



SECURITY Do's & DON'TS

DO ask for and comprehend the facility's security rules for volunteers. Every facility is different. Volunteer status can be immediately revoked for even the slightest violation of rules, willful or otherwise. Volunteer status is a privilege that must never be tested. In some cases the entire ministry may be jeopardized.

DO know and understand what is considered contraband in your facility. Seemingly ordinary items such as chewing gum and spiral notebooks may pose security threats.

DO dress conservatively, especially if you are ministering to members of the opposite sex. What may be modest to you may be otherwise to those deprived of contact with members of the opposite sex. Follow facility guidelines.

DO be respectful of facility staff at all times and obey them promptly and without argument. Clarification can be obtained after the fact.

DON'T share any personal information with inmates. While some inmates are genuinely interested in knowing you, some may be looking for ways to exploit or manipulate you. Be safe by sharing nothing.

DON'T take any actions or distribute any materials without securing permission from the chaplaincy or the authorities. One time permission may be granted for some ministry related materials. Giving a Bible to an inmate would be considered distributing contraband. The rule of thumb is "Nothing in, Nothing out."

DON'T be conned or manipulated no matter how innocent your response may seem. Never be a middleman by passing along notes, letters, conversations, etc., either inside or outside the facility.



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YPM MINISTRY DO'S & DON'TS
DO pray before you enter the facility.

DO be respectful of inmates at all times. Even narrow prejudices or slight feelings of superiority will negate your presence and purpose.

DO be yourself and express your feelings honestly and genuinely.

DO be objective, disapproving when it is warranted, as well as praising, supporting and encouraging when it is warranted. Always speak the truth in love.

DO keep all conversations with inmates confidential unless you believe that the life or the safety of the inmate or others may be in jeopardy.

DO let inmates know, prior to any possible disclosure of information related to past crimes, that religious volunteers are not afforded confidentiality privilege. If they share information about unsolved crimes and **if you are subpoenaed**, you would be required to testify against them. Be sensitive to where conversations may be heading.

DON'T use personal physical contact with inmates other than a handshake. Avoid being alone with an inmate of the opposite sex.

DON'T ask an inmate why they are incarcerated. It interferes with and is irrelevant to the ministry.

DON'T offer legal or **any** professional advice to inmates. Your role is to provide spiritual support and guidance and nothing more. Going beyond this role will jeopardize you, the inmate, and the ministry.

DON'T expect thanks or be misled by flattery. Remember, **it is not about you**. Given their past and the difficulties inmates experience, you may even experience hostility at times. Don't be shocked; retain your composure at all times.

NEVER make a promise you cannot keep. Learning to trust others may be a key factor in an inmate's rehabilitation.

REMEMBER God's forgiving and transforming grace is everywhere, regardless of the intensity of sin and perceived hopelessness.

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry
PO Box 60182, Harrisburg, PA 17106
717-512-2718 www.yokefellowship.org

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