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Mailing this to someone inside? Print one side only, black ink, plain white paper. No staples or clips. Put their full name and number on the envelope. Some facilities limit pages per envelope: check their mail rules first.

FEDERAL PRISON GUIDE

VISIT PACKET: FCI MENDOTA

Federal Correctional Institution · Mendota, CA · Phone 559-274-4000

VISIT CARD · CUT OUT AND KEEP IN THE CAR

WHEN

Saturday, Sunday and federal holidays

No regular visiting Monday through Friday unless a federal holiday falls on one of those days.[1]

HOURS

8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Visitors are not processed before 8:00 a.m.[1]

VISITS

unlimited visits

The rules say that ordinarily there are unlimited visits during the regular visiting times.[1]

WHO CAN COME

4 approved visitors

No more than 4 approved visitors at one time, not counting an infant who stays on a lap.[1]

BRING

16

Everyone over 16 needs a valid state or government photo ID (driver's license or passport).[1]

CALL FIRST

559-274-4000

Call before you drive, every time.

THE BOP'S OWN PAPERS DISAGREE. For the Special Housing Unit, the visiting rules (January 23, 2025) say Saturday and Sunday, 8:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The handbook (February 12, 2025) says Fridays, 8:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The handbook also says "six (4)" visitors at a time, while the visiting rules say 4. Call 559-274-4000 before you drive.[1]

BEFORE YOU GO: GET ON THE LIST

1. When they arrive, your loved one gets the Visitor Information Questionnaire (BPS-629.052) and a handout. They mail the form to you.
2. Fill out the **Visitor Information Form (BP-629)** and the Release Authorization Form, and mail both back to their Unit Counselor with a **photocopy of your government ID**. Incomplete forms are rejected.
3. The counselor runs a background (NCIC) check. **It is their job to tell you** if you are approved. Do not drive until they do.
4. The list holds no more than **20 approved visitors**. Immediate family (mother, father, step-parents, foster parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, children) can be added if named in the pre-sentence report.
5. Someone with a prior criminal conviction is reviewed by the Unit Manager, then the Warden decides. They can be turned down if your loved one did not know them before prison.
6. To change the list, they send an Inmate Request to Staff Member form or raise it at their Unit Team review.[1]

AT THE DOOR

PARKING	Park in the lot for the prison you are visiting. Visitors may not stay in their vehicles. A driver who is not visiting has to leave the property until the visit is over.[1]
SCREENING	Everyone goes through the **metal detector**, and staff stamp your hand and check it with a black light. An **ION spectrometer** tests for drugs. A positive test or an attempt to bring in banned items means **no entry for at least 48 hours**. Pins, plates or a pacemaker: bring medical papers.[1]
MONEY FOR VENDING MACHINES	No more than **$25.00 in bills of $5.00 or less**, or a debit card. Visitors may buy food for them but may never give them money.[1]
WHAT YOU CAN CARRY	One small clear plastic bag or change purse (no bigger than 6 inches by 6 inches), photo ID, and the money above. Medicine only if life-supporting, and only the dose for the visit. For each infant: 4 diapers, 1 pack of wipes, 1 change of clothes, 2 clear bottles (3/4 full, liquid only), 2 unopened jars of baby food, 1 receiving blanket, 1 clear cup, 1 plastic spoon, and 1 small clear tote about 12 inches by 12 inches.[1]
LOCKERS	Coin-operated lockers in the waiting area hold coats, hats, jackets, keys, cell phones, wallets and watches. Purses, packages and toys are not allowed in. Visitors may not bring anything to give or show to the inmate.[1]
WHAT TO WEAR	Shoes must have a heel or strap to the foot. No flip-flops, slippers, shower shoes or open-toed shoes. Dresses and skirts no shorter than knee length with no slit above the knee. No shorts (unless the child is under 12), tank, halter, midriff or strapless tops, spandex, bib overalls, hooded clothing, camouflage, sheer clothing, hats, watches, scrubs, or anything that looks like a staff uniform. No khaki, tan, orange or green clothing, and no gray sweats. No underwire bras or other undergarments with metal.[1]
CONTACT	An embrace and a kiss when you arrive and again when you leave. Nothing more. A private area is set aside for nursing mothers.[1]
RULE BREAKING	If a visit is ended for breaking the rules, those visitors cannot come back for at least 48 hours.[1]

