mail leaves a facility it will not be permitted back inside. This includes any original documents contained within incoming mail requiring special handling. The Department shall not make exceptions to the photocopying processes for incoming mail under **any** circumstances, including mail requiring special handling. **Prisoners must retain any original documents they require, because originals sent out will not be returned and will not be exempted from the photocopying requirement upon reentry.**

Q. Any document that a prisoner wants to preserve in its original form shall be photocopied prior to mailing. Prisoners on indigent status who lack funds to make necessary photocopies before mailing may request a loan for photocopying services in accordance with PD 05.03.116 "Prisoners' Access to the Courts." Loans shall be granted solely for photocopying materials that are being sent to an entity that is qualified to send special handling mail as set forth in Paragraph JJ and are subject to repayment. Loans shall not be approved for photocopies of personal documents.

R. Each facility shall offer prisoners outgoing mail service through the U.S. Postal Service. The facility may also offer outgoing mail service for oversize or overweight mail, including packages, through a legitimate alternate carrier. Except as set forth in Paragraphs J through N, prisoners shall be required to pay the cost of postage for any mail service used.

S. A prisoner shall be permitted to send certified and international mail, and mail that weighs more than one ounce, via disbursement. Mail that a prisoner is sending via disbursement that is clearly identified as being to a court, an attorney, or a party to a lawsuit due to pending litigation, including the initial filing and service of a lawsuit, shall be processed as soon as possible. This includes mail being sent via disbursement to a court, an attorney, or a party to a lawsuit pursuant to Paragraph J or L. An expedited legal mail process for such mail shall be established by the CFA Deputy Director. The expedited legal mail process also shall be available to prisoners to send mail to a court or court reporter to request a transcript of the prisoner's court proceeding and to legal service organizations (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union, State Appellate Defender Office, Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System). The prisoner may be required to present the mail unsealed to staff to verify that it qualifies for expedited legal mail handling. In such cases, staff shall read only those sections of the mail that are necessary to make this determination. The mail shall not be read in its entirety. If it is determined that mail does not qualify for expedited handling, it shall be returned to the prisoner.

T. Prisoners may use DTMB interdepartmental mail runs, in facilities where such service is available, to send postage-free mail to staff in other facilities serviced by interdepartmental mail runs and to Central Office. DTMB interdepartmental mail runs shall not be used by prisoners for any other purpose. Mail designated for delivery through a DTMB interdepartmental mail run in violation of this policy shall be returned to the prisoner consistent with Paragraph Z and not processed for mailing. Any mail received at facility via a DTMB interdepartmental that is addressed to a prisoner shall be photocopied and processed as set forth in Paragraph HH.

U. There is no limit on the amount of outgoing mail a prisoner may send, except that prisoners are allowed to purchase and possess envelopes only in the quantities set forth in PD 04.07.112 "Prisoner Personal Property" and PD 04.02.130 "Prisoner Store." Outgoing mail must contain the prisoner's first and last name and prisoner number, and the name and address of the facility at which the prisoner is housed as the return address on the envelope. If the mail does not contain this information, the mail shall be returned to the prisoner to be corrected. However, mail that does not contain at least the prisoner's name and number may be destroyed.

V. Outgoing mail of prisoners in segregation shall not be sealed and shall be inspected by staff prior to mailing. However, mail that is clearly identified as being sent to the business address of one of the following may be

sealed by the prisoner and shall not be opened or otherwise inspected by staff prior to mailing unless the entity has specifically objected in writing to receiving mail from the prisoner sending the mail, and subject to Administrative Rule 791.6603(5) and Paragraphs N, S, and Z:

1. A licensed attorney, including the Attorney General, an assistant attorney general, a prosecuting attorney, and an attorney of a legitimate legal service organization (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union, State Appellate Defender Office, Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System).

   Note: If staff are unsure if the mail is being sent to a legitimate legal service organization, they may contact the CFA Deputy Director or designee in consultation with the Bureau of Legal Affairs Director.

2. State or federal courts.

3. Federal, state, or local public officials.

4. The Director or any other Central Office staff.

5. Staff at the facility in which the prisoner is segregated.

6. Representatives of the news media, being persons who are primarily employed to gather or report news for any of the following:

   a. A newspaper of general circulation in the community in which it publishes;

   b. A magazine of statewide or national circulation that is sold at newsstands or by mail to the general public;

   c. A radio or television station that is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission.

7. The Office of the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman.

8. A Consulate or Embassy.

9. Disability Rights Michigan (DRM)

10. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR).

11. Just Detention International (JDI)/Victim Advocacy.

W. General population prisoners shall be permitted to send sealed mail, subject to Administrative Rule 791.6603(5) and Paragraphs N, S, and T. However, outgoing mail may be opened and inspected if it is determined by the Warden or designee that there are reasonable grounds to believe the mail is being sent in violation of Administrative Rule 791.6603(5). However, mail that is clearly identified as being sent to the business address of one of the following may be sealed by the prisoner and shall not be opened or otherwise inspected by staff prior to mailing, unless the entity has specifically objected in writing to receiving mail from the prisoner sending the mail or as required pursuant to Paragraphs N, S, or Z:

1. A licensed attorney; this includes the Attorney General, an assistant attorney general, a prosecuting attorney, and an attorney of a legitimate legal service organization (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union, State Appellate Defender Office, Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System).

