



SPECIAL REPORT

Inmate Services and
Conditions of Custody in
Saskatchewan
Correctional Centres

October 2002

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Inmate Living Conditions



Inmate Living Conditions

Introduction

The subject of living conditions covers many aspects of the correctional setting ranging from the quality of food to inmate safety. Addressing every issue that affects the inmates' living environment is not warranted; instead, we have considered only those issues that we believe are the most noteworthy.

In her inquiry into events at the federal Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario, Madame Justice Arbour commented on living conditions and provided the following as a reflection of international standards:

...Living accommodation which is appropriately lit, ventilated and cleaned; nutritional food well prepared and served; appropriate bedding and clothing regularly laundered; regular exercise and sports; regular access to medical services; educational, vocational training, and work opportunities as part of daily life; access to religious representatives; access to books and other educational and recreational opportunities (in Canada radio and television); social case work and other counselling to assist the inmate towards a law abiding and self supporting life after release; and an ongoing opportunity to remain in contact with friends and family.¹

In addition to providing an environment meeting or exceeding the standards described by Arbour, correctional institutions legally owe a duty of care to inmates in their custody. This means, among other things, that they are required to provide a safe physical environment, reasonable access to health services, and protection from harm, whether self-inflicted or inflicted by others.

Efforts to minimize the risk of physical and/or psychological injury to both Corrections staff and inmates need to accommodate both the rehabilitative objective of the correctional institution and the behavioural profile of the inmate population.

A common response to concerns about safety is the practice of isolating the most unpredictable and violent inmates in individual cells and allowing only a short period of solitary exercise outside the cell each day. The intent, of course, is to minimize safety and security risks, but the inevitable result is an environment poorly suited to rehabilitation.

The challenge in this situation is to find a workable balance that results in a safe environment for both inmates and correctional staff without compromising rehabilitative efforts any more than necessary.

With regard to providing a safe environment, it is important to note that each centre has an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee that plays an active role in ensuring staff safety. Since many issues that concern staff safety also affect inmate safety, these committees indirectly play an important role in ensuring a safe living and working environment for inmates.

In the course of our review, we discovered that in general, the centres are well managed and the inmates, for the most part, feel safe. We did, however, uncover areas where improvement is needed, such as bed space management, building design, and daily regime. We are also concerned about the lack of consistency among the four centres on some issues.

There is a risk that some readers will conclude from our observations in this section that living conditions in the correctional centres are too good for criminals. Before coming to that conclusion, the reader will want to consider that inmates in the correctional centres serve their sentences in an environment where their liberty is severely restricted. This loss of liberty is the punishment for their offence. It affects every moment of an inmate's waking life, and only those who have had to cope with this loss can truly appreciate its severity.

¹ Louise Arbour, *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at The Prison For Women in Kingston* (Public Works and Government Services of Canada, 1996), 11.



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Inmates serve their sentences in a large, spartan institution that suffers the limitations of most large residential institutions: the food is average, privacy is limited, and the daily routine is monotonous. We strongly doubt there are many people who would willingly trade their freedom for life in a correctional centre for any reason.

Entering Prison

The Strip Search

All inmates undergo a strip search when they are admitted to a correctional centre. According to the inmate representatives, the four correctional centres are not consistent in the privacy afforded during the search.

Inmates in the Prince Albert and Pine Grove correctional centres had no complaints about privacy. However, inmates in Saskatoon are stripped in an area that provides a direct line of sight to the reception area, where women are working.

In Regina, the strip search room for new admissions does not present any significant privacy issues. However, inmates leaving for or returning from court or temporary absence are searched in a sally-port that is monitored by closed-circuit camera. Some inmates expressed concern that the intimate search is observed by female staff members in the control room.

The Regina Correctional Centre responded that strip search rooms are as private as possible given the physical limitations. The cameras in the sally-port are there for security reasons because staff members are often locked in the room along with the inmates. There is a privacy screen, but it can provide privacy to only one inmate at a time, and there are often several inmates in the room.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Ensure that when inmates are stripped, it is done with minimum affront to their dignity and is not witnessed by members of the opposite sex, either directly or indirectly.

Contacting Family Members

Families of newly admitted inmates need to know where their son, daughter, sibling or spouse is and if they are all right. Since the first few days in custody are often very stressful, especially if it is a new experience, inmates need the support of their families as soon as possible. Remand inmates are entitled to call their families after they are admitted to the correctional centre, but may not get an opportunity to do this for some time.

Inmates in Saskatoon's remand units thought it would be difficult for a new inmate to get a turn to use the phone, because other inmates control the phones on the units. Inmate representatives in other centres did not raise this as a concern.

Even when inmates can get a turn to use the phone, making long-distance calls can be a problem. Remand inmates have to call collect, which is difficult for some families. Inmates were generally unaware that corrections workers have the discretion to allow them to use the staff phone for long-distance calls.

At this time, there is no policy addressing newly admitted inmates' needs to let their families know where they are and that they are safe, and no policy advising staff members that they have the discretion to let inmates use the staff phone if they are not able to make a collect call.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Draft policy to facilitate communication between newly admitted inmates and their family members or close relatives, preferably on the first day of incarceration.
- + Draft policy advising corrections workers that they have the discretion to let inmates use the staff phone if they cannot make a collect call.

The First Nights in Jail

When asked about their experience of the first few nights in jail, all inmates claimed that they were very stressful, and that they received little support from staff members. Of course, not all new arrivals are there for the first time. Many inmates are familiar with the routine and cope well enough. For those with no prior experience, however, it is not surprising that the experience is intimidating.

In Saskatchewan, the situation of first-time inmates and their special needs is not addressed in policy. All inmates receive an orientation when they are placed on a living unit, but the system relies on the good will of staff members to help inmates who are having trouble adjusting. This might work if it were obvious who was having trouble but, inmate culture being what it is, an open display of emotional distress cannot be expected.

In some jurisdictions in England and Wales, arrangements for the first night in custody include placement in a designated and appropriately equipped cell to ease the adjustment to prison life for first-time inmates. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales recommended that this be done in all prisons in England and Wales.²

This idea has merit and should be considered by Corrections. At the very least, more recognition of the additional stress experienced by inmates spending their first nights in jail is in order.

RECOMMENDATION

- + Ensure that both policy and practice recognize the special circumstances of inmates serving their first few nights in jail.

