

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALLEGHENY COUNTY BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS</b></p>	<b>APPLICABILITY: All Authorized Personnel</b>	
	<b>POLICY NUMBER: #430</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE: 11/16/15 REVISED: 4/14/20</b>
	<b>TITLE: INMATE MAIL PRIVILEGE/PUBLICATIONS ACA Standard 5B-05, 5B-06, 5B-07, 5B-08, 5B-09, 5B-10, 6A-01, 02 Title 37-95.234(1,2,3,4) 95.245(1,2)</b>	
	<b>AUTHORIZED BY: ORLANDO L. HARPER</b>  <b>SIGNATURE:</b> 	

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections (BOC) to set forth the regulations governing mail privileges for inmates of the Allegheny County Jail.

**APPLICABLE POPULATIONS**

All inmate population and Allegheny County Jail personnel

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

1. Excluding weekends, holidays or emergency situations, mail shall not be held for more than 24 hours. Packages shall not be held more than 48 hours. In the event an inmate’s mail is withheld for any reason, the inmate shall be notified in writing.
2. Correspondence shall be permitted between inmates and their families, friends, other associates and/or legitimate business contacts, attorneys, news media and public officials. The only restrictions on the amount of mail an inmate can mail out shall be those necessary to ensure the safety of the institution and other persons.
3. Inmates may correspond with any person and in any language with limitations on the volume or number of letters.
4. All inmates must comply with the rules and regulations for mailing letters. Deliberate violations may result in disciplinary action or referral to appropriate authorities for prosecution.
5. Correspondence between inmates incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail is prohibited. This includes all alternative housing sites including male/female rehabilitative programs or any county, state or federal facility contractually engaged to house ACJ inmates.

6. Correspondence between an inmate incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail and an inmate or inmates at other correctional facilities must be approved by the Warden or a Deputy Warden.
7. Correspondence, or other writings, containing threatening or obscene material as well as correspondence containing criminal solicitations or intended to further a criminal plan, is prohibited.
8. The sending and receipt of mail shall be restricted or prohibited for valid reasons such as introduction of contraband, threats to security or the public or when requested by intended recipients. Inmates shall refrain from writing to persons who have stated in writing that they do not wish to receive mail from them.
9. Incoming mail with a return address indicating that it is from public officials, the courts, a judge, attorney or otherwise determined to be a piece of legal mail will not be opened for examining for contraband unless the interested inmate is present. All legal mail must come from a lawyer. Anything coming from a residential address, the inmate's home, or with a handwritten address is not considered legal mail and will be returned to sender.
10. Incoming mail shall not be read or censored unless reasonable grounds exist to believe that the receipt of the mail is likely to jeopardize the prison security or public safety and welfare or both. Such probable cause must be supported by a written report. It shall be opened and examined for contraband. Letters containing contraband shall be held for further inspection and disposition by the Allegheny County Police.
11. Money orders, checks or cash shall be recorded indicating the sender, the amount received and the date received. The inmate shall be notified of all monies received. All money orders, checks or cash shall be forwarded to the cashier's office.
12. Outgoing mail shall not be read, censored or reproduced. Mail may be checked only if contraband is suspected or there are reasonable grounds to believe that the receipt of the mail is likely to jeopardize prison security or public safety and welfare or both.
13. Inmates shall seal and place all mail correspondence in the mail bags, when mail call is announced on each housing unit.

#### **Handling and Distribution of Mail**

1. Outgoing mail will be placed (by the inmate) in the housing unit's blue mailbag each morning after breakfast feed, Monday through Friday. Once collection is

complete, a level escort Officer will deliver the mailbag to the mailroom. Mail will not be kept on the Officers desk.

2. Incoming mail shall be processed as follows:
  - Official mail and inmate mail shall be separated.
  - If an inmate has been transferred or released, the mail shall be forwarded, unopened, to the sender.
  - All remaining mail shall be opened, examined, photocopied, and the photocopies distributed to the inmate.
  - It will be the responsibility of the 6x2 and 2x10 shift Unit Manager or Assistant Unit Manager to assure that the all mail is distributed.
3. It is the responsibility of the 6x2 and 2x10 Unit Manager or Assistant Unit Manager to pick up legal mail Monday through Friday in the Mailroom on 1M. Supervisors are to distribute legal mail to the pods to have the officers deliver the mail to the inmate. Correctional Officers are to assure that legal mail is opened only to inspect for contraband and only in the presence of the inmate.
4. Each level will be issued a logbook to document legal mail. This log book will include the following information.
  - Inmate Name
  - DOC #
  - Date
  - Agency/Firm that sent the mail
  - Inmate Signature
  - Officer Signature
5. When distributing legal mail, Correctional Officers will ensure:
  - Inmate is properly identified by looking at their armband.
  - Record the legal mail in the log book assigned to the level.
  - Mail is opened in front of the inmate, inspected for contraband, and give the mail to the inmate. At no time is the correctional officer to read an inmate's legal mail.
  - If contraband is detected or legal materials appear to be contaminated with possible liquid K-2 or other unknown substance during the inspections, the mail will not be given to the inmate. The Unit Manager or Assistant Unit manager will be notified, and reports shall be generated through the chain of command. The inmate will be advised the mail will be confiscated pending the outcome of an investigation.
  - The Shift Commander shall ensure all legal mail is distributed to the inmate population daily and ensure strict compliance with this directive.