   Note: If staff are unsure if the mail is being sent to a legitimate legal service organization, they may contact the CFA Deputy Director or designee in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs Administrator.

2. State or federal courts.

3. Federal, state, or local public officials.

4. The Director or any other Central Office staff.

5. Staff at the facility in which the prisoner is housed.

6. The Office of the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman.

7. A Consulate or Embassy.

8. Disability Rights Michigan (DRM).

9. Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR).

10. Just Detention International (JDI)/Victim Advocacy.

X. A prisoner is prohibited from sending mail addressed to anyone who has objected to receiving mail from the prisoner. This only applies after the prisoner has been notified of the objection. A prisoner who continues to send mail to a person who has objected to receiving mail from that prisoner after receiving notice of the objection may be subject to discipline in accordance with PD 03.03.105 "Prisoner Discipline."

Y. Except as set forth in Paragraph F, if it is determined that a prisoner's outgoing mail may violate Administrative Rule 791.6603(5) and that the mail therefore will not be sent, the prisoner shall be issued a Notice of Intent to Conduct an Administrative Hearing (CSJ-282) and a hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Administrative Rule 791.3310. The hearings officer shall not be the person who issued the notice. If a violation is established at the hearing, and the mail appears to be in violation of state or federal law, the Emergency Management and Special Operations Administrator or designee shall be notified, and the mail shall be turned over to the facility Inspector. The Inspector, in consultation with the Emergency Management and Special Operations Administrator or designee, shall determine if the mail needs to be turned over to law enforcement authorities.

Z. If it is determined that a prisoner's outgoing mail cannot be processed due to insufficient postage, failure of the prisoner to sign a disbursement authorization, mail returned as undeliverable, or other reason unrelated to the content of the mail, the mail shall be treated as incoming mail. Legal mail and mail to an Embassy or Consulate that cannot be processed for any of these reasons shall receive special handling as outlined in Paragraphs NN through PP of this policy prior to its return to the prisoner.

PRISONER INCOMING MAIL

AA. Staff shall only accept mail that has been delivered from a legitimate commercial carrier (e.g., U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service) or through DTMB interdepartmental mail runs as provided for in this policy. Staff shall not accept mail for prisoners left at the facility by members of the public, including prisoner family members and visitors, except that attorneys may be permitted to deliver legal mail to prisoners pursuant to standards issued by the CFA Deputy Director.

BB. Prisoners shall not be permitted to receive mail identified as being sent "marketing mail," "bulk rate," or "pre-sorted standard," as indicated by the U.S. Postal Service marking, unless it was sent from a federal or state agency or a court, is a catalog allowed pursuant to Paragraph CC, is a publication received from the publisher or an authorized vendor pursuant to Paragraph DD, or is correspondence course material approved pursuant to PD 05.02.119 "Post- Secondary Education Programs." All other mail identified by the U.S. Postal Service marking as being sent "marketing mail," "bulk rate," or "pre-sorted standard" may be discarded upon receipt by the facility without notice to the prisoner.

CC. Prisoners shall be permitted to receive books, magazines, and other publications only if:

1. The book (soft cover only), magazine, or other publication is ordered by a member of the public from an internet vendor identified in Attachment A or from the publisher and sent directly to the prisoner by the vendor or publisher,

2. The book (soft cover only), magazine, or other publication is ordered by the prisoner from a vendor identified in Attachment B or from the publisher and sent directly to the prisoner from the vendor or

the publisher, or

3. The prisoner is approved to take a correspondence course pursuant to PD 05.02.119 "Post-Secondary Education Programs," and the publication is sent directly from the approved correspondence school.

4. The publication is a government publication sent from the United States Congress and/or the Michigan Legislature.

All prisoner orders must be through established facility ordering procedures. Under no circumstances shall prisoners in a correctional facility be permitted to order a publication from an internet vendor.

DD. Prisoners shall not be permitted to receive retail or wholesale catalogs through the mail, except that a prisoner who is permitted to possess a catalog pursuant to PD 04.07.112 "Prisoner Personal Property" may receive a catalog sent directly from a vendor approved at that facility as a source of allowable prisoner personal property. Unauthorized catalogs may be discarded upon receipt by the facility without notice to the prisoner.

EE. Unless transmitted by or on behalf of the Department, mail received by staff for a prisoner via facsimile machine or e-mail may be destroyed upon receipt instead of being delivered to the prisoner, unless it is clear from the mail that it conveys emergency information (e.g., imminent death of family member) and the Warden authorizes delivery. If the mail is not delivered and the sender's address is sufficiently identified in the transmittal, the sender shall be notified by mail that the mail received via facsimile was not delivered due to the method of transmission. Subsequent transmittals by the same sender may be destroyed without notification to the sender.

FF. All incoming mail for prisoners must be clearly identified with the recipient's name and prisoner number to ensure proper delivery. Incoming mail that does not clearly identify the recipient may receive delayed processing or, if the recipient cannot be adequately identified, may be returned to the sender.

GG. All incoming mail that does <u>not</u> receive special handling pursuant to Paragraphs NN through PP shall be opened in one location at each facility and inspected at that location to determine if it contains money, controlled substances, or other physical contraband. All physical contraband shall be confiscated prior to delivery of the mail to the prisoner. The mail's written content also shall be skimmed, and if it appears from skimming the content that the mail may violate this policy, the item shall be read to determine if it is allowed.

