

COVID-19 Survey Results: Vandalia Correctional Center

The John Howard Association (JHA) is an independent citizen correctional oversight organization that goes into prisons to monitor conditions of confinement and treatment of people who are incarcerated; we fight for a fair and humane system and for government transparency and accountability. For 119 years we have been the eyes and ears of the public inside Illinois' prisons, reporting what we see, hear and learn inside facilities and using this information to recommend policy and practice changes and advocate for system reform.

It is critical that we know and understand how people in prison are experiencing the COVID-19 health crisis and what the government must do to meet the health needs of people in prison. To further this end, JHA launched a special system-wide COVID-19 survey to enable us to hear directly from those who are in prisons about prison conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey results reported herein indicate how 332 people imprisoned at Vandalia Correctional Center responded to survey items contained within the COVID-19 survey during the time frame of April 24th to May 20th 2020. As of April 24th, 2020, there were 829 people imprisoned at Vandalia. Thus, this sample of survey respondents consists of 40.05% of Vandalia's prison population. COVID-19 surveys that were completed after May 20th will be accounted for in JHA's work and analyses conducted in the future, but are not reported below.

JHA provided prison administrators with enough survey packets (COVID-19 survey, informed consent notice/instruction sheet, and business reply envelope addressed to JHA) so that every person imprisoned at Vandalia had an opportunity to participate in the COVID-19 survey if they chose to do so. Because some people who submitted a survey did not answer all questions within the survey, the count of people who responded to each question is less than the overall sample of 332.

The results of the surveys JHA collected from people imprisoned at Vandalia Correctional Center are tabulated on the pages that follow.

Tables of Results by Individual Survey Items:

Q1: How did you get information from IDOC about COVID 19 prevention?		
Paper bulletin on unit	174	52.41%
Inmate info channel on TV	93	28.01%
Verbal communication by staff	52	15.66%
Other	54	16.27%
I did not get this information	43	12.95%
Total does not add to 100% for this question because more than one answer could be selected		

Q2: Did you have enough soap to regularly wash your hands in the last week?		
No	158	48.92%
Yes	144	44.58%
Unsure	21	6.50%
Total	323	100%
No response: 9 (2.71%)		

Q3: How often did you get cleaning chemicals from IDOC to clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week (examples: soap, bleach, Citral Green or peroxide)?		
Once a day	84	26.25%
2 to 3 times last week	31	9.69%
Once last week	51	15.94%
None	154	48.13%
Total	320	100%
No response: 12 (3.61%)		

Q4: Did you get enough cleaning chemicals to thoroughly clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week?		
No, I did not get enough to make cell clean	101	30.98%
Yes	45	13.80%
Unsure	30	9.20%
No, I did not get any cleaning chemicals	150	46.01%
Total	326	100%
No response: 6 (1.81%)		

Q5: Did the common areas you have access to get cleaned at least two times a day in the last week (examples: dayrooms, showers)?		
No	110	33.95%
Some areas cleaned, but not all	156	48.15%
Yes, all areas were cleaned	44	13.58%
Unsure	14	4.32%
Total	324	100%
No response: 8 (2.41%)		

Q6: Have you tried to get medical care because of COVID-19 in the last week?		
No, because I did not want to	40	12.27%
No, because I was not sick	223	68.40%
Yes, but no response from staff	52	15.95%
Yes, and staff responded	11	3.37%
Total	326	100%
No response: 6 (1.81%)		

Q7: Would you tell IDOC staff (medical or security) if you were sick because of COVID-19?		
No	44	13.58%
Yes	238	73.46%
Unsure	42	12.96%
Total	324	100%
No response: 8 (2.41%)		

Q8: Did you go to yard at least once in the last week?		
No, not allowed to	54	16.46%
No, did not want to	89	27.13%
Yes	185	56.40%
Total	328	100%
No response: 4 (1.20%)		

Q9a: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by washing their hands often?		
No	213	65.70%
Yes	69	21.30%
Unsure	42	13.00%
Total	324	100%
No response: 8 (2.40%)		

Q9b: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by covering their mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?		
No	211	66.14%
Yes	63	19.75%
Unsure	45	14.11%
Total	319	100%
No response: 13 (3.92%)		

Q9c: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use (example: phones)?		
No	246	76.16%
Yes	46	14.24%
Unsure	31	9.60%
Total	323	100%
No response: 9 (2.71%)		

Q9d: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?		
No	289	89.75%
Yes	22	6.83%
Unsure	11	3.42%
Total	322	100%
No response: 10 (3.01%)		

Q10a: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by washing your hands often?		
No	22	7.05%
Yes	288	92.31%
Unsure	2	0.64%
Total	312	100%
No response: 20 (6.02%)		

Q10b: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by covering your mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?		
No	31	9.57%
Yes	288	88.89%
Unsure	5	1.54%
Total	324	100%
No response: 8 (2.41%)		

Q10c: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use (example: phones)?		
No	99	31.03%
Yes	212	66.46%
Unsure	8	2.51%
Total	319	100%
No response: 13 (3.92%)		

Q10d: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?		
No	228	71.47%
Yes	76	23.82%
Unsure	15	4.70%
Total	319	100%
No response: 13 (3.92%)		

Q11: Could you take a shower at least 3 times last week?		
No	30	9.29%
Yes	293	90.71%
Total	323	100%
No response: 9 (2.71%)		

Q12: Did you get laundry service in the last week (whites and blues)?		
No, was not offered	48	14.77%
No, do not want to use laundry service	7	2.15%
Yes, and my laundry was cleaned	193	59.38%
Yes, but they did not use detergent	77	23.69%
Total	325	100%
No response: 7 (2.11%)		

Q13: Did you get at least one free phone call in the last week?		
No	252	78.02%
Yes	35	10.84%
Yes, but the call cut out early	3	0.93%
This does not apply to me	33	10.22%
Total	323	100%
No response: 9 (2.71%)		

Q14: Did you get a free video visit in the last week?		
No	206	63.58%
Yes, and it worked	22	6.79%
Yes, but bad service/ cut short	49	15.12%
This does not apply to me	47	14.51%
Total	324	100%
No response: 8 (2.41%)		

Q15: Could you send and get mail in the last week?		
No	52	16.20%
Yes	257	80.06%
This does not apply to me	12	3.74%
Total	321	100%
No response: 11 (3.31%)		

Q16: Did commissary run on schedule this week?		
Yes, full shop	8	2.50%
Yes, limited shop	182	56.88%
Yes, but not my unit's shop week	27	8.44%
No	103	32.19%
Total	320	100%
No response: 12 (3.61%)		