

Appendix: Mail scanning policies by state, 2026

This appendix describes the mail scanning policies of state and federal prison systems. It contains useful information on when mail scanning was implemented, where the processing actually takes place, and who conducts it. For more information, please see [our mail scanning toolkit](#).

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE UPDATES

for April 28, 2026

Exposing how mass incarceration harms communities and our national welfare

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Mail scanning isn't the solution to drug use in prisons — here's why

Prisons across the country are stripping away physical mail to combat drug smuggling, severing family bonds in the process. But mail scanning focuses on the wrong part of the problem, failing to prevent overdoses and leaving officials aiming at a constantly shifting target.

by Emmett Sanders

Updated data and charts:
Women's incarceration,
national prison population
counts, psychological distress
behind bars, and more

At Prison Policy Initiative, we're
known for our powerful
visualizations that highlight the
injustices of the criminal legal
system.

In [this brand new piece](#), we

State/ Jurisdiction	Status of mail scanning	Method	Where	Who conducts	Effective date of mail scanning policy or contract	Legal mail
<u>Alabama</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility		ICSolutions	10/25	Handled at facility
Alaska*	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities			Unknown		
<u>Arizona</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Texas	Securus	12/25	Handled at facility
<u>Arkansas</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Florida	Unknown	9/25	Handled at facility
California	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Colorado</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities	At Facility	Colorado	Internal	Unclear	Handled at facility
Connecticut	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Delaware</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities	Central Processing Facility	Nevada	Pigeonly	4/22	Handled at facility
<u>Federal Bureau of Prisons</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at most facilities	At Facility	Various	None (internal)	Various	Legal mail must be vetted by Special Investigative Services. Mail is opened in front of the person, who receives the photocopy of the envelope and contents.
<u>Florida</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities	Central Processing Facility	Florida	J-Pay ; Smart Communications	1/22	Pursuant to the amended rule, attorneys must register and obtain a unique tracking number for legal mail sent to inmates. Inmate legal mail postmarked on or after September 15, 2025, that does not include an Attorney Registration Number (ARN) and a unique Legal Mail Tracking Number (LMTN), as defined in Rule 33-210.102, Florida Administrative Code, will be

**As we noted previously, our information about mail scanning in Alaska and Kentucky comes from people directly impacted by mail scanning policies, and not from Department of Corrections websites or news coverage.*

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						returned to the sender unopened. Inmate legal mail sent without an ARN or a unique LMTN on or before September 14, 2025, will be processed by mailroom staff.
Georgia	No mail scanning in effect					
Hawaii	No mail scanning in effect					
Idaho	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Illinois</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	Illinois	Internal	10/25	Pending Multifactor authentication for legal mail.
<u>Indiana</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	Indiana	None	7/20	“Legal mail or privileged correspondence shall be copied and distributed according to the approved facility directive. The incarcerated individual shall only receive the contents of the mailing container along with a photocopy of the parcel showing sender’s name, return address, and postmark date. The mailing container and packing material shall be destroyed daily.”
<u>Iowa</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities	Central Processing Facility	Nevada	Pigeonly	7/20	Handled at facility
Kansas	No mail scanning in effect					
Kentucky*	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities			Unknown	Unknown	
Louisiana	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Maine</u>	No mail scanning in effect	At Facility	Maine	Internal	9/18	“Policy 21.2 Prisoner Mail VI. Procedures Procedure D: Outgoing and Incoming Privileged Mail 16. “Incoming privileged mail shall be handled in the same manner as

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						incoming general mail, except that it shall not be opened without the prisoner being present, it shall not be photocopied, and staff shall not remove stamps, address labels, or the envelope.”“”
Maryland	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Massachusetts</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	Massachusetts	Internal	11/22	<p>“(4) In order to prevent fraudulent privileged mail from entering DOC facilities, the DOC may implement an Attorney Verification System (AVS). If an AVS is established, the Department shall create internal procedures, that at a minimum, consist of the following:</p> <p>(a) Any attorney wishing to send privileged mail must attempt to participate in the AVS; (b) Forms/applications to participate in the AVS must be completed in their entirety; (c) Procedures to process mail from an attorney who does not attempt to comply with the AVS, or if the Department is not able to verify the privileged mail through the AVS; (d) Incoming privileged mail may not be opened by a Department employee except in the presence of the addressee inmate and for the purpose of receiving and receipting of any funds enclosed for the inmate and/or ascertaining that its contents are free of contraband.”</p>
<u>Michigan</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	Michigan	<u>Regular mail, internal; TextBehind verification for legal mail</u>	10/20	“Legal mail: All attorneys and their representatives must be registered and verified through TextBehind and include a QR code on all envelopes containing legal mail. All legal mail must prominently display a QR code issued by TextBehind.