HH. Any incoming mail that does not require special handling, including photographs and interdepartmental mail sent to a prisoner, that staff determine a prisoner may receive shall be photocopied and the photocopies placed in an envelope provided by the Department. After the mail has been photocopied, mail room staff shall ensure all of the pages are accounted for and each photocopied page is clear and legible. Prisoners shall notify staff immediately if the mail they received is not legible or they believe it to be incomplete. Staff shall then review the mail to confirm that the mail the prisoner received is clear, legible, and complete. Staff shall only photocopy the mail again if the mail is unclear, illegible, or incomplete. The front of the envelope the mail came in shall also be photocopied and placed in the envelope, so the prisoner has the return address of the sender.

II. After the original mail and envelope has been photocopied, it shall be retained for 14 calendar days. After 14 calendar days, the original mail and original envelope shall be placed in a locked bin for shredding or immediately shredded by staff if the locked bin is unavailable. Original vital documents that are mailed to a facility shall not be shredded and shall be forwarded to the Records Office. Original photographs that are mailed to a prisoner may be returned to the sender at the prisoner's expense after they are photocopied. Funds shall not be loaned for this purpose. The prisoner shall notify mail room staff within 14 calendar days of receipt of the photograph if they want to return the original photograph to the sender. Mail room staff shall process incoming publications (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers) in accordance with this policy directive. Receipts from publication purchases shall be photocopied, and the prisoner shall only receive the photocopied receipt. The original receipt shall be shredded in the same manner as other original mail.

MAIL REQUIRING SPECIAL HANDLING

JJ. Special handling mail includes two categories of sensitive correspondence that requires additional verification and handling:

a. Legal mail: Correspondence sent by a prisoner's attorney or the attorney's representative that includes attorney-client communications or other private legal materials. Only mail received directly from a licensed attorney or their representative is considered legal mail, and only if the mail is clearly identified on the face of the envelope as being from a licensed attorney. It is not sufficient for the envelope to be simply marked "legal mail."

b. Confidential mail: Correspondence designated by one of the following entities or their employees as containing confidential, personal, or privileged mail that does not qualify as attorney-client protected mail but warrants special handling:

- A legitimate legal services organization,
- Department of Attorney General,
- A prosecuting attorney's office,
- A court or clerk of the court,
- A Friend of the Court office,
- Office of the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman,
- A Consulate or Embassy,
- Disability Rights Michigan (DRM)
- Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR),
- Just Detention International (JDI)/Victim Advocacy

Verification of Mail Requiring Special Handling Through TextBehind

KK. TextBehind is an end-to-end verification system to ensure special handling mail is sent from legitimate and verified sources and to help eliminate contraband from incoming mail. TextBehind will ensure all special handling mail is sent from legitimate and verified sources.

LL. To receive special handing, mail requires the use of TextBehind as follows:

a. Legal mail: All attorneys and their representatives must be registered and verified through TextBehind and include a QR code on all envelopes containing legal mail. All legal mail must prominently display a QR code issued by TextBehind. MDOC Mail Room staff shall verify the QR code against the registered sender by scanning or if necessary, by inputting QR code information into the TextBehind platform. To avoid inadvertently breaching any attorney-client privilege, any legal mail without a valid QR code or that contains a QR code that cannot be confirmed as valid, shall be returned to the sender unopened.

b. Confidential mail: Any entity identified in Paragraph JJ(b) that wants confidential mail to receive special handling must be registered and verified through TextBehind. This designation is made **by the sender**. All confidential mail designated by the sender to receive special handling must prominently display a valid QR code issued by TextBehind. Staff shall verify the QR code by scanning or if necessary, by inputting QR code information into the TextBehind platform. If a QR code cannot be confirmed as valid, then the confidential mail shall be returned to the sender unopened to preserve confidentiality. Confidential mail that does not contain a QR code will be processed as regular mail.

MM. To obtain a TextBehind QR code at no cost, senders of legal or confidential mail must register for an account and follow all instructions on the TextBehind website, https://docs.textbehind.com.

Processing Mail Requiring Special Handling

NN. Incoming mail receiving special handling shall be opened and inspected for money, controlled substances, publications, and other physical contraband in the prisoner's presence. The contents, excluding publications, but including the envelope, shall be photocopied in the prisoner's presence using a machine that does not retain data or digital information. After photocopying, staff shall ensure all of the pages are accounted for and each photocopied page is clear, legible, complete, and properly duplicated. If any page is

missing or illegible, it must be recopied before proceeding. **The content of the mail shall not be read or skimmed.** After confirming the photocopies are clear, legible and complete, the original documents shall be shredded immediately in the presence of the prisoner. The prisoner shall then receive all photocopied documents. Staff shall complete the Legal and Confidential Mail Processing Acknowledgement Form (CSJ-991) for each piece of legal or confidential mail. If the prisoner refuses to physically accept the mail after it has been opened, the mail shall be shredded in prisoner's presence.

NOTE: Facilities shall use shredders that meet or exceed the following minimum standards for destruction of legal mail after photocopying: destroy paper using crosscut shredders that produce particles that are 1 mm x 5 mm (0.04 inch x 0.2 inch) in size or smaller, or pulverize/disintegrate paper materials using disintegrator devices equipped with a 3/32 inch (2.4 mm) security screen.

