

## **Section 8: Communication**

**Subject: Message for Inmates**

**Minimum Standard:**

**Revised: 05/1999, 03/2009, 12/2011, 09/2015**

**Authorized:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Effective date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sheriff Paul A. Sigsworth**

### **POLICY**

It is a general practice of the Erie County Jail that messages for inmates will not be taken or delivered. Messages from legal sources (Attorney or Legal Offices) and verified emergency messages from inmate's family or friends may be delivered but only after the originating source is verified and the information provided is found to be accurate.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Referral:**

- a. Any staff member who obtains information from a caller claiming to have an emergency message or a message from an attorney shall:
  1. Obtain as much information as possible.
  2. Obtain a name and return phone number from the caller.
  3. Notify the shift supervisor of the call.
  4. Supply the information gathered to the shift supervisor.
  5. Complete a Jail Incident Report of the call, if advised to by the shift supervisor.

#### **B. Verification:**

- a. If the shift supervisor has reason to suspect the accuracy or truthfulness of a message is in question, the supervisor may attempt to verify the message through the following means:
  1. Telephone records and data resources.
  2. Contacting any hospital or funeral home that may be involved.
  3. Contacting relatives of the inmate.
  4. Contacting the originating source for additional information.

#### **C. Notification of Injury, Illness, or Death:**

- a. If the emergency message left for the inmate involves the death, serious injury, or illness of a person or any other message that may have a negative psychological impact on the inmate, the shift supervisor shall:
  1. Make certain the information received is accurate.
  2. Arrange for the inmate to be brought to a private area of the jail.
  3. Allow the inmate to call the emergency contact number.
  4. In the event the information provided by the caller cannot be verified, the message will not be delivered to the inmate until more information is obtained.
- b. The supervisor or Corrections Officer who escorts the inmate when the message is delivered will monitor the actions and behavior of the inmate.
  1. Officers will watch for signs of emotional distress that may indicate the prisoner is a danger to himself or others.

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2. In the event the prisoner displays behavioral signs of concern, officers will move the inmate to holding until a Mental Health Counselor conducts an assessment of the inmate.

**D. Emergency Release from Custody:**

- a. No staff member of the Erie County Jail has the authority to release an inmate from custody.
- b. Release from custody must be approved in the form of a journal entry from the court of jurisdiction over the inmate.