Overcrowding

Prison overcrowding has many negative effects upon inmates. Research has demonstrated that prison overcrowding creates competition for limited resources, aggression, higher rates of illness, increased likelihood of recidivism and higher suicide rates.³

Overcrowding in Saskatchewan's correctional centres has been a persistent and growing problem for nearly twenty years, and some of the symptoms described above have appeared. Corrections has managed to keep the number of incarcerated inmates within acceptable limits but is faced with ever-increasing numbers of remand inmates. The net result is a system that is trying to accommodate more people than it was designed for.

Crowded conditions inevitably result in the inmates' personal space being diminished. Furthermore, the ability to keep incompatible inmates apart is already limited, and overcrowding has made this challenge that much more difficult. It is generally accepted that the consequences of overcrowding have contributed to increased tensions.

Overcrowding is discussed in detail in the section titled "Bed Space." Other observations that are made in that section are that there are fewer programming opportunities and more inmates have to serve their time in a correctional centre outside their home geographic area.

² *Unjust Deserts: A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons of the Treatment and Conditions for Unsentenced Prisoners in England and Wales* (London: Home Office, 2000), 33.

³ John Howard Society of Alberta, *Prison Overcrowding: a Briefing Paper* (1996), 1.



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Privacy

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Most people value their privacy. Furthermore, there are laws that establish our right to privacy. With the exception of necessary limitations due to the circumstances of incarceration, inmates maintain their right to privacy. If the inmates' right to be treated in a dignified and humane manner is to be respected, these limitations should go no further than strictly necessary to maintain the security of the institution and the safety of staff and inmates.

Overcrowding and Cell Arrangements

Some of the efforts to manage overcrowding have been made at the expense of inmate privacy. For example, the men's centres in Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon have been forced to convert programming space into open dormitories, and occupy some cells with two inmates rather than one.

The first place most inmates look for privacy is in their cell, but not all cell arrangements are equally private. Inmates who have a cell to themselves are, of course, afforded the most privacy. Other arrangements compromise privacy to save space.

All four centres use dormitories, which are large, open rooms filled with single or bunk beds. Dormitories are reserved for low-security inmates

who Corrections believes are able to get along in a dormitory setting.

Saskatoon and Regina house fewer than ten per cent of their inmates in dormitories. At Pine Grove and Prince Albert almost one third are housed in this way.

With the exception of Regina, all centres mix remand and sentenced inmates in the dormitories. Not surprisingly, the inmate representatives told us that inmates prefer single cells to the dormitories, where privacy is minimal.

Double-bunking, or placing two inmates in the same cell, is another space-saving measure. Saskatoon reported that 40% of inmates share a cell, while Prince Albert and Regina both reported this number at about 15%. Pine Grove does not house inmates in this way.

Sharing a cell with another inmate is arguably a greater intrusion on privacy than sharing space in a dormitory. There are many hours during the day when inmates are confined to their cells, and in a small cell there is literally nowhere to go to get away from each other. In a dormitory, there is more space to move around and a choice of inmates to socialize with.

On a more personal note, another area of concern is toilet privacy. While our society considers using the washroom to be a very private matter, not all inmates have access to a private toilet. Dormitories and some units in the centres have common washrooms that afford privacy. The most private cell space is a single cell with a solid door and a small sight window. This is followed by the situation in the old part of the Regina centre where the toilets in the cells are in plain view through the bars. The inmates with the least privacy are those who have to share cells.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners were approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as an authoritative guide to meeting binding treaty standards. These rules require toilet facilities that "enable every prisoner to comply with the needs of nature when necessary and in a clean and decent manner."⁴ The circumstances under



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which some inmates have to use a toilet can hardly be characterized as "in a decent manner."

Other jurisdictions have addressed this issue by installing small, foldaway privacy screens in front of the toilet. This would be an improvement, although still less than satisfactory for inmates who share a cell.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Take steps to eliminate the need for double-bunking and dormitories.
- + Supply privacy screens for all toilets in cells.

Provided staff members do not read inmates' mail without a valid reason, screening for contraband is a legitimate security precaution and is not unreasonably intrusive. Even so, it is understandable that inmates would rather that staff members open their mail when they are present so they can be confident that the contents are kept private.

Whether staff open the mail in front of the inmate or the inmate opens their mail in front of staff should not make any significant difference.



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Mail Privacy

Inmates are not assured of private mail correspondence except for privileged communications.

The policy for outgoing mail is the same in all four centres: it is opened only if a reasonable belief exists that it contains illicit material. The policy for incoming mail, on the other hand, is not the same. Pine Grove, Regina and Saskatoon staff open incoming mail and look for contraband, but they are not supposed to read the contents.

In Prince Albert, inmates open their own mail in front of staff. On occasion, incoming mail is opened on the authority of the director if there is a reasonable suspicion that its contents might constitute an offence.

RECOMMENDATION

- + Screen incoming mail with the intended recipient present, unless that would be a security risk.

Phone Privacy

For most inmates in the provincial correctional centres, telephone conversations are relatively private. In the Regina remand unit, however, inmates are not assured of private telephone conversations because staff members in the unit office, which is out of sight of the inmates, have the ability to listen in on an extension line. Inmates are informed that their calls may be monitored, but we were advised by the Regina centre that they rarely are. Calls are only to be monitored with the director's approval, and that approval is only to be granted if there is a reasonable suspicion that the nature of the call would constitute an offence or a threat to the security of the institution, staff or inmates.

⁴ United Nations, Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955, 1977), section 12.



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In theory this would be all right, but it presents at least one problem for the inmates. If they want to submit a complaint to the Ombudsman (or anyone else) about a staff member, they worry that their call may be listened to without authorization. Some inmates have told us that rather than risk being overheard by a staff member, which they believe may result in reprisals, they simply don't call.

It should be noted that remand inmates in Regina can request the use of another phone that is private. However, arranging the use of a private line can be complicated by other demands on staff members that can result in lengthy delays.

In some cases, inmates could write a letter to the Ombudsman, but this isn't always a practical option. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the inmate's literacy level and the time remaining until a court appearance and possible release, using the mail may take too long to be of any use.

RECOMMENDATION

+Provide remand inmates in the Regina Correctional Centre with better access to a private telephone line.

Physical Environment

The Design of the Correctional Centres

The design of a correctional centre not only plays a role in creating a safe and secure environment, but also plays a role in creating an environment conducive to rehabilitation.

The living units in the correctional centres in Saskatoon and Prince Albert and the three new living units in Regina were all built after 1980 and reflect current correctional philosophy on inmate rehabilitation. These areas emphasize a normalized living environment where inmates are encouraged to learn to live cooperatively in a residential setting.

