

25 January 2022

C143901

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Tēnā koe Holly

Thank you for your email of 11 November 2021 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa (Corrections), requesting the following information:

Please provide the daily frequency of public visitors to prisons, for each New Zealand prison by prison location, from the 1st July 2021 to 11th November 2021.

Secondly, please provide the frequency of drug contraband finds per day (or whatever frequency recorded/ available) for each New Zealand prison, by prison location, from the 1st of July to 11th November 2021.

Please provide this data in an excel spreadsheet.

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Corrections recognises regular contact and support from whānau and friends is important for people we manage and can have a positive effect on a range of factors for them, including their morale, rehabilitation and reintegration. Pro-social support from family and friends is an integral part of reducing reoffending and successful reintegration.

The safety and security of our sites, staff, and the people we are managing is a top priority for us. Contraband includes alcohol, communication devices, drugs, drug paraphernalia, tattoo equipment, tobacco, tobacco paraphernalia, weapons, and other miscellaneous items that prisoners could use in inappropriate ways.

Some people go to extreme and elaborate lengths to introduce contraband into prison. Contraband may be concealed on a person's body when they come into the prison, posted in with mail or property, thrown over perimeter fencing, or smuggled into the prison by visitors. Sometimes the people we manage place a significant amount of pressure on their partners, friends, or associates to risk attempting to bring contraband into prison for them.

We place significant emphasis on the prevention and detection of contraband introduction in prisons and we are constantly working to stay one step ahead of new methods used to introduce contraband into our prisons. We were also the first agency in New Zealand to train our detector dogs to detect new psychoactive substances, including synthetic cannabis. Our detector dog teams have a range of searching capabilities and can also detect drugs, mobile phones, tobacco and illicitly brewed alcohol.

Other methods we use to prevent contraband from entering our prisons, include:

- searches of vehicles and people entering prisons
- using scanners and x-ray machines at entry points
- extensive prison perimeter security
- camera surveillance in prison visit rooms, along perimeter fences and at entry points
- requiring prisoners to wear closed overalls when in visiting areas to prevent contraband being hidden on them
- checking prisoner mail and property for contraband
- random and targeted monitoring of prisoner telephone calls
- specialist detector dog teams that patrol prison perimeters, visitor areas and cells
- banning visitors who attempt to bring contraband into prisons.

Attached in the Excel Spreadsheet is appendix one, which details the daily frequency of visitors to each prison, broken up by prison location and day. As Auckland South Corrections Facility is not a Corrections run facility, their statistics are not included in this.

You will note that prison visits across all prison sites were limited during Corrections Alert Level 4 lockdown, and visits to prisons affected by Corrections Alert Level 3 restrictions, particularly those in Auckland, have continued to be affected up to the date you have requested information. We acknowledge how difficult it was for people in prison to not be able to see their whānau over this time period due to Corrections Alert Levels.

As you will be aware, New Zealand is now operating under the COVID 'traffic light' system. To keep COVID-19 out of our prisons, Corrections has a three-stage model to manage the risk posed by COVID-19 in the community. We also have vaccination requirements for people visiting prisons. Prisons operate at one of three COVID-19 Stages, which reflects the level of risk for each prison, regardless of the traffic light setting. You can find out more about visiting prisons at each stage on our website [here](#).

Also in the attached in the Excel Spreadsheet is appendix two (A), the monthly frequency of contraband found by Corrections. Corrections data is held as monthly statistics, along with appendix two (B) which is the daily frequency of contraband found by Corrections. Corrections data is held as monthly statistics

Corrections does not categorise contraband finds according to where the item was found or the manner in which it was located. Contraband may be found in a number of locations within or around a prison, including in prison cells, during perimeter

searches, or on a prisoner's person. Contraband can also be found on a visitor's person or in their vehicles. When analysing any fluctuations over time, note that our incident reporting system does not report whether the contraband was found within the secure perimeter of the prison or outside of the prison (for example in the carpark). People in prison may also conceal contraband within the prison for a period before it is found by staff, so it is not possible to draw conclusions about the amount of contraband that entered prisons each month from this data. Corrections prisons also have varied prison populations, security classifications and physical layouts. As such, it is difficult to draw conclusions about variance in volumes found at different sites.

Each incident within the data provided is categorised by staff at the prison where contraband was found. When reviewing these figures, note that we rely on individual sites to enter information into a central system in an accurate and timely matter. We caution against drawing conclusions about the data provided as prisons have different populations and contraband incidents are not comparable between sites.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Rachel Leota
National Commissioner