Inspection Report of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre

Final Submission Nov. 7, 2011



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Introduction

Through the *Corrections Act and Regulations*, the Investigations and Standards Office (ISO) has the mandate to carry out inspections of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC) and report on the findings and recommendations to the Corrections branch and Deputy Minister.

To allow for the most effective use of the ISO and Corrections Branch resources, programs and services are generally selected for inspection using a risk assessment process which forms part of ISO's Risk-based Inspections Framework. The risk assessment process prioritizes programs and services for examination of those with the highest potential for risk such as those where non-compliance with corrections policy could result in serious injury or death or an egregious breach of inmate rights.

The inspection process undertaken by the ISO:

- (a) provides assurance to the Department of Justice that operation of correctional facilities and programs are well-managed, efficient and within the parameters of applicable laws, regulations and policies;
- (b) identifies weaknesses in operational or corrections practices, internal controls and management systems; and
- (c) identifies opportunities, where applicable, to improve operational or correctional practices.

For this year's inspection, based on the abovementioned framework, the ISO inspected two key areas of the operation of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC) for compliance with the *Corrections Act*, its *Regulations* and WCC policy.

This Inspection focused on two areas of risk:

- Focus A: The use of Segregation for "disciplinary segregation", "segregation pending a disciplinary hearing", and "short-term separate confinement" or "long-term separate confinement". In particular, the inspection reviewed appropriate inmate notification, file documentation and compliance with mandated review periods.
- **Focus B:** The Admissions and Discharge processes that ensure custodial sentences are properly calculated; that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure inmates being considered for discharge have been properly cleared and double checked consistent with policy.

Focus A: The Use of Segregation/Separate Confinement

Methodology:

In order to review a random selection of inmates placed in the segregation unit of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC), ISO selected 7 key dates for review. The individuals residing in segregation on the selected dates were identified and their individual progress logs and WCC records were then reviewed for staff entries, appropriate reviews*, inmate notification* and documentation related to the specific circumstances of their separate confinement. *For a complete list of appropriate reviews and review periods, refer to Appendix A.

The dates selected commenced with the first day following the implementation of the new *Corrections Act*, followed by six quarterly dates of review going forward. These dates were as follows:

- January 11, 2010
- April 01, 2010
- July 01, 2010
- October 01, 2010
- January 02, 2011
- February 01, 2011
- March 01, 2011

Policies and Legislation¹

Pursuant to the Corrections Act Regulations (CAR), the following sections capture the circumstances for housing an inmate in a cell in the Segregation Unit:

- Short-term Separate Confinement, per CAR s. 20;
- Long-term Separate Confinement, per CAR s. 21;
- Voluntary Separate Confinement, per CAR s. 22;
- Segregation placement pending a disciplinary hearing, per CAR s. 28; or
- Disciplinary Segregation, pursuant to the Corrections Act Regulations (CAR), section 33(3)(b);

Because separate confinement is a form of lost liberty, the housing of any individual in the Segregation Unit without justification would be in violation of the *Corrections Act* and *Regulations*.

¹ Except for quotations from the Act, the Regulations or policy, the terms segregation and separate confinement are used interchangeably throughout this report.

Inmate files were reviewed for the appropriateness of placement and the requisite paperwork on the abovementioned snapshot dates. Note that for those individuals held in the Segregation unit for an extended period and for multiple reasons, this review only examined the reason for such placement on the designated review date.

ISO Analysis of Files Reviewed

ISO reviewed 10 inmate files dated between Jan. 11, 2010 and March 1, 2011 to determine whether applicable reviews of separate confinement were conducted within the timelines specified in the *Corrections Act* and *Regulations:* whether adequate notification was provided to affected inmates; and whether appropriate documentation had occurred. ISO analyzed the files and found as follows:

- Of the 10 individuals reviewed, six progress log files were located and checked for staff entries related to separate confinement. Four of those reviewed contained appropriate entries identifying movement to or from segregation. Two files were satisfactory in all aspects for reviews and written inmate notifications. One of the individuals was held in the segregation area for less than 24 hours while another appropriate placement was being arranged.
- Errors or omissions found within these files were:
 - One case of failure to release an inmate from segregation upon completion of disciplinary segregation;
 - One case of an inmate held pursuant to CAR s.20 (short term separate confinement) where there was no evidence of any secondary review prior to the 72 hour limit. The inmate was eventually restaged to a regular unit two days later.
 - Three cases of inmates held in separate confinement for varying medical reasons without any reviews or notification under CAR s. 20 (short-term separate confinement) or CAR s. 21 (long-term separate confinement);
 - The case of an inmate held under CAR s. 28 (pending a disciplinary hearing) without being reviewed every 24 hours; and,
 - An inmate moved to segregation due to an incident resulting in a disciplinary charge. During the period of separate confinement prior to the approval of the disciplinary charge at which point CAR s. 28 applied the centre erred by not identifying the inmate as held pursuant to CAR s. 20 (short-term separate confinement). As a result the required written notification to the inmate and appropriate reviews were not provided.
 - While it was allowable to hold an individual awaiting other placement for up to 24 hours, the reviewed example lacked any relevant file documentation.