The layout is open, with a central common area and a small kitchen off to one side. Cells are arranged on two levels in a circle around the

common area. Each inmate is provided with a private cell, which has a solid door rather than bars and a window facing outside. The objective of this living arrangement is to provide inmates with the best chance of successfully reintegrating into society.

In contrast, the physical layout of the old part of the Regina Correctional Centre does not encourage a normalized living environment. The main part of the Regina centre was built in 1911, with additions added during the 1960s. In all the units except Unit 4 and North G (now a dormitory holding short-term inmates), the cells are barred and aligned side by side in a long row.

Pine Grove has two dormitories and two units where the cells, which have solid doors rather than bars, are aligned in a row.

Both Pine Grove and the old part of the Regina centre were built when the words "power" and "control" characterized the correctional setting. Today, the correctional environment is supposed to reflect Corrections' emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration.

All four centres have problems with lines of sight, some more serious than others. Living units 1, 2, and 3 in Prince Albert and living units A, B, and C in Saskatoon have an area on the second floor that is outside the line of sight of staff members unless they are on the floor or in the second floor staff office.

The pattern of staff and inmate interactions has led to staff mostly using the office on the main floor. The design of the unit assumes that the office on the second floor will be occupied, but it is commonly vacant. Even if staff did use that office, there would still be blind spots because of its location.

In Regina, lines of sight in the new living units are good. In the old units, however, there are problems. Cells are arranged in rows with the unit office placed at one end. Staff members cannot see into the cells without walking down the corridor.



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This problem is compounded on the remand unit because there is no room for an office, or even a chair for that matter, at the end of any of the three levels of cells. As a result, all three levels are monitored remotely from an office on the main floor. This remote monitoring provides a view of the hallways but does not allow staff members to observe activities and movements in the cells.

Although staff members check the remand unit every half hour, it is not possible to see everything that is going on. Inmates on the remand unit have complained to the Ombudsman on many occasions about muscling and intimidation that goes on unnoticed. Pine Grove has problems with lines of sight down cell corridors just as Regina does.

The Regina centre has to cope with other design problems in Unit 4, located in the old part of the centre. Cells in this unit do not have toilets: toilet, shower and washing facilities are located at one end of the unit. This arrangement has always caused problems when the unit is locked down and inmates need to use the washroom.

Due to the design problems with Unit 4, Corrections uses the unit only as a last resort. However, it is opened from time to time as count demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Address the issue of blind spots on the second floor in Units 1, 2, and 3 in Prince Albert and Units A, B, and C in Saskatoon.
- + Deal with the line-of-sight problems down cell corridors in Pine Grove and Regina.
- + Tend to the design problems on Unit 4 at the Regina centre.

Air Quality

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules call for inmates to have access to fresh air whether or not there is artificial ventilation.⁵ None of the centres reported having windows that would



open to allow fresh air in. However, if the air exchange is adequate, especially given the often-severe weather conditions faced in Saskatchewan, having windows that open to the fresh air may not be practical.

None of the four centres reported any significant problems with air quality. The Occupational Health and Safety Branch of the Department of Labour informed us that the data it has shows that there have been no serious deficiencies in air quality in the last 10 years.⁶

The inmates, on the other hand, complained that the air was too dry and that in some areas air circulation was poor. Since inmates are not employees, they have no recourse to Occupational Health and Safety. They could, however, raise a concern about air quality with the Department of Health. In the meantime, we do not think it is unreasonable for Corrections to rely on Occupational Health and Safety's test results.

Lighting Quality

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules also call for inmates to have access to enough natural light to read or work by.

⁵ Section 11.

⁶ Prince Albert Correctional Centre was last tested in October 2000, Pine Grove Correctional Centre in August 1994, Saskatoon Correctional Centre in February 1998, and Regina Correctional Centre in October 2001.



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Pine Grove and Regina reported that all cells receive natural light. This is a bit of an exaggeration in the case of Unit North G in Regina, which is in the basement of the old building. At the top of its north-facing wall, there are three small windows. One of these windows is partially boarded up, and the glass, which is old and stained, filters the light.

The dormitories and the holding cells in Prince Albert and Saskatoon receive no natural light at all. These areas were originally intended to hold inmates only temporarily, and the use of these areas for longer periods has occurred as a result of a substantial rise in the amount of bed space needed. These areas ought to be considered a temporary response to overcrowding, and provision made as soon as possible for bed space that meets minimum standards.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Discontinue placing inmates in cells with no natural light, except as a temporary response to emergency bed space demands.

Cleanliness

Section 14 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules states that "all parts of an institution used by prisoners shall be properly maintained and kept scrupulously clean at all times." All areas of all four centres are cleaned at least

daily by designated inmates, and inmates are responsible for cleaning their own cells. According to most of the inmate representatives we talked to, cleanliness was not an issue.

One exception to this was in Regina, where inmates said the cells in East and West G were "pretty gross". Our enquiries revealed that this complaint is most likely directed to the appearance of these areas rather than the cleanliness. The area is sometimes damp, the lighting is poor and it is commonly in need of paint. These cells were built at the turn of the century and have long since ceased to reflect progressive correctional philosophy.

The inmate representatives from the Pine Grove centre thought that in general cleanliness was all right, but commented that the plumbing often needed repair: toilets were backing up, pipes were leaking, and shower pressure was low. Pine Grove has responded to this concern by stating that problems with the plumbing are addressed as they occur, and that the entire system is showing signs of age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Address the substandard conditions in East and West G in the Regina Correctional Centre.
- + Address the plumbing problems at Pine Grove.

Temperature Control

Temperature control in the centres plays an important role in staff and inmate performance: neither can be expected to function well if temperatures are outside reasonable limits.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules state that "all accommodation provided for the use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating and ventilation."⁷

The Saskatoon and Prince Albert correctional centres were built in the early 1980s and were designed to meet the demands presented by Saskatchewan's extreme temperature fluctuations. Even so, in the late 1990s, when the win-

⁷ Section 10.



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ters were especially cold, both centres had trouble heating their remand and secure units. As a result, their heating systems had to be replaced. Summer temperatures have not been a problem, as they have adequate air conditioning. Complaints about temperature from Saskatoon and Prince Albert are now rare.

The Pine Grove Correctional Centre, on the other hand, was built in the early 1960s and cannot effectively meet demand. The building is not insulated, and therefore takes several days to heat up. This problem is most evident in the fall and spring, when temperatures can fluctuate greatly from day to night. Part of the problem is

and sufficient bedding which shall be clean when issued, kept in good order and changed often enough to ensure its cleanliness."