OO. All physical contraband shall be confiscated, and non-contraband mail shall be delivered to the prisoner in accordance with this policy. If the mail includes a publication sent by the publisher, it shall be searched consistent with other publications under this policy and delivered in it's original format, not photocopies. Any other documents sent subject to special handling with a publication shall be handled according to Paragraph NN. If a prisoner receives mail that requires special handling but chooses not to come to the designated area in the facility to have the mail processed in their presence, the mail shall be returned to the sender unopened.

PP. The mailroom shall maintain a log to document the facility's receipt of all incoming mail receiving special handling, including mail that is returned to the sender. The log shall include the date the mail was received in the mailroom, the sender's name and the prisoner's name and number. This log is in addition to the Legal and Confidential Mail Processing Acknowledgment Form (CSJ-991) mentioned in Paragraph NN.

PROHIBITED INCOMING MAIL

QQ. Prisoners are prohibited from receiving mail that may pose a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the facility, facilitate or encourage criminal activity, or interfere with the rehabilitation of the prisoner. The following pose such risks under all circumstances and therefore shall be rejected:

1. Mail containing specific information regarding the manufacture, or operation of electronic security systems, weapons, explosives, ammunition, or incendiary devices.

2. Mail including procedures for manufacturing: poisons, alcohol, or controlled substances.

3. Mail violating, advocating, or promoting the violation of state or federal laws, or providing instruction on how to violate state or federal laws. This includes mail advocating or promoting the filing of a false or fraudulent Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) financing statement in violation of MCL 440.9501, mail encouraging or providing instruction for filing fraudulent state or federal forms, or mail with information on how to set up a fraudulent business enterprise.

4. Mail advocating or promoting violence, group disruption, or insurrection.

5. Mail describing or depicting acts of sadism, masochism, bondage, necrophilia, or bestiality, or describing, depicting, or appearing to promote sexual acts involving children. This does not include small advertisements in a publication sent directly from the publisher or an authorized vendor except if the advertisement depicts or appears to promote sexual acts involving children.

6. Mail advocating racial supremacy or ethnic purity or attacking a racial or ethnic group that is reasonably likely to promote or cause violence or group disruption in the facility.

7. Mail providing detailed instruction in the martial arts, such as judo, karate, aikido, kendu, kung fu, and similar techniques. This does not include non-combative martial arts such as tai chi.

8. Subject to Paragraph BB, a book, magazine, newspaper, or other publication that is not received directly from the publisher, an Internet vendor identified on Attachment A, a vendor identified on Attachment B, or, if the prisoner is approved to take a correspondence course pursuant to PD 05.02.119 "Post-Secondary Education Programs," directly from the approved correspondence school. This does not apply to an article or a few pages, or copies of a few pages, from a

publication that may be included with a letter or other mail, unless it is reasonably believed to be an attempt to circumvent this restriction. Retail and wholesale catalogs are specifically addressed in Paragraph DD. Hard cover books received after February 9, 2026 are prohibited.

9. A used publication.

10. A publication received on a credit basis (e.g., from a book club). This does not apply if the publication is completely pre-paid and receipt does not obligate the prisoner to make future credit purchases.

11. Mail containing a provocative or scurrilous attack on any religion or religious group. This does not include a thoughtful and rational discussion of religious beliefs or differences between religions.

12. Nude photographs (including drawings and images), except if included in a publication sent directly from the publisher or an authorized vendor. Nude photographs are defined as any photograph exposing the buttocks (including photographs of an individual wearing a thong with the buttocks visible), pubic area or genitalia, or, except if a baby or infant, the female breast below the top of the areola. This includes exposure through "see through" materials.

13. Photographs (including drawings and images) depicting actual or simulated sexual acts by one or more persons. This includes photographs in a publication sent directly from the publisher or a vendor authorized by the facility.

14. Official photographs of a victim at a crime scene or depicting injuries to a victim sustained as a result of a crime that were taken for purposes of criminal investigation or prosecution. This includes photographs of the autopsy of a victim.

15. Mail depicting, encouraging, or describing methods of escape from a correctional facility. This includes blueprints, drawings, or similarly detailed descriptions of correctional facilities, courthouses and medical care facilities, and detailed roadmaps of Michigan, any state contiguous to Michigan, or the Province of Ontario, Canada.

16. Mail written in code, or in a foreign language that cannot be screened by facility staff to the extent necessary to conduct an effective search. However, correspondence written in a foreign language shall be processed as set forth in Paragraphs XX through ZZ of this policy. This does not include dictionaries, language learning publications, and grammar/phrase books written in either a foreign language, American Sign Language (ASL), or braille.

17. Mail that is known to contain personal information about an employee or an employee's family, unless it is sent by the employee and the employee is related to the prisoner by blood or marriage or is provided with the approval of the Administrator of the Office of Legal Affairs or designee regarding pending litigation. This includes personal information published in newspapers.

18. Mail for the purpose of operating a business enterprise while within the facility. This does not apply to mail regarding the operation of a business enterprise after release.

