

Dane County Criminal Justice Agencies Policy Responses to COVID-19

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers have the discretion to release a person with an active warrant for misdemeanors (except those with domestic surcharges), child support payments, and Class H and I felonies that are solely property- or drug-related.

Dane County law enforcement agencies have the legal authority to enforce the Safer at Home order, but Dane County agencies will not randomly stop residents in the community or require documentation of permission to leave home.

Many police departments in Dane County have suspended non-essential services, such as routine fingerprinting, public use of district community rooms, animal traps, MedDrop box, and public outreach.

District Attorney

The Dane County District Attorney is reviewing every case of pretrial detention to see who can be safely released, emphasizing the importance protecting victims and public safety.

Courts

All criminal proceedings for out-of-custody defendants will be made remote or rescheduled. In-custody defendants' case proceed as scheduled.

In-person appearances for civil, small claims, and family court are suspended, and hearings can instead proceed by telephone.

Juvenile justice hearings occur remotely, via phone if the defendant is in the community and via video if the defendant is in custody.

Eviction proceedings are suspended until June 1, 2020, except if they involve significant property or personal safety concerns.

[Wisconsin Court COVID-19 Task Force issued their report on reopening facilities and returning to in-person proceedings.](#)

Sheriff's Office

All jail programming and contact and non-contact visitation are suspended effective immediately. Attorney visits continue.

Inmates in Dane County Jail will each receive two 15-minute phone calls for free each week.

All inmates and essential staff at the Dane County Jail are tested for COVID-19, after several inmates and staff members test positive.

Department of Corrections

All in-person visits are suspended until further notice. Professional visits may continue.

Inmates in DOC facilities will each receive two phone calls, additional stamps, and 5 email messages for free each week.

All medical copays are suspended for any inmates in DOC facilities showing symptoms related to COVID-19.

Each incarcerated person in DOC facilities will receive four disposable face masks.

This is a summary version—for specific details contact the appropriate agency.

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