Inmates in the general population in all centres have essentially free access to laundry services. Those who are confined to their cells either do their own laundry or have an inmate designated by corrections workers do their laundry.

The bedding provided in the four centres includes a mattress, sheets, blankets, and a pillow and pillowcase, all of which are replaced as needed. Until 2002, we routinely received complaints from the old part of the Regina centre



Pine Grove is still using the original heating plant, which can no longer efficiently meet demand. This centre is not air-conditioned.



that, despite additions to the centre in the last forty years, Pine Grove is still using the original heating plant, which can no longer efficiently meet demand. This centre is not air-conditioned.

The old part of the Regina centre faces similar problems. It is still using the original radiant heating system, which cannot efficiently meet demand during the spring and fall. Unit 4 has problems with temperature control because one wall of the cells is an uninsulated outside wall. When this unit is used, the problem will persist. The old part of the Regina centre is not air-conditioned.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Take steps to bring temperature fluctuations in Pine Grove and the old part of the Regina centre within reasonable limits.

Laundry and Bedding

Section 19 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules state that "every prisoner shall, in accordance with local or national standards, be provided with a separate bed, and with separate

about the condition of the mattresses, many of which were little more than pieces of uncovered foam. These were all replaced in 2001 with new, covered foam mattresses.

As of 2002, mattresses for all of the correctional centres were purchased from a manufacturer in Saskatoon. The mattresses are three-inch foam with a fire-retardant cover that is sewn in place to prevent inmates from hiding contraband inside. There are some mattresses with a removable plastic cover for inmates with bladder problems.

The mattresses cannot be washed because the foam does not dry well, so they are washed and disinfected by hand by wiping the cover with cleaning and disinfecting solutions. They are cleaned as needed. If they cannot be cleaned, they are replaced. Mattresses are not cleaned for each new inmate.

If an inmate has a bad back he or she can ask for two mattresses, provided they get a request signed by the centre physician. The chiropractor can also make a request, but it has to go through the physician.



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In our view, laundry facilities and bedding meet acceptable standards.

Clothing and property allowances

In general, inmates are allowed liberal amounts of personal clothing and property. The issues are discussed in detail in the section titled "Inmate Property."

The Daily Routine

Daytime Activities

Section 60 (1) of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules states that "the regime of the institution should seek to minimize any differences between prison life and life at liberty which tend to lessen the responsibility of the prisoners or the respect due to their dignity as human beings."

Part of complying with this rule involves occupying inmates with meaningful activity, at least during the day. Leaving some inmates idle because there are insufficient resources to keep them occupied is contrary to Canada's commitment to comply with the Rules.

Meeting the challenge to comply with international standards is proving difficult for Corrections, which has to cope with rising inmate populations while operating in a climate of fiscal restraint (see "Bed Space"). Some of the correctional centres are managing better than others.

Each centre offers work, education and training (WET) placements to the inmates. There is a considerable amount of overlap between these three categories, with some placements consisting of all three. Examples of placements are unit cleaners, institutional cleaners, metalworking, carpentry, mechanics, adult basic education, and literacy workshops.

The Pine Grove Correctional Centre is the only centre that is able to offer a placement to all its inmates.

Prince Albert reported that all low-security inmates are given a placement and 70% of the general population of all risk categories who are

eligible for a placement either get a placement or are put on a waiting list.

Saskatoon estimated that just over 50% of eligible inmates are given a placement, and Regina estimated that about 75% of eligible inmates are given a placement.

The percentages for the men's centres were provided by each centre and are only rough estimates.

With the exception of a few half-day program placements, inmates with a WET placement go through a day that is structured between the hours of approximately 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

The following schedule at Pine Grove is typical.

Cell doors are opened at 6:00 am and each inmate is responsible to shower, clean up, have breakfast and be ready to go to her work placement by 8:30 am. The inmate returns to the unit at 11:30 am for a count and to receive any medication needed. She then goes for lunch at 12:00. At 12:30, the courtyard is open for inmates who want to go outside. The inmate returns to work at 1:00, where she remains until 4:30. She then returns to the unit for a count and any medication needed. Supper is at 5:00, and at 5:30 the courtyard is opened again for 30 minutes. Leisure activities begin at 6:00 and can include participation in volunteer programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. At 9:00 the inmates are confined to their units unless a special program is taking place. Lockup is at 10:30 pm every night.

Ideally, every inmate should be occupied during the day with some kind of activity. Unfortunately, this is not always possible. Inmates who do not have a placement must remain on their unit, where there is little to occupy them. Some inmates have to cope with this idleness for several weeks, and in some cases, months.

There will always be inmates who are not eligible to participate in an activity for different reasons. Some inmates cannot participate in an activity because there are not enough placements available. Others have been confined to their cell or



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segregated because of their uncontrolled behaviour, or cannot participate in any activity that involves being around other inmates because they require protection. There are inmates who cannot be trusted to participate in any activities. Others may not be capable of being active because they are ill. Some inmates simply refuse to participate in programming and other activities.

Despite these exceptions, leaving inmates idle is contrary to Corrections' objective of preparing inmates for reintegration into the community. Although this may seem surprising to some readers, most idle inmates complain about their forced idleness; they would rather be occupied.

The daily regime for inmates with a WET placement meets the United Nations standards. The regime of the others falls short.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Provide work, education or training opportunities for all eligible inmates.

Meals

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules state that "every prisoner shall be provided by the administration at the usual hours with food of nutritional value adequate for health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served."

Any institution that has to prepare meals for hundreds of people is bound to receive some complaints. One would expect this to apply to a greater degree in correctional centres, where the residents are, for the most part, not all that happy about their general circumstances. Therefore, we were surprised to discover that the quantity and quality of meals at the four correctional centres does not seem to be an issue for the inmates we spoke to.

All of the provincial correctional centres employ journeyman cooks, who are assisted with meal

preparation by inmates. The menu, which is based on the Canada Food Guide, is planned for a three- or four-week cycle.

Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Pine Grove provide three meals a day, seven days a week, with inmates preparing their own breakfast on their units.

Inmates at the Regina centre do not prepare their own breakfast. During the week, they receive three meals a day, and on weekends, in response to the low demand for breakfast, the centre provides a mid-morning meal and supper. These two meals are to be equivalent in calorie content to the three meals provided during the week.