19. Mail that is restricted or prohibited under a court order (e.g., personal protection order).

20. Mail violating postal regulations.

21. Mail containing threats.

22. Voluminous mail (i.e., greater than 12 single sided pages in legible font, which is the equivalent of a two-ounce first class postage stamp) or any mail that is too large to photocopy. This does not include legal or confidential mail, mail from a State Department or organization contracted through a State Department conducting official business with the prisoner, or mail from a legitimate educational or legitimate religious organization.

23. Mail depicting gang signs or gang activity in accordance with Paragraph SS.

24. Mail containing specific information regarding the manufacture, or operation of electronic security systems, weapons, explosives, or incendiary devices. However, mail shall not be rejected simply because it shows a photo of a gun or other weapon.

RR. Publications with any of the following substances that prevent an effective search shall be rejected:

1. Publications that have pages with tape, paste, or that joined or fastened together.

2. Publications that have crayon, non-graphite pencil, highlighter, or other markers on the pages.

3. Publications that have glitter, lipstick marks, unusual stains, body fluids, perfumes, oils, or other foreign or unknown substance on the pages.

4. Publications with stamps, stickers, labels, or anything affixed to the pages with an adhesive.

SS. Mail depicting a sign or symbol of a security threat group designated pursuant to PD 04.04.113 “Security Threat Groups” shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in order to determine if the sign or symbol is believed to pose a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the facility, facilitate or encourage criminal activity, or interfere with the rehabilitation of the prisoner.

TT. Prisoners are prohibited from receiving photo collages through the mail.

UU. Coloring books/pages are permitted as long as the book/page does not contain written content that violates Paragraph QQ.

VV. If any written material, picture, or photograph contained within a publication is believed to be in violation of this policy, the entire publication shall be rejected. However, if the written material, picture or photograph is in a portion of a newspaper that is not stapled or otherwise affixed to the rest of the newspaper, only that portion of the section (i.e., only the page that the written material, picture, or photograph is on and any connected pages) shall be removed and rejected. The rest of the newspaper shall be delivered to the prisoner.

NOTE: Only full pages containing prohibited content and the connected pages may be removed. Prohibited articles shall not be torn or cut out of the newspaper.

<u>CORRESPONDENCE WRITTEN IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OR BRAILLE</u>

WW. Incoming correspondence mailed to a prisoner that is written in braille shall be processed as a foreign language as set forth in Paragraphs YY - ZZ If it is determined that the content of the mail does not violate this policy directive. If a blind prisoner requires mail to be written in Braille, they may contact the Worksite Offender ADA Coordinator and request a Special Accommodation Notice (SAN) to possess mail that is written in Braille on heavy weight paper. the prisoner requiring braille shall be allowed to possess the mail if they have a SAN. Learning material for Braille may be ordered and possessed in accordance with Attachment B “Authorized Vendors for Prisoner Purchases of Publications.”

XX. Incoming correspondence mailed to a prisoner that is written in a foreign language shall not be interpreted or translated by Department staff or prisoners.

YY. Wardens must retain the services of one or more vendors to provide an English summary of the content of correspondence received by prisoners that is written in a foreign language and, if necessary, a detailed English translation. The summarization and translation services shall be retained via a purchase order within the facility’s delegated authority. These services shall be provided in a prompt manner but not to incur overtime charges for expedited services. Summarization and translations are not required for electronic messages forwarded through the Department’s contracted vendor. The use of the vendor shall be at the Department’s expense.

ZZ. If correspondence addressed to a prisoner is written in a foreign language, staff designated by the Warden shall contact one or more of the facility’s vendors for summarization and translation services and request a verbal English summarization of the correspondence. Appropriate facility staff shall prepare a written

summarization using the Mailroom Foreign Language Summarization Log (CAJ-1032), making a specific notation of any potential violations of policy. If no violation of policy is noted, the item shall be promptly delivered to the prisoner. All pages of the correspondence shall be stamped "Translation Approved" and dated so that the correspondence will not be confiscated upon inspection or when the prisoner is transferred to another facility. If the correspondence is believed to be in violation of policy, staff shall initiate the mail rejection process as outlined in this policy.

REJECTED MAIL

AAA. Whenever mail addressed to a prisoner is opened and believed to be in violation of policy, a Notice of Package/Mail Rejection (CSJ-316) shall be completed and promptly sent to the prisoner, except as set forth in Paragraph F. The Notice shall specify in detail the specific item/content believed to be in violation of this policy and why the item/content is believed to be in violation of policy. A copy of the Notice shall also be sent to the person or entity that sent the mail if a return address is identified.

BBB. Unless the prisoner waives their right to a hearing in writing by choosing an allowable disposition for the item, and the prisoner and staff agree on the appropriate disposition of the item, a prompt hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Administrative Rule 791.3310 to determine if the mail violates policy for the reason(s) identified in the Notice of Package/Mail Rejection (CSJ-316) and, if so, the appropriate disposition of the mail. The hearings officer shall not be the person who issued the Notice.

CCC. If a hearing is conducted, an Administrative Hearing Report (CSJ-144) shall be completed by the hearings officer. The prisoner shall be provided the opportunity to review the mail or a copy of the mail at the hearing unless the review itself would threaten the order and security of the facility, encourage or provide instruction in criminal activity, or interfere with the rehabilitation of the prisoner. If the prisoner is not permitted to review the mail or a copy of the mail at the hearing, the hearings officer shall state the reason for that decision on the Administrative Hearing Report. If a summarization was provided for correspondence written in a foreign language, the hearings officer shall review the summarization prior to issuing a finding. The hearings officer may request a full written translation of the correspondence if necessary to issue the finding.