ALL VISITING DAYS AND HOURS

WHERE	DAYS	HOURS
FCI and satellite camp (general population)	Saturday, Sunday and federal holidays	8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Special Housing Unit (SHU)	Saturday and Sunday (visiting rules); Friday (handbook). Non-contact rooms only.	8:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Visitors are not processed before 8:00 a.m. or after 2:00 p.m. Visits end at 3:00 p.m. If the room is full, visits can be cut to two hours.[1]

No regular visiting Monday through Friday unless a federal holiday falls on one of those days. The rules ask families to call the prison before visiting to check for changes.

GETTING THERE

From Fresno	Highway 180 West to Panoche Road. Turn left on Panoche Road, which becomes California Avenue. Turn right into the institution.
From Fresno Yosemite International Airport	East on Clinton Way to North Peach Avenue. Merge onto 180 West. Turn left on Panoche Road, which becomes California Avenue. Turn right into the institution.
Traveling south on Highway 5	Take Exit 379, Shields Avenue, toward Mendota. Turn left onto Little Panoche Road West/Shields Avenue, right onto North Fairfax Avenue, left onto Belmont Avenue, right onto North San Diego Avenue, then left onto California Avenue. Turn left into the institution.
Traveling north on Highway 5	Take exit 349, Derrick Avenue/33 North. Turn right onto 33 North, then left onto California Avenue. Turn right into the institution.

WHAT TO WEAR TO A VISIT

The BOP beats to its own drum. The front desk has the final say. Keep a spare outfit in the car.

FCI MENDOTA

Rules dated **01/23/2025** (1 year old)

Official rules (PDF) (bop.gov/locations/institutions/men/men-visit.pdf) En español (PDF) (bop.gov/locations/institutions/men/men-visit_sp.pdf)

Skirts and dresses	Dresses/skirts at least knee-length (0 inches above); no slit above knee.
Shorts	No shorts unless on a child under 12.
Colors to avoid	No khaki or tan clothing. No green clothing. No orange clothing. No gray sweat gear. No plain T-shirts in gray, khaki, green, orange, white, red or yellow.
Leggings, spandex	No spandex style clothing.
Bras and metal	No undergarments containing metal (underwire bras).
Camouflage, military	No camouflage clothing.
Shoes	No open-toed shoes; shoes need a heel or strap. No slipper-type shoes, shower shoes or flip-flops.
Children	Children under 12 may wear shorts.

ALL 28 RULES, IN THE BOP'S OWN WORDS

LENGTH AND FIT

- Dresses/skirts at least knee-length (0 inches above); no slit above knee.
  BOP wording: "and may not have a slit above the knee."
- No shorts unless on a child under 12.
  BOP wording: "Shorts(unless on a child under the age of 12)"
- No tank tops.
  BOP wording: "4. Tank tops"
- No midriff tops.
  BOP wording: "6. Midriff tops"
- No halter tops, strapless tops or strapless dresses.
  BOP wording: "7. Strapless tops"
- No sheer or see-through clothing.
  BOP wording: "3. Sheer clothing"
- No spandex style clothing.
  BOP wording: "9. Spandex style"
- No gray sweat gear.
  BOP wording: "Sweat gear in gray color"