Providing a proper regular diet has not been a problem. Providing special diets, however, has presented some problems. Corrections has a legal obligation to accommodate inmates on special diets for religious and medical reasons.

Although Corrections is obligated to provide special diets, it is not at the mercy of inmates with fickle appetites. Inmates requesting a special diet must show that the request is genuine.

A recent federal court case addressing the question of an inmate's right to a vegetarian diet concluded that just as inmates have a right under section 2 (a) of the Charter to a religious diet, they also have a right to a vegetarian diet based on the right to freedom of conscience.⁸

Furthermore, the diet must be comparable in variety to the diet for the general population. While the centres did not believe that providing a variety of special diet meals was an issue, we heard from some inmates that variety was lacking. This is a contradiction we were unable to resolve.

At the present time, there is no policy on special diets. As of June 2002, in part as a response to

⁸ *Maurice v. Canada (Attorney General)*. 2002 FCT 69.



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the federal court ruling, Corrections was in the process of preparing a provincial policy addressing the provision of special diets.

In addition to the quantity and quality of meals, we looked at sanitation in the kitchens. Complaints from Pine Grove, Prince Albert and Saskatoon have been rare, but we did get regular complaints about cleanliness in the kitchen in Regina prior to extensive renovations in 2001.

Following the renovations, a Public Health Inspector identified five relatively small issues in a Food Premises Report dated October 10, 2001, all of which were resolved within a month.

COMMENDATION

+ To the Regina Correctional Centre for renovating the kitchen area to address sanitation issues.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Ensure that special diets are comparable in quality and variety to the regular diet.

Showers

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules set the minimum number of showers per week in a temperate climate at one.⁹ With the exception of Regina, all centres provide daily showers for all inmates.

In Regina, this only applies to inmates in the general population. Inmates in Regina's segregation unit are allowed to shower only twice per week. This matter is discussed in detail in the chapter titled "Segregation."

Sometimes an inmate will refuse to look after his or her personal hygiene. These inmates, besides being unpleasant to be around, can present a health risk. Staff members respond with counselling and, in extreme cases, may force the inmate to clean up.

Exercise

Exercise is essential to the physical and mental well being of everyone. This is especially true for people who are confined. The Standard Minimum Rules recognize this and set the minimum time for daily exercise in the open air, weather permitting, at one hour.¹⁰ If the weather is not suitable, exercise can be held indoors.

We believe Corrections should accept and apply the rule that sets the minimum time for exercise at one hour. Furthermore, exercise must be meaningful, which means that exercise equipment of some description ought to be available. Also, some centres include time for bathing, making phone calls, and cleaning cells in the calculation of total exercise time, which takes them over the one-hour minimum. However, the rule clearly refers to one hour of physical exercise, which cannot reasonably include time spent doing other things.

⁹ Section 13: "Adequate bathing and shower installations shall be provided so that every prisoner may be enabled and required to have a bath or shower, at a temperature suitable to the climate, as frequently as necessary for general hygiene according to season and geographical region, but at least once a week in a temperate climate."

¹⁰ Section 21: "(1) Every prisoner who is not employed in outdoor work shall have at least one hour of suitable exercise in the open air daily if the weather permits. (2) Young prisoners, and others of a suitable age and physique, shall receive physical and recreational training during the period of exercise. To this end space, installations and equipment should be provided."



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The following discussion of exercise times in the four centres does not count time spent bathing, making phone calls or cleaning cells as exercise time.

All four correctional centres provide at least one hour of daily exercise for inmates in the general population. None of the centres, however, provides a full hour of exercise for all of the other classes of inmates.

Inmates in the Pine Grove Correctional Centre who are being held in the maximum-security unit are allowed only one half hour for exercise.

In Prince Albert, inmates on cell confinement, including inmates in holding cells, also get only one half hour of exercise. Inmates in the secure unit are allowed 90 minutes daily, but this can be reduced to 45 minutes if the inmates choose a passive activity, such as playing cards.

In Saskatoon, inmates in the holding cells get only one half hour of corridor freedom with no exercise equipment provided. Remand inmates get one half hour of exercise every day and one hour on alternate days.

In Regina, inmates in the secure unit get one half hour of exercise every day.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Provide all inmates with a minimum of one hour of meaningful exercise daily, not including time spent on personal hygiene, cell cleaning or other activities.

Visitors

There appears to be general agreement in the Corrections field that continued contact with family and other supports plays an important role in inmate rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.



Interestingly, while the guidelines for prison management in the United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia, as well as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules¹¹ all emphasize the importance of continued contact with family, the furthest any guideline goes is to call for "regular" contact, which is not defined. This may be unavoidable considering the differences in local conditions and resources, inmate profiles, security concerns and community expectations.

Even within Saskatchewan, there are significant differences between the four correctional centres.

In Prince Albert, medium- and high-security remand inmates are allowed two visits a week. Low-security remand and low-, medium- and high-security sentenced inmates get one visit per week. All visits are for two hours.

In Saskatoon, one visit per week is allowed for all inmates except those in remand and urban camps, who receive two per week. All visits are for two hours.

¹¹ Section 37: "Prisoners shall be allowed under necessary supervision to communicate with their family and reputable friends at regular intervals, both by correspondence and by receiving visits." Section 79: "Special attention shall be paid to the maintenance and improvement of such relations between a prisoner and his family as are desirable and in the best interests of both." Section 80: "From the beginning of a prisoner's sentence consideration shall be given to his future after release and he shall be encouraged and assisted to maintain or establish such relations with persons or agencies outside the institution as may promote the best interests of his family and his own social rehabilitation."



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In Regina, general population inmates and regular remand inmates get one visit per week for three hours. Confined inmates and inmates in the secure unit get one visit per week for one hour. At Pine Grove, inmates in the general population get two visits per week for two hours each. Inmates in the maximum-security unit are allowed one visit per week for two hours.

For the protection of staff and inmates and to minimize the chances of contraband making its way into the centre, all visitors are screened. This includes a Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) check. Visitors who violate visiting rules are restricted to non-contact visiting or are banned from visiting depending on the seriousness of the violation.

We looked at other jurisdictions across Canada to determine a standard for visiting privileges and discovered considerable variance. The federal penitentiary in Prince Albert allows all inmates five hours of visiting per day. Each visitor is restricted to three three-hour visits per week. To accommodate visitors who have to travel long distances, weekends are open to out-of-town visitors only.

The Brandon Correctional Centre allows ninety-minute non-contact visits Monday to Friday for remand and high-security inmates. General population inmates are allowed one-hour visits Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Lower security inmates can get an additional one-hour visit on Sunday.



continued contact with family and other supports plays an important role in inmate rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.