DDD. If the hearings officer finds that the mail does not violate this policy, the mail shall be returned to the mailroom to determine if any other violations of policy exist. If other violations exist, the mail shall be processed as set forth in Paragraphs AAA through CCC. If there is no other reason to reject the mail pursuant to this policy, the mail shall be promptly delivered to the prisoner unless it is determined by the Warden or designee that the hearings officer's decision was not supported by policy and a rehearing is ordered.

EEE. If the hearings officer finds that the mail violates this policy, the hearings officer shall determine the appropriate disposition of the mail as set forth in Paragraph NNN. The disposal option chosen by the hearings officer shall be specifically stated on the Administrative Hearing Report. The hearings officer may take into consideration the prisoner's choice of disposition in making that determination but shall identify only one disposal option on the hearing report.

FFF. Whenever a hearings officer finds that a newspaper, magazine, book, or other publication violates this policy based on its written or pictorial content, the publication shall be submitted in a timely manner to the Warden along with a copy of the Notice and the Administrative Hearing Report. If the Warden does not agree that the publication violates this policy based on its content, that decision shall be noted on the Administrative Hearing Report and the publication returned to the mailroom for a second review to see if there are policy violations not found during the first review. If after the second review the Warden does not agree that the publication violates this policy based on its content, that decision shall be noted on the Administrative Hearing Report and the publication promptly delivered to the prisoner with a copy of the Warden's decision. If the Warden agrees that the publication violates this policy based on its written content, they shall proceed as set forth in Paragraph GGG. In all other cases involving the pictorial content of a publication, the Warden shall make the final decision. The Warden may maintain a list of publications rejected under their authority due to pictorial content.

RESTRICTED PUBLICATIONS LIST

GGG. If the Warden concurs with the hearings officer's decision that a publication violates this policy based on its written content, the Warden or designee shall promptly submit copies of the Notice, the Administrative

Hearing Report, the publication's cover, and a representative sampling of the specific sections of the publication found to be in violation of this policy to the CFA Deputy Director or designee for a final determination whether the publication violates this policy. The Warden or designee shall be notified of the decision. The Warden shall ensure that the prisoner is notified of the decision and, if the CFA Deputy Director or designee does not agree that the publication violates this policy, ensure that the publication is promptly given to the prisoner.

HHH. If the CFA Deputy Director or designee agrees that a publication violates this policy for the reason(s) identified in the Administrative Hearing Report, it shall be placed on the Restricted Publications List. The Restricted Publications List shall be maintained by the CFA Deputy Director or designee and be available to all staff on the Document Access System (DAS) SharePoint. A copy of the Restricted Publications List shall also be available in the Library and on the Department's website.

III. Once a publication is placed on the Restricted Publications List, it shall be rejected at all facilities without the need for a hearing to determine the basis for the rejection removed, unless otherwise indicated on the Restricted Publication List. If a Warden maintains a list of publications rejected under their authority due to pictorial content pursuant to Paragraph FFF because it is on the Restricted Publications List or the list maintained by the Warden, as applicable.

JJJ. A Literary Review Committee (LRC) shall be developed by the CFA Deputy Director or designee. The LRC shall review the list at least annually to determine if there is anything that needs to be taken off the list. A specific item may be reviewed by the LRC upon request of an Executive Policy Team (EPT) member. The LRC shall be comprised of the CFA Deputy Director's Administrative Assistant, a Librarian, Chaplain, Mailroom employee, an employee from the Emergency Management and Special Operations Division, and an employee from the Education Section as determined by the CFA Deputy Director.

APPEAL OF REJECTED MAIL

KKK. A prisoner who disagrees with the outcome of a hearing may file a grievance as set forth in PD 03.02.130 "Prisoner/Parolee Grievances." If the publication was referred to the CFA Deputy Director or designee for a final determination pursuant to Paragraph GGG, however, the grievance should not be filed until a final determination has been made.

LLL. Within ten business days after the date of the Notice, the sender may appeal the proposed rejection by mailing a letter to the Warden (these letters shall not be sent via e-mail). An appeal received by any other facility staff shall be referred to the Warden as soon as possible. If the mail was referred to the CFA Deputy Director or designee pursuant to Paragraph GGG, the Warden shall not respond to the sender until a decision is made by the CFA Deputy Director or designee. If the mail was rejected because it was already on the Restricted Publications List, the sender's appeal shall be forwarded to the CFA Deputy Director or designee through the appropriate chain of command for review. In all circumstances, the sender shall be notified in writing whether the appeal is granted or denied. If the appeal is granted, that decision shall be noted on the Administrative Hearing Report and the mail promptly delivered to the prisoner.

DISPOSITION OF REJECTED MAIL

MMM. Prior to disposal, rejected mail shall be retained at the facility for at least 15 business days after the date of issuance of the Notice of Package/Mail Rejection or hearing, whichever is later. However, if a publication was referred to the CFA Deputy Director or designee pursuant to Paragraph GGG, it shall be retained at the facility until a final decision is made by the CFA Deputy Director or designee. If the CFA Deputy Director or designee determines that the publication violates this policy, the publication shall be retained at the facility until the prisoner has exhausted the grievance process. If the sender appeals the rejection, the mail shall not be disposed of until after a response to the appeal is sent. If the mail violates state or federal law, it shall be turned over to appropriate law enforcement and only a copy retained.

