

Elkhart County Jail Policies and Procedures

What Can I Bring into the Elkhart County Jail with Me?

You can ONLY bring the following items into the Elkhart County Jail:

1. One Bible, Quran or holy book
2. One or two pieces of paper
3. A valid or current government issued photo ID
4. Car keys
5. One flex pen which can be obtained from the front lobby officer

Examples of items that are NOT allowed in the Elkhart County Jail

1. Coats
2. Purse/Wallet
3. Cell phone
4. Books (other than Bible or other holy book)
5. Tracts
6. Candy/gum
7. Pen/Pencil
8. Paperclips
9. Money
10. Anything else not on the approved list of items listed above

Check-In / Check-Out Procedures

When arriving to the Elkhart County Jail to meet with an inmate or join a class, always:

1. Bring photo ID
2. Leave non-essential items in your vehicle
3. Check in with officer at front desk and follow his/her instructions
4. NEVER leave the facility without checking out with the officer at the front desk and ALWAYS return your visitor badge to the officer before leaving

Proper Attire Inside the Elkhart County Jail

1. The Elkhart County Jail is a large facility so wear comfortable walking shoes
2. No jewelry other than wedding rings and a watch
3. No tight fitting clothing
4. No coats - Coats can be checked into lockers in the lobby of the jail but are not permitted anywhere past Gate 1
5. All volunteers must be dressed modestly
 - a. No sleeveless shirts or tank tops
 - b. No low cut shirts
 - c. Skirts and dresses must be below the knee
6. No hats of any kind are allowed

When Meeting with Inmates in a Classroom...

1. Always keep the door to the classroom closed and secure at all times. NEVER leave a door propped open
2. Only correctional officers are allowed to bring inmates to a classroom and dismiss inmates from a classroom
3. Classroom lights are to be left ON at all times
4. Avoid controversial political, theological and social issues. These issues cause tension, stress and arguments between inmates which heightens tension within wards. When asked about your belief on a controversial topic it is OK to give your opinion so long as it's done with humility and you recognize the genuineness and sincerity of people with differing opinions
5. Understand that whatever personal information you give one inmate will quickly be accessible to ALL inmates inside the jail. Do not give personal information to one inmate that you do not want every other inmate to have.

What Information am I Required to Report to Officers

As you are inside the jail interacting with inmates there are issues/scenarios you are required by law to report. If you see or hear of the following scenarios you are required to report them to the nearest correctional officers:

1. Any and all inappropriate sexual behavior by volunteers, inmates and/or staff (refer to the Prison Rape Elimination Act PREA guidelines for more details)
2. See or smell smoke of any kind
3. See, hear of, smell, or witness the use of drugs of any kind anywhere inside the Elkhart County Jail
4. Witness or hear of violence or threats of violence

Visitation Hours

Visitation hours for Elkhart County Jail volunteers are seven days a week during the following hours:

9:00-11:00am

1:30-4:00pm

6:30-9:00pm

All volunteers must be out of the building by 9:00pm. This means visits with inmates need to start wrapping up around 8:30pm in order to be out of the building by 9:00pm.

How Do I Become Involved?

After you receive an email from SafeVisitor notifying you of your Approved Visitor status, you can contact Chaplain Cory Martin or Program Director Kris Klosinski about ways to get involved in the jail. Chaplain Martin can be contacted at cmartin@ecjailministry.org and Kris Klosinski can be reached at kklosinski@elkhartcountysheriff.com.

Appropriate Interaction with Inmates

All interactions between inmates and volunteers are closely monitored. The policies governing volunteer/inmate interactions are put in place for the safety of the volunteers, inmates and correctional officers. Below are guidelines ALL volunteers are expected to follow at all times while inside the Elkhart County Jail.

1. Absolutely NO interaction between male inmates and female volunteers, or female inmates and male volunteers
2. Under NO circumstances are volunteers allowed to accept any items from inmates for any reason. **This is considered Trafficking and is a prosecutable offense.**
3. Under NO circumstances are volunteers allowed to give any items to inmates for any reason. **This is considered Trafficking and is a prosecutable offense.**
4. Under NO circumstances are volunteers allowed to pass messages between inmates or between inmates and their families/friends. You could unknowingly violate a restraining order by doing so which **is considered Invasion of Privacy and is a prosecutable offense.**
5. QUICK handshakes, hugs and pats on the back are permitted between same gender volunteers and inmates.

Interaction with Correctional Officers

The Correctional Officers inside the Elkhart County Jail ALWAYS have ultimate authority over volunteers while inside the Elkhart County Jail. Remember that Correctional Officers have many responsibilities while on duty in addition to monitoring visitors. Their first priority is the safety and security inside the jail. ANY VOLUNTEER THAT DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY AND GRACIOUSLY OBEY A DIRECTIVE FROM A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER WILL BE REMOVED AS AN APPROVED VOLUNTEER.

If you feel you have been mistreated by a correctional officer or have questions about a policy, you can contact Program Director Kris Klosinski at kklosinski@elkhartcountysheriff.com for clarification.

