



# Corrections **FAST FACTS**

*Drugs in prisons are an unfortunate fact around the world.*



## Measures in institutions to fight against drugs

- Metal detectors
- Ion scanners
- Drug detection dogs to search visitors, staff, contract workers and all inmates who may be returning to the institution following a temporary absence.
- Search by staff of cells, buildings, and grounds, as well as offenders
- Urine test

## Drugs in Prisons

### Substance Abuse – a Global Issue

Correctional systems around the world battle the sad reality of drugs in prisons. Canada is no different. The fact is that most inmates in Canada's penitentiaries – eight out of ten – have substance abuse problems. Drugs in prisons are a great concern because they lead to criminal activity in jail, violence and the transmission of disease.

To battle the problem of drugs in prisons, the Correctional Service of Canada has programs and policies in keeping with Canada's Drug Strategy, which seeks to reduce the supply and demands for drugs. In practice, that means staff try to keep drugs from making their way into the institution, assist inmates with their substance abuse problems, and help reduce the harm associated with substance abuse.

### Keeping Drugs Out

Across the country, more than 5,000 people enter and leave Canada's penitentiaries every day. Metal detectors, ion scanners, and drug detection dogs are used to search visitors, staff, contract workers and all inmates who may be returning to the institution following a temporary absence.

Prison staff also search cells, buildings, and grounds, as well as offenders, to find drugs. Every month, five per cent of offenders are chosen at random for a urine test to detect drug use. This information can be used for discipline and also to identify people who need help with substance abuse problems.

# Drugs in Prisons

## Helping Drug Users

The link between drug use and criminal activity can be broken thanks to prevention and treatment programs offered in penitentiaries. Many different programs have been developed to help inmates with substance abuse problems based on research and best practices.

The best prevention and treatment programs are targeted to the specific needs of a certain population. This is why special programs are available to women and are being developed for Aboriginal offenders.

## Reducing Harm

Injection drug use in prison leads to the spread of serious diseases. In conjunction with prevention and treatment programs, institutions may offer methadone programs or bleach kits to sterilize needles. The purpose of these activities is not to condone drug use, but to reduce the spread of diseases such as hepatitis or HIV/AIDS. Research has shown that harm reduction strategies such as these have not lead to an increase in drug use. On the contrary, these programs help reduce the spread of disease and link drug users with health services.

## Protecting Society

More than half of federal offenders report that they were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs when they committed the offence that led to prison. This underlines the importance of addressing the problem of substance abuse in Canada's penitentiaries. Research has shown that offenders who take part in prevention and treatment programs are less likely to re-offend once they have returned to the community. Helping offenders with substance abuse makes Canada's society safer.

*Prisons house the highest proportion of people with substance abuse problems in Canada.*

*The rate of HIV/AIDS infection in prisons is ten times higher than the general population.*

*Effective treatment for substance abuse is critical to successful re-entry into society.*

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