NNN. After retention for the period set forth in Paragraph MMM, rejected mail shall be disposed of by one of the following methods as determined by the hearings officer or as indicated by the prisoner on the Notice of Package/Mail Rejection if a hearing is not required pursuant to Paragraph BBB or III of this policy:

1. Returned to the sender at the prisoner's expense. Funds shall not be loaned for this purpose. If the prisoner does not have sufficient funds to pay the required postage, the mail may be destroyed

no sooner than ten business days after the prisoner is notified in writing of this intent. The mail shall be mailed out at the prisoner's expense during this ten-day period if the prisoner receives sufficient funds to pay the cost of the postage.

2. Mailed at the prisoner's expense to a person designated by the prisoner, except that the mail shall not be sent to another prisoner, a court, an identified public official, or a Department employee unless that employee or public official is related by blood or marriage to the prisoner. Funds shall not be loaned for this purpose. If the prisoner does not have sufficient funds to pay the required postage, the mail may be destroyed no sooner than ten business days after the prisoner is notified in writing of this intent. The mail shall be mailed out at the prisoner's expense during this ten-day period if the prisoner receives sufficient funds to pay the cost of the postage.

3. If the item is a photograph, book, or magazine, retained and stored by the facility for up to 30 calendar days for pick-up by a person designated by the prisoner. If the mail is not picked up within 30 calendar days, it may be destroyed no sooner than ten business days after the prisoner is notified in writing of this intent. The mail may be picked-up during this ten-day period.
4. If the item is the prisoner's original certified birth certificate, original Social Security card, original GED certificate or other official document that the prisoner may need upon release, retained in the prisoner's Record Office file until the prisoner paroles or discharges, at which time the documents shall be given to the prisoner.

5. Destroyed, except that a publication or photograph shall be destroyed only if the prisoner agrees or as allowed pursuant to nos. 1 through 3 above. Documents identified in no. 4 above shall not be destroyed.

PROCESSING OF MAIL

OOO. Facilities shall endeavor to process all incoming and outgoing mail within two business day after receipt. Mail received by any form of express mail or special delivery is not required to be expedited. Mail sent or received over holidays or weekends, and mail requiring special handling or foreign language summarization, may require additional time to process. However, mail sent via disbursement to a court, an attorney, or a party to a lawsuit shall be processed consistent with the requirements set forth in Paragraph S. Prisoners shall not be used to process mail.

PPP. Mail received for a prisoner who has transferred to another Department facility shall be returned unopened to the postal carrier that delivered the item. The new mailing address of the prisoner shall be provided to the carrier for at least two months after the transfer to allow for forwarding of the mail, when possible. Mail received for a prisoner in a secure hospital or in Duane L. Waters Health Center shall be forwarded to the prisoner. Mail, including legal mail, received for a prisoner in any other hospital setting shall be returned to the sender unopened. If an attorney subsequently contacts the facility indicating that the returned mail contains time-sensitive information, facility staff shall contact the CFA or FOA Deputy Director, as appropriate, for instructions how to proceed.

QQQ. Upon notification of parole or discharge, a prisoner must inform the mailroom supervisor in writing of their new address if the prisoner wants mail forwarded as set forth in Paragraph PPP. If a prisoner does not request that their mail be forwarded, any mail received for the prisoner shall be returned to the carrier for return to the sender or, if the carrier will not return the mail, for disposition in accordance with the carrier's regulations.

RRR. Mail received for a prisoner who has been released on court writ shall be returned to the carrier for return to the sender, or if the carrier will not return the mail, for disposition in accordance with the carrier's regulations, unless the prisoner has made other arrangements in writing with the mailroom supervisor.

PROCEDURES

SSS. Facilities shall develop or update facility operating procedures to ensure requirements set forth in this policy directive are implemented.

AUDIT ELEMENTS

TTT. A Primary Audit Elements List has been developed and is available to assist with self-audit of this policy pursuant to PD 01.05.100 "Self-Audits."

ATTACHMENTS

UUU. This policy includes the following attachments:

1. Attachment A - Approved Internet Vendors
2. Attachment B - Authorized Vendors for Publications
3. Attachment C - Operational Guidance for Photocopying Incoming Legal and Confidential Mail

APPROVED: HEW 08/03/2026

ATTACHMENT A

APPROVED INTERNET VENDORS FOR PUBLIC PURCHASES

A. Prisoners may receive publications ordered by members of the public from the following Internet vendors, provided the publication is not used and is sent directly to the prisoner from the Internet vendor:

Amazon.com
BarnesandNoble.com
EdwardRHamilton.com and HamiltonBooks.com
prisonlegalnews.org/humanrightsdefensecenter.org/action/publishing/
Schulerbooks.com
Walmart.com

B. Visually impaired prisoners who read Braille also may receive Braille publications ordered by members of the public from the following Internet vendor provided the publication is sent directly to the prisoner from the vendor:

American Printing House for the Blind (aph.org)

NOTES:

1. Under no circumstances shall prisoners in a correctional facility be permitted to order publications from an Internet vendor.

