

About the Northwest Detention Center

The Northwest Detention Center is an immigration prison located in Tacoma, Washington. Opened in 2004, the NWDC is a privately owned and operated by the GEO Group on behalf of U.S. immigration and Customs Enforcement. The NWDC's current capacity is 1575, making it one of the largest immigration prisons in the United States.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project's Tacoma office is dedicated to serving detainees at the NWDC, with 10 full-time staff currently focused on providing direct legal representation. Our staff meets with detainees one-on-one to access their immigration cases and identify forms of relief; conducts workshops to help detainees fill out applications for relief and prepare for court; identifies wrongfully detained US citizens and facilitates their release from detention; advocates for the most vulnerable of the detained population, including the mentally ill, elderly, and handicapped; and provides "Know Your Rights" presentations to detainees to explain the legal process and potential forms of relief.

Basic Information

The NWDC is located in Tacoma, Washington, about 40 minutes south of Seattle. The address for the facility is **1623 East J Street, Tacoma, WA, 98421**. Parking is available on the street in front of the prison.

Address: The NWDC is about 1.2 miles from the Tacoma Dome Bus Station, located at 610 Puyallup Avenue, Tacoma, Washington.

What is an "A" Number? An "A" number is a 9-digit number assigned to non-citizens in the United States by the Department of Homeland Security. If the person detained did not have an A number prior to detention, one will be issued when they are processed into the detention center. This number is printed on all paperwork issued by the government regarding immigration, and can also be found on bracelets worn by detainees.

Visitation

How do I find out if someone is at the NWDC? If you have the full name and A number of the person you are looking for, you can try to find out if they are being held by:

1. Accessing the [ICE Online Detainee Locator System](#)
2. Calling ICE at **(253) 779-6000 ext 14**
3. Visiting the NWDC and asking to speak with ICE

Who is allowed to visit?

1. Immediate Family: mothers, fathers, stepparents, foster parents, brothers, sisters, children, spouses, including common-law spouses, grandparents, uncles, aunts, in-laws, godparents or any other person who has custodial responsibility for the detainee.
2. Other Relatives, Friends, Associates: cousins, non-relatives and friends, unless posing a threat to the security, good order of the institution and available space.
3. Members of the clergy with proper identification.
4. Minors: at the Associate Warden's discretion, a minor without positive identification may be admitted with a parent, guardian, or adult visitor. Minors are to remain under the direct supervision of an adult visitor, so as not to disturb other visitors. Disruptive conduct by minors, accompanying adults or detainees may cause termination of the visit.

Do not visit if you are undocumented or have doubts about your current immigration status. If you lie about your status, this could have future consequences.

What do visitors have to bring? All adults must have photo identification. A driver's license or other state I.D. is best.

How many visitors can a detainee have? A maximum of two adults and two children may visit a detainee at any one time. This regulation is to be interpreted flexibly and subject to exceptions.

Visiting hours: Visitation hours are from 8:00am to 11:00am and 1:00pm to 3:30pm **Thursday through Monday**, including holidays. The prison is closed to visitors on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Phone Calls and Mail Rules and Regulations

Can detainees make phone calls? Detainees can make calls from the NWDC using a personal PIN number issued to them if they have money in their accounts. The rate for calls is 10 cents for local calls and 15 cents for long-distance calls. Detainees can also make collect calls. If you are having trouble receiving collect calls from the detainee, you should call 1-866-348-6231. Certain calls, such as those to free legal services and consulates, are free. There are instructions for how to make free calls above the phones in each unit. Family and friends can deposit money in a detainee's phone account by going to www.talton.net and locating the detainee by name. You can deposit money for a detainee to make phone calls generally, or to call your number specifically. There is a 7% transaction fee. NOTE: ICE and the NWDC reserve the right to record any phone calls made from or to the facility, except for attorney calls where the attorney has specifically requested the number be exempted from monitoring.

Can I call a detainee? You can not call a detainee directly.

Can I leave a phone message for a detainee? In case of family or other emergencies, or to leave messages for a detainee, you can call 253-396-1611. Messages must be short and usually serve only to prompt the detainee to call you back. Messages are delivered daily, between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. You can also leave voicemail messages of up to three minutes in length for detainees by calling (888) 516-0115 for a \$2.95 fee.

Can detainees send mail? Detainees can send mail at any time at their own expense. Detainees who are indigent can send up to three pieces of regular-size mail at the facility's expense per week. Detainees can send up to three pieces of regular-size mail at the facility's expense per week.

Can I send mail to a detainee? Detainees can receive mail, as long as it does not include any prohibited items that are considered contraband, such as paperclips or rubber bands. Also keep in mind that detainees cannot usually receive original identity documents, and it is preferable to send copies of such documents if they are for the detainee's legal case.

Use the following address:

[Detainee Name]

[Alien "A" Number]

1623 East J Street, Suite 5

Tacoma, Washington 98421-1615

Money and Property Rules and Regulations

How do I put money in a detainee's account? To put money in a detainee's account, you can drop off cash or a U.S. Postal Money Order with the reception officer between 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. You can also send U.S. Postal Money Orders. Sending cash is strongly discouraged. Money orders other than those issued by the U.S. Post Office will not be placed in the detainee's account. You can also [make deposits online](#), by telephone at 1-866-345-1884, or by using one of the machines in the lobby of the NWDC. You can [deposit money for telephone use](#), by telephone at 1-866-516-0115, or by using one of the machines in the lobby of the NWDC. Both you and the detainee should receive a receipt for any funds accepted.

How do I give money or property to someone who is getting deported? Detainees will receive in cash any money left in their account. You can put money in the detainee's account using the instructions above. The money should be available within 30 minutes.

