I. AUTHORITY

The Commissioner of Corrections adopts this policy pursuant to the authority contained in 34-A M.R.S.A. Section 1403.

II. APPLICABILITY

Entire Maine Department of Corrections

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Maine Department of Corrections to provide for a system of two-way communication between staff and prisoners/residents/clients. It is also the policy of the Department to ensure that staff at all levels appropriately convey rules, policies and procedures, and practices to prisoners/residents/clients and to ensure that prisoners/residents/clients are able to interact and communicate with staff.

IV. CONTENTS

Procedure A: Communication with Prisoners/Residents/Clients, General
Procedure B: Verbal Communication

V. ATTACHMENTS

None

VI. PROCEDURES

Procedure A: Communication with Prisoners/Residents/Clients, General
1. Each facility Chief Administrative Officer and community corrections Regional Correctional Administrator shall develop and maintain a system of open communication between prisoners/residents/clients and staff by:

   a. maintaining a written request/response system that minimizes delays in responding to prisoner/resident/client requests by the staff members to whom they are addressed;

   b. distributing to prisoners/residents/clients up to date written information describing rules, policies and procedures, practices, programs and services, and other appropriate information;

   c. ensuring that those prisoners/residents/clients who require assistance in understanding written or verbal communications due to hearing impairment, limited English proficiency, developmental disability, or other reason are provided with appropriate assistance;

   d. keeping prisoners/residents/clients appropriately informed of changes in scheduling or programming through verbal and written communications;

   e. supporting and enforcing appropriate personal interactions and communications with prisoners/residents/clients;

   f. providing staff with the authority to make decisions and the ability to make recommendations concerning security, classification, services and programs.

2. The Chief Administrative Officer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officers, or other designee, of each correctional facility, and designated department heads shall visit the facility’s living and activity areas at least weekly to encourage informal communication between staff and prisoners/residents and to informally observe living and working conditions.

3. Any formal meetings between staff and prisoners/residents/clients shall be documented as to date, names of staff and prisoners/residents/clients present and general subjects of the meeting.

Procedure B: Verbal Communication

1. Language and demeanor of staff communicating with, and in the presence of, clients must be of unquestionable professional standards. Verbal communication between staff and prisoners/residents/clients should be positive
in scope. Staff shall make every effort to respond to questions and concerns of prisoners/residents/clients, as soon as possible.

VII. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

ACA:

ACI - 4-4016  Written policy, procedure, and practice provide for a system of two-way communication between all levels of staff and inmates.

ACI - 4-4126  The facility should encourage staff/inmate interaction. The facility has a management system that provides staff with the authority to make decisions, the ability to make recommendations regarding security, classification, services and programs for inmates.

ACI - 4-4180  Written policy, procedure, and practice facilitate personal contact and interaction between staff and inmates.

ACI - 4-4185  Written policy, procedure, and practice require that the warden/superintendent or designee, assistant warden/superintendent(s), and designated department heads visit the institution’s living and activity areas at least weekly to encourage informal contact with staff and inmates and to informally observe living and working conditions.

4-ACRS-7D-36  There is a system of communication between all levels of staff and offenders.

4-JCF-2A-12  The facility administrator or designee, assistant facility administrator(s), and designated department heads visit the facility’s living areas at least weekly to encourage informal contact with staff and juveniles and to informally observe living and working conditions.

4-JCF-6A-13  There is an established system of two-way communication between all levels of staff and juveniles.