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						MDOC Mail Room staff shall verify the QR code against the registered sender. To avoid inadvertently breaching any attorney-client privilege, any legal mail without a valid QR code or that has an unscannable QR code shall be returned to the sender unopened.”
<u>Minnesota</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	<u>TextBehind</u>	10/22	<p>“Incoming mail that meets the definition of attorney-client privileged mail must have</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a QR code from TextBehind and must contain the attorney’s name in the destination or return address along with terms such as “attorney at law” or “law offices” on the a. iii. iv. v. envelope. Attorney-client privileged mail without a verified QR code or improperly addressed will be returned to sender. <p>When delivering attorney-client privileged mail to an incarcerated person, staff must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scan the QR code to verify its legitimacy; and ii. In the presence of the incarcerated person, staff must test the envelope and contents for contraband (if possible). Skim the contents to ensure that it is legal in nature. Provide the envelope and contents to the offender. If the item contains contraband, staff must write an incident report and enter the envelope and contents into evidence. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/draft-mike.html”
<u>Mississippi</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at one or a few facilities			Unknown	Unknown	

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<u>Missouri</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities			Securus	7/22	Handled at facility
<u>Montana</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	<u>TextBehind</u>	12/24	Handled at facility
<u>Nebraska</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	TextBehind	12/21	Normally at facility. However, "Incoming privileged mail photocopy procedures for the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, Reception and Treatment Center and Nebraska State Penitentiary. Additional facilities may be designated to photocopy incoming mail at the discretion of the deputy director-prisons operations pursuant to Title 68, Chapter 3. As an additional measure to prevent contraband or illicit substances from entering the facility, the steps listed below will occur, including the use of photocopying and shredding."
<u>Nevada</u>	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>New Hampshire</u>	No mail scanning in effect	At Facility	New Hampshire	Internal	10/21	Handled at facility
<u>New Jersey</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Nevada	Pigeonly	2024	Handled at facility
<u>New Mexico</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Florida	Smart Communications	12/21	Handled at facility
<u>New York</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	New York	Internal	8/21	Currently scan legal mail for drugs via RaySecur. Are attempting to pass legislation to digitize all legal mail.
<u>North Carolina</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	TextBehind	10/21	Handled at facility

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<u>North Dakota</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Florida	Securus	6/21	Handled at facility
<u>Ohio</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Ohio	Internal	2/22	https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/drc.ohio.gov/Forms/Visit_Attorney%20Info%202021.pdf
<u>Oklahoma</u>	No mail scanning in effect	Central Processing Facility	Texas	Securus	2/24	Handled at facility
<u>Oregon</u>	No mail scanning in effect				Upcoming plans to implement scanning	
<u>Pennsylvania</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Florida	Smart Communications	9/18	<p>“Any attorney, court, or non-attorney/court entity wishing to send privileged correspondence must fill out a control number request form(opens in a new tab).</p> <p>Numbers will only be issued to attorneys who represent inmates or to verified court/court entities. Attorneys not representing inmates or other organizations that do not meet the criteria of a verified court/court entity can use Smart Communications for all correspondence.</p> <p>Envelope must be properly addressed and contain the following: Attorney or court control number associated with the law office. Secondary authentication number/time code issued for that week (for attorneys only)</p> <p>The attorney control number, court control number, other control number, and/or secondary authentication number should only appear on the outside front of the envelope.”</p>

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Rhode Island	No mail scanning in effect					
South Carolina	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>South Dakota</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	At Facility	South Dakota	Internal	11/22	Handled at facility
<u>Tennessee</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	TextBehind	11/25	Handled at facility
<u>Texas</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Texas	Securus	9/23	Handled at facility
<u>Utah</u>	No mail scanning in effect	Central Processing Facility	Utah	Internal	1/25	Handled at facility
Vermont	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>Virginia</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Virginia	Internal	4/17	Legal mail sent to VADOC's Centralized Mail Distribution Center, scanned for illicit substances, then delivered via USPS Priority mail the same business day. https://vadoc.virginia.gov/general-public/legal-correspondence/
Washington	No mail scanning in effect					
<u>West Virginia</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	TextBehind	2017	Handled at facility
<u>Wisconsin</u>	Scanning incoming personal mail at all facilities	Central Processing Facility	Maryland	TextBehind	12/21	Handled at facility
Wyoming	No mail scanning in effect					