

COVID-19 Update

May 8, 2020

4 p.m.

SCDC will begin temporarily accepting and processing new offenders at Lieber Correctional Institution while the department deals with a COVID-19 quarantine at Kirkland Reception & Evaluation Center.

The department is preparing a housing unit and offices at Lieber to perform this function, and it expects to begin accepting new offenders there May 18. All new intakes will be quarantined for 14 days after arrival.

Once open, counties in the lower part of the state will take their male offenders directly to Lieber, which is in Dorchester County. Counties in the upper state will bring their offenders to Columbia, and SCDC will transport them to the Lowcountry facility.

To make room for this new function, SCDC transferred 121 offenders from maximum-security Lieber to Ridgeland Correctional Institution, which is medium-level security. These offenders were scheduled to be moved to a lower custody level as part of the department's new reclassification system.

These offenders, a faith-based character unit, were monitored and screened several times in the days leading up to the move. They also were screened upon arrival at Ridgeland. No offenders or staff at either institution are positive for COVID-19.

SCDC has been averaging about 25 new offenders per week since the courts shut down because of the coronavirus. During normal times, that number often is more than 100.

SCDC is in the process of notifying county detention facilities of the change.