We spoke to inmates in each centre about the visiting policies and they raised several issues. Understandably, inmates would prefer more visits with family and other supports. Non-contact visiting was also an issue.

The Pine Grove centre restricts all visits to non-contact visits when drug use in the centre involves more than a few isolated incidents or when they receive information that drugs will be coming into the centre. Inmates reported that non-contact restrictions sometimes last for months. They didn't think it was fair that all inmates should be restricted to non-contact visits because some won't obey the rules.

While we understand this concern, we are not prepared to conclude that in all cases, the desire for contact visits takes precedence over the need to control drug use. Each case would have to be examined separately.

Calgary is more restrictive: all inmates get half-hour visits on Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays. The Vancouver Island Correctional Centre allows one one-hour visit every day for all inmates.

Compared to the jurisdictions consulted, Saskatchewan appears to be about average; however, in keeping with the objectives of rehabilitation and reintegration, we believe an increase in visiting time should be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Maximize visiting hours for all inmates, with due consideration to security.
- + Minimize the use of blanket policies that restrict visiting privileges for all inmates when only some inmates' behaviour warrants restrictions.



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Access to the Library

Although all provincial inmates, both on remand and sentenced, are granted library privileges, the four correctional centres offer very different levels of accessibility to library resources.

At Pine Grove, inmates have direct access to the correctional centre library and can also borrow books from the public library.

Regina inmates can select books from a cart that is brought to the unit by the inmate librarian. The cart holds about 50 books selected at random from the centre's library. Inmates do not have direct access to this library. Requests can be made for particular types of books, but the selection is limited and special requests of this nature are rare. During the winter months, the Regina Public Library Outreach Program comes to the centre once a week to fill requests for books from the public library.

In Prince Albert, as in Regina, library books are delivered on a cart to the units, and there is no direct access to the centre's library. Unlike Regina, the cart contains books requested by the inmates. At present, there is no ability to borrow books from the public library.

Saskatoon operates in the same way as Prince Albert, although the library cart carries books selected at random rather than requested books.

Access to library materials at the four centres appears reasonable. Unfortunately, the selection is limited and few of the books are current. Two of the libraries have been able to provide better service by engaging the services of the local public library. This is a no-cost option that the Saskatoon and Prince Albert correctional centres should explore.

SUGGESTION

+ Explore the possibility of engaging the services of the local public library in Saskatoon and Prince Albert to augment the correctional centres' services.

Emotional and Psychological Environment

Relations Between Inmates and Staff

The understanding that a good relationship between corrections staff and inmates is an important element in rehabilitation and reintegration is not new.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules, which were drafted in 1957, state that "all members of the personnel shall at all times so conduct themselves and perform their duties as to influence the prisoners for good by their example and to command their respect."¹²

Security and safety is also greatly influenced by the nature of the relationships between staff and inmates. Incidents of threats or violence can be minimized if there is open and trusting communication.

In the federal system, great emphasis is placed on respect, accountability, openness and learning. It has coined the term "dynamic security" to describe the nature of the optimum relationship between staff and inmates.

The Correctional Service of Canada's "Report of the Task Force on Security" recommended that the term "dynamic security" be defined and understood as "those actions that contribute to the development of professional, positive relationships between staff members and inmates."¹³

Saskatchewan Corrections supports and encourages positive and respectful communication with inmates. All of the centres reported that relations between inmates and staff are good. However, the inmates we spoke to did not share this perception. In fact, none of the inmates that we spoke to in any of the centres thought that the relationship with staff was good. Despite this, they all conceded that this was a generalization, and some staff members were, in their view, very good.

¹² Section 48.

¹³ Correctional Service of Canada, *Report of the Task Force on Security (May 2000)*, 94. See also *Commissioner's Directive 560: Dynamic Security*.



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From our discussions with centre management, we suspect the reality is that there are a few staff members in each centre who are not well suited to their job or who need additional training and some inmates who are intransigent, disruptive and/or unreasonable. A few such people can have a disproportionate effect on the perception of the quality of staff/inmate relations.

Actions that are available when staff members have difficulty with individuals are discussed in detail in "Discipline" and "Segregation."

When an inmate is having difficulty with an individual staff member, he or she has the option of raising the issue with the team leader for their unit or the director of the correctional centre. If necessary, the director can address the issue using the progressive discipline process described in the collective bargaining agreement.

Although this process is available, inmates told us they are often reluctant to submit a formal complaint because of the fear of reprisal. This is difficult to address. While one can understand this concern and agree that any attempt at retaliation is unacceptable, we have not come across any obvious cases of reprisal.

If a staff member takes some adverse action against an inmate who has complained about him or her, it's easy to claim that it is reprisal, but in our experience there has always been another explanation. Of course, there is always the possibility that reprisal played a part in the decision, but we have yet to substantiate even one such allegation.

The concern about reprisal is most likely related to the quality of relations between correctional staff and inmates, and will lessen as the relationship improves.

Without a comprehensive study across jurisdictions, one cannot do much better on the issue of staff/inmate relations than work with general impressions. The task is complicated by several constantly changing variables that can affect the quality of these relations.

The inmate population is continually changing and, consequently, so is the inmate behavioural profile. Inmate disturbances can temporarily increase security precautions and decrease positive interactions between staff and inmates. Administrative decisions such as institutional lockdowns raise tensions and further restrict interaction.

Not all variables are dependent on the inmate population, however. Even something as basic as a change in season can affect staff members' and inmates' moods.

With these variables in mind, our general impression is that the relationship between staff members and inmates is good, but there is room for improvement.

Sense of Safety

Any time large groups of people are forced to live and work together in close proximity, there is going to be friction. One would expect this to be especially true in a correctional institution, where resources are limited and a large percentage of the residents have trouble coping with stress at the best of times.

For these reasons, we were surprised to discover that both staff and inmates thought the environment in the four correctional centres was generally safe. It needs to be understood, however, that corrections workers and inmates feel reasonably comfortable in an environment that others might well find uncomfortable.

To check corrections workers' and inmates' assessment of their environment, we raised the issue with outside service providers that we assumed would hear from inmates if safety were an issue. They all confirmed what staff and inmates were saying.

This is not, of course, to suggest that there are not occasional incidents of violence and threats. The only way friction between inmates could be eliminated would be to eliminate all contact. This would be too high a price.



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Some reasonable balance has to be found between safety and liberty. In Saskatchewan, it seems Corrections has found an acceptable balance.