### **Certified Mail**

1. Determination to send mail these methods shall be the responsibility of the inmate.

2. The inmate must have funds available in his/her account for such postage payment and arrangements must be made with the Pod Officer and Cashier.
3. Inmates shall fill out a Form 125 with his or her signature and witnessed by a staff member. Processing shall be in accordance with internal institutional procedures.

### **Procedures for Outgoing Mail**

To ensure the efficient and proper mail handling and delivery, it shall be the responsibility of the inmate to assure that:

1. All outgoing mail is addressed properly. This means the name and DOC number **MUST BE PRINTED** in the designated area (upper left-hand corner) on the envelope. Any mail received in the Mail Room which does not have the proper name and DOC number will be opened to identify the sender and will be returned to the inmate.
2. The addressee's name or name of agency, the proper address and zip code are to be **PRINTED WITHIN THE BLOCKED AREA** marked in the center of the envelope.

### **EXAMPLE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number: DOC. Number  
Allegheny County Jail 950 Second Avenue  
Pittsburgh PA 15219-3100

Address must be printed and remain in address block area below

Addressee's Name/Agency Name  
Complete Address  
City, State & Zip Code

### **ALL THE ABOVE MUST BE PRINTED**

3. No drawings, artwork or markings of any type are permitted outside of the designated areas. The bar code system will not accept the mail if you do not follow these instructions.
4. For security reasons, any outgoing mail that is marked outside of the designated areas will be opened and inspected. The envelope will then be marked R.T.S (Return to Sender).

### **Incoming Materials**

1. All letters & packages without the correct name & DOC number will be returned to sender.
2. All letters and packages must have a valid return address or it will be returned.
3. All money orders must have a DOC number & the senders name and valid return address.

**Prohibited Mailing Items:**

1. Items that cannot be identified will be considered contraband.
2. Any pictures, publication or documents containing nudity and/or partial nudity or explicit sexual content are prohibited.
3. Envelopes not addressed in blue or black ink. Colored pens, pencils, or highlighters and colored paper are not permitted including colored envelopes.
4. Catalogs
5. Clothing
6. Credit cards or phone cards
7. Demon or witchcraft mail
8. Food
9. Gang related photos
10. Hair(s)
11. Hygiene products
12. Jewelry
13. More than three (3) pages per letter—mailings are not to exceed 3 pages
14. More than two (2) photos per week. Please note, photos are not to exceed size 4x6.
15. More than 7 paperback books per day
16. Publications or correspondence regarding the manufacturing of explosives, weapons or drugs.
17. No lipstick or lip gloss on letter or outside of envelope or package.
18. No stickers, tape or glue of any kind including return address labels
19. No letters, cards or packages will be accepted with strings, clasps, metal, plastic wood or lamination.
20. No perfume or stains on letters, envelopes, cards or packages.
21. Letters or packages with white out
22. Federal or personal checks
23. Playing cards
24. Stamped envelopes
25. Stamps
26. Tobacco of any kind
27. Weapons
28. Wet or powdered substances

29. Wires or ropes
30. Writing materials (pens, paper, envelopes, markers etc.)
31. Letters or cards with any type of gem or music components
32. Hardback books
33. DVD'S, VHS tapes, CD'S, cassettes, and 8-track tapes

### **Publications**

Inmates may pay for a subscription of a periodic publication or receive a subscription paid for by a person in the community, including local newspapers. No inmate is entitled to receive any periodic publication or newspaper at the county's expense. While staff members may screen incoming mail, only the Warden or Deputy Warden may reject a publication.

1. The publications may be read and examined by the Warden or his/her designee. All incoming publications will be inspected for contraband prior to distribution.
2. Books must be soft-back and contain the packing slip and or receipt from the publisher. If there is no return authorization, the inmate will be responsible for return postage.
3. A publication may be prohibited from coming into the institution for the following reasons:
  - Contains information regarding the manufacturing of explosives, weapons or drugs.
  - Includes materials intended to encourage or assist in disrupting the orderly operation of the jail such as through a criminal act, work stoppage or other breach of major jail rules or a threat to the jail's security.
  - Contents that may include illegal mailing materials, in which case the item will be referred to postal authorities.
  - Material that would encourage deviant sexual behavior, sexual behavior which is criminal and/or in violation of institutional rules, detrimental to rehabilitation, including material that is considered obscene or depicting explicit sexual acts.
  - Any other material found to be detrimental to the security, good order or discipline of the institution or if it is to facilitate a criminal act.
4. The Jail's Administration will advise the inmate and the publisher or other source in writing of rejected material and will provide an opportunity for response to the concerns that gave rise to the rejection. Inmate appeals will be through the established complaint procedures.

5. Family and friends can only order online soft-covered books to be delivered from the vender to inmates at the ACJ from:

- [Barnesandnoble.com](http://Barnesandnoble.com)
- [Christianbooks.com](http://Christianbooks.com)

This is the only approved list of publishers. Furthermore, no hardback books are permitted and all approved publications must be sent via US Mail, Fed Ex, and UPS only.