

# How to Virtually Communicate with an Incarcerated Loved One



**Disclaimer:** This is a comprehensive guide on what to expect while communicating with an incarcerated loved one virtually. With this being said, rules and regulations still vary from facility to facility so, to get the clearest and best information, check the website that your loved one is located to ensure that you receive the most accurate information for contacting them.

## Virtual Communication

### Emailing

Virtual communication can vary from jail to prison, and from state to state. However, many jails and prisons offer email as an easy way to communicate. To email with your loved one, you will need to create an account on their platform (JPay, ConnectNetwork, Corrlinks, etc.). If you are able to look up the jail or prison where your loved one is currently, it should tell you which specific website they use for email communication. For some platforms, you will need to pay for the service.

In order to sign up for these services, you will need to verify that you are older than 18. If you are younger than 18, you will need your parent or legal guardian to make an account for you. This can then be attached to your own personal email, so you may communicate directly with your parent.

A major benefit of emailing is the quick response time. Your loved one should receive the email within about 24-48 hours from the time it was sent. It will likely be closer to two days if you send an attachment, so we suggest keeping it just to write if you want it to get there faster.

## Phone Calls

### Getting in Touch

Talking with a loved one on the phone is a great way to stay in touch. With this being said, you will not be able to call your incarcerated loved one, they have to call you. Some facilities restrict who an incarcerated person can call, allowing only verified family members or people who are on their approved visitation list. With that being said, make sure that they have your phone number to put on this list.

Cell phone minutes often cost commissary money for your incarcerated loved one as well. This may limit how much they are able to call. On the website for the facility they are residing in, it may have more information on how to add money to their commissary if you want to do so.

### The Call

When you receive a phone call from your loved one, it will likely come from a blocked number. When you pick up the phone, it will tell you that you are receiving a call from a correctional facility, asking whether or not you want to pick up. You will either respond verbally, by pressing a number, or just allowing the call to go through. When it does, you will be able to speak with your loved one!

Calls are typically limited to about 15-30 minutes (per day) to allow all of the people in that facility to make phone calls who want to. Your conversation will be occasionally interrupted to alert you how much time you have left. Once time has run out, if you have not hung up, the call will immediately end so make sure to say your goodbyes when it gives you a final warning.

## Written Communication and Visitation

Check out our other how-to guides for more information on writing a letter and visiting an incarcerated loved one!