COMMENDATION

+ For achieving a reasonable balance between safety and liberty.

Management of Inmate Population

Measures of Violence and Disruption

At the present time, there is no reliable way to compare the level of violence in Saskatchewan's four correctional centres with one another or with other jurisdictions. Observations by staff are helpful indicators, but not sufficient as objective, factual information.

Consequently, we were unable to determine if Saskatchewan's correctional centres were as safe or safer than other jurisdictions.

The Report of the Task Force on Security prepared by Corrections Service of Canada states that Manitoba has been using a reporting procedure designed to measure the stability and safety of its correctional centres.

In Manitoba, a "checklist is filled out by line staff, supervisors and/or managers and provides information such as: increased telephone calls, increase in canteen purchases, increased requests for protection, cancellation of visits, decline in program attendance, lack of eye contact, decline in communications, increased use of hand signals, etc."

The report notes that the United Kingdom also has a system "worth benchmarking." The task force encourages the development of an even more sophisticated measure that could be used daily or weekly.¹⁴

This idea has merit. At the present time, there is no reliable, objective method for assessing the

security climate of the centres. We attempted to collect data that we thought might provide some indication of the level of violence in each centre, but differences in recording practices, definition, surveillance practices and tolerance defy comparative analysis.

A checklist such as the one described above routinely completed by staff, would enhance Corrections' ability to measure the volatility of the environment and improve security and safety for both staff and inmates.

RECOMMENDATION

+ Establish a reporting system that will improve Corrections' ability to objectively determine the volatility of its correctional institutions.

Effective Surveillance

Surveillance is essential in a correctional centre. There is, of course, the obvious need to prevent inmates from escaping and a need to maintain a safe and orderly environment.

Although advances in technology have enhanced surveillance capabilities, the need for surveillance has not changed for many decades. As a result, Corrections has many years of experience with effective surveillance techniques.

Since inmates have some right to privacy, however, there are limits to how intrusive surveillance measures can be. In addition, the privacy rights of staff and visitors must be taken into consideration.

All four centres use several methods to monitor inmate movements and behaviour. Inmates are continually observed through direct staff observation and strategically placed video cameras.

Correctional centre staff members also conduct cell checks and several daily institutional counts. The frequency of the cell checks varies from unit to unit depending on the risk level of the inmates on the unit. Staff will conduct a thorough search of an inmate's cell if they suspect the presence of contraband.

¹⁴ Report of the Task Force on Security 49.



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The ratio of staff to inmates has a definite effect on a correctional centre's surveillance capabilities. A Corrections Service of Canada security review of the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, which has a staff-to-inmate ratio comparable to the other centres, concluded that the staffing levels were highly favourable and, in fact, higher than in the federal system.

We did not find any shortcomings in Corrections' surveillance systems that warrant comment, and neither staff nor inmates raised any concerns.

Gang Control

According to an internal Saskatoon Correctional Centre report, the number of gang members and associates in the provincial correctional centres rose dramatically between the beginning of 1998 and the end of 1999.

A study of the Saskatoon centre's discipline charges and incident reports revealed that gang members and associates were involved in a disproportionate number of charges and incidents. While it is not unlikely that this situation also exists in Regina and Prince Albert, no similar study has been conducted. We do understand, however, that gang activity is a problem in only the men's centres.

Although it is possible to identify some of the inmates who have connections to gangs through inmate self-disclosure and information sharing between institutional members of the Canadian justice system, it is difficult to identify which incidents are gang-related and which are not. As a result, measures of gang activity in correctional centres are imprecise.

Each of the correctional centres has a designated staff liaison who works with local police and the RCMP to identify gang members or associates and help control gang activity. Gang association is recorded on an inmate's file and can affect an inmate's security rating, program suitability and transfers.

Measures used by Corrections to deter gang activity include the following:

- + *Disqualifying an inmate from any Work Education Training placement that may*

promote or give status to gang membership;

+ *Prohibiting inmates from retaining property that endorses gang membership and/or behaviour, or wearing gang-related paraphernalia;*

+ *Implementing frequent room and property checks to verify that items in the inmate's possession have been obtained by authorized means and that such property complies with approved limits for allowable effects;*

+ *Preventing an inmate's involvement in events or activities that have been organised or sponsored by a gang; and*

+ *Censoring mail and telephone communications.*

At this time, there is no structured programming in place to help inmates end their gang involvement, although this type of assistance is stated as one of the principles of Corrections' gang management strategy. Corrections is, however, researching the possibility of implementing programming based on an American model that has shown some success in helping inmates end their involvement with gangs.

The reader may be surprised that inmates and staff believe the environment in the correctional centres is safe, while at the same time the presence of gangs in the centres is increasing.

The explanation appears to be that while there are a disproportionate number of gang members who receive charges and discipline reports, the overall level of violence and disruption has not increased to the point where people feel unsafe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

+ Continue to identify and implement measures to discourage gang membership and avoid gang activity.

+ Develop programming to help inmates end their gang involvement.

Drug Control

The correctional centres' drug control strategy consists of sharing information with local police and the RCMP, staff observation, cell searches, urine testing, strip-searching, visitor screening, canine units, substance abuse programming,



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and methadone treatment (for more information on Corrections' methadone program, see "Medical Services").

The most common drugs discovered in the men's correctional centres are cannabis and benzodiazepines. At the Pine Grove Correctional Centre, almost all of the drugs that are being used illicitly are prescription drugs.

Regina and Saskatoon reported that over the last five years, drug usage has remained about the same. Pine Grove reported that usage was up, or at least the drugs were different. Prince Albert also reported that usage was up.

There has been no comprehensive assessment of drug use in the provincial correctional centres. Information about drug use is based on staff experience and observation, search results, drug-related discipline charges, and information from inmates.

It is generally assumed that the primary source of drugs is outside visitors, but this may not be the case. Survey results submitted to the United Kingdom Home Affairs Select Committee on Drugs in Prison (1998) showed that in four UK prisons and young inmate institutions, "less than one percent of the visiting population were found with drugs in their possession and in an overwhelming proportion of those cases (between 71 and 94 percent) cannabis was the offending drug."¹⁵

It is very unlikely that less than one in a hundred visitors is managing to supply the prisons with drugs; clearly, they are coming in some other way. Of course, this survey was done in the UK, not Saskatchewan, but it does demonstrate the need to verify assumptions.

Reliable empirical data would provide a sound base for Corrections' drug control strategy, and we understand that Corrections is presently compiling this information.