Detainees must follow these procedures to receive property to take with them when they are deported:

Step 1: The detainee fills out a KITE available in their unit to receive the property. The request must list what property the detainee is receiving and who will be bringing the property.

Step 2: The form will be sent for approval by ICE.

Step 3: Once the request is approved, the detainee will be notified and a letter will be sent to front desk specifying who is bringing the property and what the property is. The detainee will also be told when their friend/family should bring the property.

Step 4: The person dropping off the property comes to the front desk of the detention center from 4:30 - 6:00 PM.

What kind of property can a detainee typically receive for deportation? One suitcase, no more than 40 pounds, filled with clothes.

Can detainees get their IDs back after they are released from the detention center? If the detainee is being deported, ICE will not return state or US-issued IDs. ICE will return foreign national IDs. If the detainee is released on bond, state ID documents will be returned.

Bonds and Bond Hearings

What is a bond? A bond is money paid to the government in return for the detainee's release. It is a guarantee that the detainee will go to all court hearings and comply with the judge's final order.

Who sets a bond? ICE can set a bond. Detainees usually receive a piece of paper with the heading: "Notice of Custody Determination" on it that has the amount of bond that ICE set.

The Immigration Judge can also set a bond. If ICE did not set a bond amount, the detainee can ask the Judge to set one by asking for a Bond Hearing. The detainee can also ask the Immigration Judge to lower the bond that ICE set by requesting a bond hearing. However, the Immigration Judge does not have the power to lower everyone's bond amount. Also, the Immigration Judge has the power to raise the amount or take the existing bond away.

Can the Immigration Judge set a bond for everyone? No. The Immigration Judge cannot set a bond for certain people. For example, people who are being charged as an "arriving alien" (someone who is picked up at a port of entry, like a land border or the

airport), or people who were convicted of certain types of crimes, cannot get a bond from the Judge.

How does the detainee request a bond hearing? The detainee can either ask the Immigration Judge for one in person at the first master calendar hearing, or the detainee can fill out a Motion Requesting Hearing for Bond Determination and mail to the court: Tacoma Immigration Court, 1623 East J Street, Suite 3, Tacoma, WA 98421. NWIRP can assist pro se detainees with this process.

What is the best way for a detainee to prepare for a bond hearing? The Immigration Judge is looking for two things: 1) Whether the detainee is a danger to the community; and 2) Whether the detainee is a “flight risk” – meaning, whether the detainee is likely to go to all future court hearings. Detainees are encouraged to invite family members and friends to bond hearings and provide supporting documents to the Immigration Judge, such as letters from friends, family and employers.

The entire bond must be paid for the detainee to be released.

Immigration Court

How do I check a detainee's immigration case status? The easiest way to check the status of a case in immigration court is to call their automated number: 1-800-898-7180. You will need the detainee's full 9-digit A number. If the A number only has 8 digits, enter a “0” at the beginning of the number.

This line will provide basic information about the case:

- 1) The date, time and location of the next hearing;
- 2) Any decisions issued by the Immigration Court;
- 3) The status or availability of appeals; and
- 4) Other relevant deadlines.

If the individual's “A” number is not found in the system, do not worry. Sometimes there is a delay in entering cases into the system. Call back at a later date and try again.

If the problem persists, it may be that the individual's case is not scheduled to go before a judge, such as when the individual has been previously removed from the country, or when he or she has signed a stipulated order of removal. If you need more information, you can call the Tacoma Immigration Court directly at 253-779-6020. Press zero (“0”) to skip forward and speak with court staff.

Where do detainees attend court? The Tacoma Immigration Court is located in the detention center. The address for the court is:

Tacoma Immigration Court

Northwest Detention Center

1623 East J Street, Suite 3

Tacoma, WA 98421

What are the stages of immigration court proceedings? The first type of hearing a detainee will attend is called a Master Calendar Hearing. This hearing is similar to an arraignment in criminal court. At the hearing, many detainees will be brought to the courtroom at once, and the judge will spend a short time talking to each one. The judge will explain the government's charges and inform the detainee of his or her rights. The judge will ask whether the detainee agrees with the government's charges, listed in a document called a "Notice to Appear" (NTA). At this hearing, the detainee can also ask for a Bond Hearing, to get a bond or to get bond lowered. The detainee can also ask for more time to find a lawyer by requesting a Continuance.

If the detainee is eligible for a form of "relief" (a defense against deportation or removal) and wishes to apply for this relief, the judge will schedule an Individual Hearing. This also sometimes called a "merits hearing," since this is when the detainee must present arguments for why he or she qualifies and should be allowed to stay in the U.S. The government attorney will also make arguments for why the detainee should be deported. Each side can present evidence and call witnesses. The judge will make a decision based on the arguments made at this hearing.

If the detainee disagrees with the judge's decision at the Individual Hearing, he or she has the right to appeal to Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). To appeal, the BIA must receive a "Notice of Appeal" from the detainee within 30 days of the decision issued at the Individual Hearing. The detainee can make arguments in the Notice of Appeal, or can indicate that he or she will be sending arguments in a written statement, called a "brief." If the detainee submits a brief, he or she must do so by the time set by the BIA, or the BIA will reject the appeal. All arguments and decisions are made in writing, and are sent by mail.

If the detainee disagrees with the BIA decision, he or she has the right to appeal to Federal Circuit Court. The Circuit Court for California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, among others, is the 9th Circuit.

Another method of relief, mainly for those who have been ordered deported but who ICE is unable to deport, can challenge their detention through a Writ of Habeas Corpus. Individuals interested in pursuing this option should contact their local Federal Public Defenders for more information.