2. Prisoners also may receive publications ordered by members of the public from a publisher provided the publication is not used, was sent directly to the prisoner by the publisher, and does not otherwise violate this policy.

3. Some approved Internet vendors, such as Amazon.com, allow private individuals and other vendors to directly sell publications on their websites. In such cases, prisoners are allowed to receive the publication only if the vendor actually selling the publication is identified on this attachment as an approved vendor

4. Some approved internet vendors, such as Amazon.com,-no longer include an invoice or packing slip with the packages they ship verifying that the delivered publication is in compliance with this policy. To assist in ensuring that the item can be delivered, written verification that the publication was purchased from the approved vendor must be provided. This can be done by:

    a. Requesting a gift receipt be included with the package at the time of purchase.

    b. Sending to the prisoner a copy of the invoice provided to the purchaser by the internet vendor. The invoice may be sent via the US mail or by e-mail through J-pay

ATTACHMENT B

AUTHORIZED VENDORS FOR PUBLICATION PURCHASES

A. Prisoners may order and receive non-used publications from the following vendors:

Edward R. Hamilton Bookseller
Prison Legal News/Human Rights Defense Center
Schuler Books & Music

B. Blind/visually impaired prisoners may order and receive Braille publications, or other publications to accommodate their needs, from the following vendors:

National Library of Congress
Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
American Printing House for the Blind
Hadley Institute

C. The Warden or designee may authorize additional local vendors from whom prisoners at their respective facilities may order and receive non-used publications. The prisoner shall be permitted to receive the publication, subject to other policy restrictions, if transferred to another facility prior to receipt of the publication.

D. The CFA Special Activities Coordinator shall authorize vendors from whom prisoners may order and receive non-used religious publications, as set forth in PD 05.03.150 "Religious Beliefs and Practices of Prisoners." A list of authorized religious vendors is available on the Department's Document Access System (DAS) SharePoint.

All publications must be ordered from the above vendors through institutional ordering procedures and received directly by the prisoner from the vendor. Publications ordered by prisoners are subject to all requirements set forth in this policy.

Prisoners also may receive publications ordered through institutional ordering procedures, or by members of the public, from the publisher provided the publication was sent directly to the prisoner from the publisher and does not otherwise violate this policy.

PD 05.01.142 "Special Alternative Incarceration Program" controls for prisoners in the Special Alternative Incarceration Program.

ATTACHMENT C

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR PHOTOCOPYING INCOMING LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIAL MAIL

This attachment provides standardized operational guidance for processing incoming legal and confidential mail in accordance with PD 05.03.118. Facilities shall use the information in PD 05.03.118 and this document when developing or updating facility operating procedures to ensure that **all** prisoners, regardless of housing assignment, timely receive photocopied legal and confidential mail.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Legal and confidential mail shall be photocopied, verified, and delivered to the prisoner without unreasonable delay.

2. Each facility shall maintain access to specialized equipment to process legal and confidential mail, including a photocopier that does not retain digital data or images, and a shredder that meets or exceeds the following minimum standards: destroys paper using crosscut shredder that produces particles that are 1 mm x 5 mm (0.04 inch x 0.2 inch) in size or smaller, or pulverizes/disintegrates paper materials using disintegrator devices equipped with a 3/32 inch (2.4 mm) security screen. This equipment shall **only** be used for processing legal and confidential mail.

3. A Legal and Confidential Mail Processing Acknowledgment Form (CSJ-991), shall be completed for each piece of legal or confidential mail. All completed forms must be retained in the facility mailroom. Forms shall be sorted and stored in a manner that allows for efficient retrieval when needed, such as by date and prisoner name or number. Forms may be stored electronically shall be retained for 42 months from the date of processing.

4. After photocopying and verifying legal or confidential mail in front of the prisoner, staff must immediately shred the original documents in front of the prisoner. Staff shall not: (1) store documents for later destruction, (2) use offsite or contracted shredding bins, even if locked, or (3) leave originals unsecured or unattended at any point.

5. Shredder waste compartments must be emptied and cleared by staff immediately upon completion of all legal and confidential mail processing, and all shredder waste must be immediately secured or removed from that area and properly disposed of (e.g., trash compactor, outside the secure perimeter). Under no circumstances shall shredder waste remain in the shredder or unsecured in an area where legal and confidential mail is processed. All shredder waste shall only be handled, transported, and disposed of by staff. Prisoners, including porters, are not permitted access to equipment or shredder waste at any time.

6. When not actively in use, photocopiers and shredders must be secured and stored in a locked location that is inaccessible to prisoners.

PHOTOCOPIER/SHREDDER USE

7. Facilities shall use photocopiers and shredders located in centralized areas (e.g., programming building, school) to process legal and confidential mail. Movement should be authorized daily or as needed to avoid delays.

8. Legal and confidential mail shall be fully processed in front of the prisoner, including photocopying, verifying copies, and immediate shredding of original documents.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

9. Facilities must have a contingency plan for processing legal and confidential mail in the event of equipment failure. Plans must: (1) identify alternate equipment available on-site, (2) ensure no unreasonable delay in processing legal and confidential mail due to repair, replacement, or maintenance, and (3) ensure compliance with PD 05.03.118 in all backup processes.