None of the centres search staff, and none regularly search official visitors such as lawyers, counsellors, or outside maintenance and construction workers. They do not believe that this is necessary to control the flow of drugs.

Even so, the growing number of gang members in custody warrants increased surveillance to minimize the risk of staff or visitors being compromised. This was the conclusion of the Task Force on Security established by Corrections Service of Canada, which recommended "that searching at the front gate be systematized and that procedures for searching include all staff and visitors (both official and inmate visitors)."¹⁶

RECOMMENDATION

+ Establish reliable and objective statistical criteria on drug use in the correctional centres to serve as the base for a drug interdiction strategy.

SUGGESTION

+ Establish procedures for staff and official visitor searches.

Emergency Procedures

In addition to official provincial policy addressing the management of crisis situations, all four correctional centres have detailed, written procedural responses that establish a command structure and assign responsibilities to specific staff members in case of emergencies such as fires, riots, and hostage takings.

While the procedural manuals are impressive in their comprehensiveness, we discovered that in some areas they are not fully in compliance with provincial policy.

With regard to fire prevention, each centre's director is supposed to conduct an annual review of fire safety procedures in consultation with local fire department officials. None of the centres' directors are currently completing yearly

¹⁵ Murray Allen, Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman), Government of Western Australia, *Report on an Investigation into Deaths in Prisons* (2000), 281.

¹⁶ Report of the Task Force on Security 40.



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reviews as directed in policy, although some have conducted less formal reviews.

One can reasonably infer that the requirement that directors consult with local fire department officials annually also requires a yearly fire inspection report. Even so, Saskatoon is the only centre that does this; the other three centres request fire inspection reports every few years.

Each centre is supposed to establish a crisis management team made up of a crisis manager, an operations officer, an information officer, and a medical officer. The director is responsible for ensuring that this team receives ongoing training and support. We discovered that the ongoing training provided varies from none to sporadic.

Two of the centres equip some of their staff with portable radios that provide direct access to fire and police services. In a crisis, immediate access to emergency services can be essential.

Staff in the centres without these portable radios would have to contact their control room (assuming it is still under Corrections' control) and explain the situation. The control room would then have to make contact with the fire or police departments. Although this may only take a few seconds, seconds often count.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Comply with the requirement for annual fire inspections at all centres.
- + Ensure that sufficient resources are available for ongoing training of the crisis management teams.
- + Acquire portable radios that enable direct communication with fire and police for all centres.

Inmate Awareness of Emergency Procedures

Although all of the centres conduct regular fire drills, none of the centres provide inmates with written procedures. Some of the issues are addressed during the inmate's orientation when he or she is first admitted.

There is also an expectation that inmates will approach staff or write to the director if they have

questions or concerns. In addition, there is some reliance on experienced inmates helping out new ones.

Since some of these situations could ultimately be matters of life or death, we question whether the current process is adequate. The average inmate is only incarcerated for a few months and may well serve his time in between fire drills.

It would provide more consistency and thoroughness if each inmate were provided with a handbook that clearly described emergency procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

- + Include a section on emergency procedures in an inmate handbook.

Conclusion

For a relatively short time, Corrections has an opportunity to provide inmates with "normal" living conditions that encourage good behaviour and responsibility. This is most easily accomplished in an environment that is fair, ordered and safe. Anything that detracts from such an environment makes the task of rehabilitating inmates that much harder.

As a society, we need to remember that Corrections is working on our behalf, and the more inmates it can rehabilitate, the safer our communities will be.

If Corrections is to maximize its chances of meeting its objective of promoting safe communities through its rehabilitative and reintegration efforts, it will need to remove as many barriers as reasonably possible. To accomplish this, it will need adequate resources and strong community support.



Inmate Living Conditions

SPECIAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Ensure that when inmates are stripped, it is done with minimum affront to their dignity and is not witnessed by members of the opposite sex, either directly or indirectly.
- + Draft policy to facilitate communication between newly admitted inmates and their family members or close relatives, preferably on the first day of incarceration.
- + Draft policy advising corrections workers that they have the discretion to let inmates use the staff phone if they cannot make a collect call.
- + Ensure that both policy and practice recognize the special circumstances of inmates serving their first few nights in jail.
- + Take steps to eliminate the need for double-bunking and dormitories.
- + Supply privacy screens for all toilets in cells.
- + Screen incoming mail with the intended recipient present, unless that would be a security risk.
- + Provide remand inmates in the Regina Correctional Centre with better access to a private telephone line.
- + Address the issue of blind spots on the second floor in Units 1, 2, and 3 in Prince Albert and Units A, B, and C in Saskatoon.
- + Deal with the line-of-sight problems down cell corridors in Pine Grove and Regina.
- + Tend to the design problems on Unit 4 at the Regina centre.
- + Discontinue placing inmates in cells with no natural light, except as a temporary response to emergency bed space demands.
- + Address the substandard conditions in East and West G in the Regina Correctional Centre.
- + Address the plumbing problems at Pine Grove.
- + Take steps to bring temperature fluctuations in Pine Grove and the old part of the Regina centre within reasonable limits.
- + Provide work, education or training opportunities for all eligible inmates.
- + Ensure that special diets are comparable in quality and variety to the regular diet.
- + Provide all inmates with a minimum of one hour of meaningful exercise daily, not including time spent on personal hygiene, cell cleaning or other activities.

- + Maximize visiting hours for all inmates, with due consideration to security.
- + Minimize the use of blanket policies that restrict visiting privileges for all inmates when only some inmates' behaviour warrants restrictions.
- + Establish a reporting system that will improve Corrections' ability to objectively determine the volatility of its correctional institutions.
- + Continue to identify and implement measures to discourage gang membership and avoid gang activity.
- + Develop programming to help inmates end their gang involvement.
- + Establish reliable and objective statistical criteria on drug use in the correctional centres to serve as the base for a drug interdiction strategy.
- + Comply with the requirement for annual fire inspections at all centres.
- + Ensure that sufficient resources are available for ongoing training of the crisis management teams.
- + Acquire portable radios that enable direct communication with fire and police for all centres.
- + Include a section on emergency procedures in an inmate handbook.

SUGGESTIONS

- + Explore the possibility of engaging the services of the local public library in Saskatoon and Prince Albert to augment the correctional centres' services.
- + Establish procedures for staff and official visitor searches.

COMMENDATIONS

- + To the Regina Correctional Centre for renovating the kitchen area to address sanitation issues.
- + For achieving a reasonable balance between safety and liberty.