
FIRST DAY OF AN INSTITUTIONAL VISIT



Monday

- 7:45 a.m.** The investigator arrives at the front counter of the medium-security facility. She greets the officer on duty, whom she has known since 1997 when he worked on a living unit at Drumheller. As always, the officer opens her briefcase and computer bag and searches for contraband. The investigator passes through the metal detector. During this process she surveys the area and chats with the officer to get a feel for the level of tension and any significant happenings inside.
- 8:00 a.m.** The investigator meets with the Deputy Warden's secretary, who arranges interviews in this institution. The investigator will meet with inmate groups (the Inmate Committee, the Native Brotherhood and the Lifers Group, among others) and then with individuals. Interviews are scheduled in a vacant office near the "keepers" office. The names are from the list the investigator provided a week ago and from inmate requests received since the announcement of the visit was posted in all living units. The investigator will also be seeing inmates in the segregation unit, the hospital and the special needs unit for inmates with mental health problems. The investigator relies on the secretary to handle any delays or missed appointments. There are three committees and 37 names on the list.
- 8:15 a.m.** The investigator has a confidential meeting with the Institutional Security Officer to be informed of any safety or security concerns about inmates on the list as well as current issues in the institution as a whole. This is for the investigator's personal safety and to provide her with possibly useful background for what she will see and hear in the next four days.
- 9:30 a.m.** The meeting with the Inmate Committee (IWC) is winding down. The Chair is an old acquaintance serving ten years. He has a realistic outlook on dealing with the Warden and staff but is also respected by most inmates. The Committee can be counted on to get to the point. Issues relate to access to employment, purchase of food for private family visits, screening of visitors for an upcoming social visit and the effects of the CSC policy banning purchase of personal computers for cell use. The investigator provides information and advice on how to proceed with most items and undertakes to raise the social visit and the employment situation with the Warden. The Committee's comments on computers will be folded into the mediation that the OCI is about to have with CSC National Headquarters.
- 11:30 a.m.** The investigator observes the noon meal—quality of the food, progress of the line, cleanliness etc. She tries to make time every trip for at least a couple of these observations of various processes.
- 11:45 a.m.** Lunch with the Deputy Warden, two Unit Managers and the Chief of Health Services—an informal discussion of how things are going.
- 4:00 p.m.** Thirteen individual interviews completed. Some inmates repeated the IWC concerns. Other had specific problems on which the investigator referred the inmate to staff or to the complaints and grievance process (with instructions to contact the investigator if the inmate encounters obstacles). Four had problems requiring attention during the visit. The investigator called the Warden immediately on a denied temporary absence to attend a family funeral. She will see the Chief of

Health Services in the morning on two cases and she will visit the Head of Programs on an inmate who was suspended and who risks not completing an essential course in time for his parole hearing.

4:15 p.m. The investigator meets with the Grievance Coordinator to review timeliness of grievance replies and to inquire about topics that have involved an unusually high number of grievances. The big issue lately is visits. “Procedural Fairness/Redress” is one of four areas of focus that the OCI is reviewing this year to get a sense of the “health” of institutions and to support systemic inquiries at the national level. The other areas are “Segregation,” “Programming/Conditional Release” and “Transfers.” On each topic the investigator has pulled data from CSC’s informatics system and is expected to make inquiries with responsible staff where concerns arise. She will review any problems at her debriefing with the Warden on Thursday afternoon.

8:00 p.m. In the hotel after supper the investigator tidies up her reports on what she has

reviewed today and enters them in the OCI’s case tracking system. She begins to frame issues for her debriefing meeting and to draft her institutional report. In the report she will provide a detailed analysis of each area of focus as well as other systemic issues that come up during the visit. The report must be completed within two weeks of returning from the institution. In the same period she will also have to write to the Warden detailing significant cases, concerns, findings and recommendations. Follow-up with staff that can’t be done at the institution will be completed by phone or email.

She finalizes her schedule for tomorrow:

- 8 a.m. in the segregation unit
- 11:30 meeting with the Chief of Psychology on cognitive skills programming
- tour of the yard and the landscaping shop during lunch hour
- eight interviews after 1 p.m.
- meeting with the Elder and the Native Liaison on access to sweat lodges for aboriginal inmates

10:00 p.m. Call home. Bed.