COLORS AND UNIFORMS

- No khaki or tan clothing.
  BOP wording: "14. Khaki or tan color (any clothing)"
- No green clothing.
  BOP wording: "16. Green color (any clothing)"
- No orange clothing.
  BOP wording: "15. Orange color (any clothing)"
- No gray sweat gear.
  BOP wording: "13. Sweat gear in gray color"
- No plain T-shirts in gray, khaki, green, orange, white, red or yellow.
  BOP wording: "Plain T-shirts in gray, khaki, green, orange, white, red and yellow colors"
- No camouflage clothing.
  BOP wording: "12. Camouflage clothing"

BRAS, UNDERWEAR AND METAL

- Undergarments are required for admission.
  BOP wording: "HOWEVER, UNDERGARMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION."
- No undergarments containing metal (underwire bras).
  BOP wording: "wearing undergarments containing metal (i.e. underwire bra)."

SHOES

- No open-toed shoes; shoes need a heel or strap.
  BOP wording: "4. Open-toed shoes"
- No slipper-type shoes, shower shoes or flip-flops.
  BOP wording: "Slipper type shoes"

HATS, HOODS AND COATS

- No hats; only religious headwear.
  BOP wording: "Only religious head wear may be worn."
- Religious headwear allowed after search.
  BOP wording: "Visitors will be allowed to wear religious headwear only after it has been searched."
- No hooded clothing.
  BOP wording: "11. Hooded clothing"

CHILDREN

- Children under 12 may wear shorts.
  BOP wording: "Shorts(unless on a child under the age of 12)"

EVERYTHING ELSE

- No sexually suggestive/offensive writing or gang writing/logos.
  BOP wording: "wearing any clothing that contains sexually suggestive/offensive writing, or writing/logos that reference gangs."
- No items revealing buttocks or crotch area.
  BOP wording: "Items revealing any part of the buttocks or crotch area"
- No bib overalls.

BOP wording: "10. Bib overalls"

- No medical scrubs or clothing resembling staff uniforms.
  BOP wording: "19. Clothing resembling staff uniforms"
- No watches.
  BOP wording: "20. Hats 21. Watches"

IF THEY SAY NO

- Provocatively or inappropriately dressed visitors denied visiting.
  BOP wording: "Any visitor who arrives provocatively or inappropriately dressed will be denied the privilege of visiting."

MAIL AND THE MAILING ADDRESS

Your full name
Your street address
City, State ZIP

STAMP

Their committed name, exactly as the BOP Inmate Locator shows it

Reg. No. _____-___

FCI Mendota

P.O. Box 9

Mendota, CA 93640

The envelope, filled in. Their name and number must match the BOP Inmate Locator exactly.[2]

The handbook says to address mail: **Federal Correctional Institution, inmate's committed name, register number and unit, P.O. Box 9, Mendota, California 93640**.[2]

> **USE THE P.O. BOX ONLY.** Never mail to the street address.

THE MAIL RULES

MAIL DAYS	Incoming mail is handed out Monday through Friday right after the 4:00 p.m. count.[2]
OPENED AND CHECKED	Incoming mail is opened and checked for contraband unless it is properly marked legal mail. At intake they sign a form on how they want incoming mail handled.[2]
LEGAL MAIL	Must be marked "Legal Mail - Open only in the presence of the inmate." It is opened in front of them and they sign a log. Certified mail that does not qualify is opened in the mail room first.[2]
MONEY	The mail room does not accept money. Send it to the National Lock Box: Federal Bureau of Prisons, inmate name and register number, P.O. Box 474701, Des Moines, Iowa 50947-0001.[2]
AFTER RELEASE	Mail that arrives after the release date is forwarded for 30 days to the release address.[2]
WHAT THEY SEND OUT	Outgoing mail (except legal mail) must not be sealed and needs a TRULINCS-made label with the name and address of the person they write to.[2]

Sources

1. MEN 5267.09C, Visiting Regulations (January 23, 2025) bop.gov/locations/institutions/men/men-visit.pdf
2. FCI/SPC Mendota Admissions and Orientation Handbook (February 12, 2025) bop.gov/locations/institutions/men/men_ao_handbook.pdf