

Visitation Guide



Visiting incarcerated family members or friends is an important way of maintaining connections and enhancing an inmate's success while in jail, and after release. But it's not easy. The process of visiting an inmate in the Santa Cruz County Main Jail can be complicated, and just walking into the Jail lobby can be quite intimidating. To some, pushing through the jail's heavy doors may feel like entering a whole other alien world.

There are strict procedures to adhere to and rules to follow in the visitation process, and many steps to take. We'll breakdown the basics and provide you with all of the information needed to make visiting your friend or loved one as easy and seamless as possible.

The Santa Cruz Main Jail's visiting hours are on Saturdays and Sundays, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Inmates are allowed 2 non-contact visits from their family and friends each week. Visitation times and schedule depend on an inmate's unit (information can be found online at <http://www.scssheriff.com/Portals/1/County/sheriff/MainJailVisitingSchedule.pdf>).

Visitors must call Jail Reception at (831) 454-7800, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M., and 8:00 A.M.-3:00P.M. on Friday, to schedule a visit in accordance with the schedule. Visits MUST be scheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance, but no sooner than 7 days in advance.

Visitor Request Form

Before being allowed inside the jail to visit an inmate, you must ensure your name has been placed on his/her "approved visiting list." No visits are allowed until an inmate *fully* completes his Visitor Request Form. Inmates must have the address, driver's license number, date of birth, and phone number of prospective visitors in order for visitors to be approved. Gathering all of this information can be difficult for an inmate to do and represents one of the largest hurdles in the visitation process. To get this information into the jail and to an inmate, you can complete the Visitor Request Form yourself and send it to the jail (addressed to the inmate). This way your friend or loved one has the details required to make the visitation request themselves. Of course, you can try to connect with an inmate over the phone. The inmate can call you, but you'll have no way of contacting them directly. Sometimes though, inmates may lack the money to make calls, or simply do not remember (your) phone number. The visitation process can drag on. Family members and friends cannot set up visits themselves until the Visitor's Request Form has been turned in and approved inside the jail. It can take some time for the Visitor Request Form to be processed and approved. Jail staff must pre-approve each potential visitor, and it can take up to 10 days to complete a background check for each visitor. The visitor list can only be updated once every 30 days (from the date the original list is completed). Once the inmate's visitor request form has been approved, you can call Jail Reception to schedule a visit.

Visits, all audio recorded, are conducted in one of five visitation rooms where inmates and their visitors are separated by a wire and plexiglass barrier.

It's required that you check in at the reception area in the main lobby (of the Santa Cruz County Main Jail) at least 30 minutes before your assigned visiting time. The address of the Main Jail is 259 Water St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060. You must present valid identification to reception.

Approved and acceptable forms of identification include driver's license, California ID card, passports, military ID, or immigration ID.

Be mindful of the Main Jail's strict cancellation policy. If three appointments (visits) are cancelled by the jail within a calendar year, visitation privileges will be suspended. To avoid a visitation ban, you must be in the lobby when your name/visit is called, give 24-hour notice if you can't make it to your appointment, and arrive and register at least 30 minutes before your scheduled visit time. If you fail to appear for a scheduled visit it will count as a visit. Remember, inmates are allowed 2 visits per week.

Visitation Rules

-Minors are allowed to visit as long as they are accompanied by an approved adult visitor (such as a parent or court appointed legal guardian)

-There is a strict dress code and limits to the types of clothes you can wear during a visit. Visitor clothing can't be "provocative" in nature or design, and must cover all buttocks, breasts, and genitalia. Be prepared to shed items like hats, and shoes or clothing containing metal.

-Cell phones and purses aren't allowed into the viewing area. And all personal items must be stored in lockers in the lobby of the jail.

-A visit will end immediately and without warning if inmates or visitors fail to conduct themselves "properly." If you violate any proper procedure of the visiting process you may be banned from entering the jail temporarily or permanently, and depending on the violation, even criminally charged.

(A litany of other visitation rules are listed on the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office website)

Included in Packet: "Visitor Request Form" and "Main Jail Visitation Scheduling, Times and Days"

See Also: <https://www.scssheriff.com/Home/InmateVisitingInformation/SantaCruzMainJail.aspx>

To provide feedback, comments, questions, and to correct errors please contact jailguide@namiscc.org

Date Written: April 2021