

Contact Frequency in Probation and Parole Supervision

Brief¹

These eight recommendations are grounded in research, existing county policies, and operational capacity. They are intended to guide the development of written contact-frequency policies and supervision standards. Departments should adapt them to local court requirements, available resources, and population characteristics.

1. **Anchor All Contact Decisions to a Validated Risk Assessment.** Adopt a third- or fourth-generation [risk-needs instrument](#) (e.g., ORAS, LS-CMI) as the mandatory basis for determining supervision level. Establish graduated contact standards by risk tier.
2. **Minimize Contact for Low-Risk Individuals.** Create an administrative or low-intensity tier for validated [low-risk cases](#) (e.g., phone, kiosk, or remote reporting) with minimal contact requirements.
3. **Front-Load Contacts in the First 6 Months.** Concentrate officer time, treatment referrals, and field contacts early in supervision, when violations and rearrests are most likely.
4. **Pair High-Risk Supervision with Programming.** For high- and moderate-high-risk individuals, [structure contacts](#) around cognitive-behavioral treatment (CBT), prosocial modeling, and case plan progress, not compliance monitoring alone.
5. **Implement Earned Discharge and Step-Down Pathways.** Create formal earned-compliance credits or [behavioral incentive](#) dates that allow low- and moderate-risk individuals to shorten supervision terms when they demonstrate compliance.
6. **Adopt Blended Virtual and In-Person Contact Standards.** Virtual contacts can be effective within a blended supervision model, particularly for lower-risk individuals, routine check-ins, and those demonstrating stability.
7. **Concentrate Field Contacts on High-Risk Cases.** Field contacts reduce recidivism for [high-](#) and [very-high-risk](#) individuals but are ineffective or counterproductive for low-risk individuals.
8. **Maintain Offense-Specific Enhanced Standards.** [Specialized supervision](#) requirements for sexual offense, domestic violence, and violent offense cases remain necessary due to statute, clinical evidence, and victim safety obligations. Maintain small, specialized caseloads, victim contact protocols, containment models, and offense-specific risk tools.

¹ A more detailed report, including the supporting research, statewide contact-frequency averages, and the recommended appointment structure, can be found in “*Contact Frequency in Probation and Parole Supervision Evidence-Based Guidance for County Adult Probation & Parole Departments*”.

Contact Recommendations by Category²

Framework for Developing Written Contact Standards

All contact frequencies should be anchored to validated risk assessment scores and adapted to local court expectations, department resources, and population needs.

Category	Contacts	Field Contact	Key Guidance
Low-Risk	Kiosk/phone; monthly or less	Not required routinely	Move to administrative status promptly. Prioritize earned discharge eligibility. Re-intensify only for new arrests or clear patterns of noncompliance.
Moderate-Risk	2-3 contacts/month (front-load); step down with compliance and/or success plan (case plan) progress	Periodic; case plan driven; at least one field contact within first 90 days	Pair contacts with CBT/treatment interventions. Conduct step-down review at 6 months. Blended virtual/in-person contacts are appropriate.
High-Risk	3-4 contacts/month (front-load); step down with compliance and/or success plan (case plan) progress	Regular; prioritize first 6 months; at least one field contact within first 60 days	Contacts must be paired with evidence-based programming. In-person strongly preferred.
Specialized Caseloads (Sex Offense, Intimate Partner Violence, Violent Offense, Firearm, etc.)	Per specialized caseload standards; minimum twice monthly	Per containment model, DV standards, and public safety needs; first field contact within the first 45 days	Use offense-specific risk tools. Maintain small, specialized caseloads. Apply RNR principles within specialized structures; risk-matched dosage improves compliance.
Newly Released / First 3-6 Months	Elevated based on stability, resources, and level of support	Front-load per risk score; at least one field contact within the first 60 days	Begin planning pre-release. Establish housing, treatment, and employment linkage before supervision starts. First contact within 24–72 hours post-release.

²The contact recommendations currently exceed the average contact standards reported by county adult probation and parole departments in a 2025 survey.