

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) at the Essex County Department of Corrections

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was signed into Federal law in 2003 by President George W. Bush. It was created to address the problem of sexual misconduct in all confinement facilities. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice released national PREA standards to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment in confinement facilities.

The Essex County Department of Corrections (ECDOC) is responsible for protecting the rights of inmates/detainees placed under the Department's custody and supervision. The Department has established a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and acts to prevent, detect and respond to all allegations and incidents of sexual misconduct.

All Essex County Department of Corrections employees, volunteers and contractors receive training on their duties and responsibilities under the Department's zero-tolerance policy and are informed that they are required to immediately report any incident or allegation of sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

The ECDOC investigates all allegations of inmate/detainee-on-inmate/detainee and staff-on-inmate/detainee sexual misconduct. You can report sexual misconduct in multiple ways:

Contact the ECDOC PREA Coordinator at 973-274-7733
Contact the ECDOC Internal Affairs Bureau at 973-274-7557
Contact the ECDOC Warden's Office at 973-274-7761

Information for family and friends of those in custody of the ECDOC

The Essex County Department of Corrections takes every report of sexual misconduct seriously and all allegations will be referred for investigation. All staff, volunteers and contractors receive training in the awareness and reporting of sexual misconduct. All victims will be provided with medical and mental health care. Staff/inmate/detainee sexual misconduct is against the law in New Jersey.

THE ESSEX COUNTY DEPT OF CORRECTIONS RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF INMATES/DETAINEES TO BE FREE FROM SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

What is PREA?

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is federal law that went into effect in September of 2003 and prohibits sexual misconduct in correctional settings such as prisons, jails, lockups, juvenile facilities and Immigration Services/ICE detention facilities. Sexual misconduct under this law includes:

- Inmate/detainee-on-inmate/detainee sexual assault and abuse
- Staff-on-inmate/detainee sexual misconduct (sexual/inappropriate relationships with inmates/detainees)
- Inmate/detainee-on-inmate/detainee and staff-on-inmate/detainee sexual harassment

The Essex County Department of Corrections (ECDOC) has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct of any kind and will impose discipline for such misconduct, up to and including termination and

criminal prosecution for staff as well as discipline for inmates/detainees who victimize other inmates/detainees. Incidents of sexual misconduct will also be referred to law enforcement when applicable. ECDOC policies prohibiting sexual misconduct apply to all inmates/detainees, employees, contractors, and volunteers.

How would I know if my family member/ friend is being threatened/ victimized?

A victim may:

- Have trouble sleeping
- Suffer a loss of appetite
- Experience stomachaches and/or headaches
- Display anger or rage
- Seem unusually anxious
- Express concern about their safety
- Seem unusually detached or withdrawn
- Have episodes of crying or shaking
- Not care about their personal hygiene

What can I do to help?

There are many ways to help someone who has been a victim of sexual misconduct during confinement, including:

- Don't be judgmental
- Listen; be supportive and patient
- Encourage them to report the abuse
- Reporting abuse on their behalf

Having a family member or friend who has been the victim of sexual misconduct can be very upsetting. For this reason, it is also important to take care of yourself.

Can I report sexual abuse/misconduct for my family member/friend?

YES, you can. If you have information regarding a ECDOC inmate/detainee who has been the victim of sexual misconduct while under ECDOC custody, you may:

Contact the ECDOC PREA Coordinator at 973-274-7733

Contact the ECDOC Internal Affairs Bureau at 973-274-7557

Contact the ECDOC Warden's Office at 973-274-7761

The ECDOC has a zero tolerance for all forms of retaliation against any person because of his/her involvement in the reporting or investigation of a PREA claim.

As part of our continued effort to protect our inmate/detainee population and create a safe environment, we have made our Department's Investigative Protocol for all PREA Investigations available to the general public in our Visitor Lobby upon request.