Findings

- Some gaps in recording are noticeable on the inmate Progress Logs. Movements into or out of Segregation were not always recorded.
- For inmates facing disciplinary charges, they may be held in segregation pending charges pursuant to CAR s.28, however such placement MUST be reviewed every 24 hours thereafter by the Person in Charge until the inmate concludes their disciplinary hearing, pursuant to CAR s.28(2). Only a small number of files examined were found to document a satisfactory level of review.
- Inmates placed in Separate Confinement for medical / mental health reasons (withdrawal protocols or suicidal ideation, for example) require written notification under CAR s. 20 (Short term Separate Confinement) and/or s.21 (Long-Term Separate Confinement), and the requisite reviews are applicable. This review found ample evidence of documentation in the form of daily "Security and/or Medical Observation Sheets", but no evidence on file of proper inmate notification under CAR s.20 and 21 for the two inmates who fell into this category.
- Improvements to the Separate Confinement (Notification) Form* (Appendix C) are needed. This is an operation-critical form that has been developed and improved over the past year. However further improvement is still needed, particularly in Section IV. The highlighted sections identified below currently provide only the following details: "As per policy". Following this review, WCC management has been advised that such comments are of little value to an inmate in the Segregation Unit, as they have no access to written policy. Similarly, supervising staff do not have ready access to written policy. The combined effect allows for misinterpretation, confusion and inconsistent application.

Section 1 is completed if the inmate is held in *Short Term* or *Long Term Separate Confinement*.

Section II is completed if Voluntary Separate Confinement applies.

Section III is completed if the inmate is held pursuant to CAR s. 28 (Pending disciplinary hearing).

Section IV of the form identifies "Special Instructions for Separate Confinement", and includes:

- The period between mandatory checks
- Restraints (if applicable)
- Clothing Issue Type
- Bedding Issue Type
- Meals (served regular or on Styrofoam)
- Fresh Air
- Phone Calls
- Television Access
- Cell Searches
- Visits
- Access to Personal Effects

Progress observed during the Review Period

The inspection found that the Whitehorse Correctional Centre made significant improvements as it implemented the new Corrections Act Regulations (CAR). In particular, notable improvements were seen in the new forms developed for inmate disciplinary charges, the hearing process, and separate confinement.

These forms include:

- 1. The Disciplinary Offence Report. Part 1 identifies: the officer making the allegation; the Supervisor who reviewed the documentation package; and the Person-In-Charge who approved the charge. Part 1 also identifies the circumstances of the allegation, the Regulation allegedly breached, and provides essential information for the accused such as time and date of documentation service, the proposed hearing date, and whether CAR section 28 applies. It also provides formal notification of certain inmate rights such as the 'right to legal counsel'. Part 2 identifies any hearing adjournments, the adjudicator, evidence reviewed during the hearing, the decision and penalty or corrective measure imposed by the adjudicator, and the date and time that the inmate was provided a copy following the hearing. Later versions of the form now also include advice to the inmate of their right to appeal inmate discipline to the Investigations and Standards Office, pursuant to CAR s. 35(1).
- 2. A noteworthy new form is the "WCC Separate Confinement Inspection Sheet" (Appendix B). It tracks daily events for each individual in the segregation unit including phone calls, shower offered, roll change offered, fresh air offered, cell cleaning material offered, meal offerings, medication issued, and tracks whether a progress log entry had been made. The form also records the officer and supervisor's name and allows for special comments or notes for the individual. At the completion of the separate confinement the form is to be added to the inmate's progress log.

There are several advantages of this form including:

- It serves as a daily check to ensure appropriate privileges have been provided;
- It prevents inmates from abusing undocumented privileges, such as requesting a second fresh air period;
- Staff of subsequent shifts know definitively what has been offered, accepted/declined, or not offered;
- It has additional space for special notes such as No-Contact info, approved telephone numbers, or restrictions that apply; and
- It serves as a single permanent record of the conditions by which the individual was separately confined.

The latter would prove particularly useful in the event where subsequent allegations are made against the Correctional Branch.

The form could be improved somewhat by adding a version date to the form, and by identifying where the form is to be filed. (i.e. Inmate progress log following the completion of the separate confinement.)

3. ISO was impressed with the Short Term and Long Term notifications provided via the Separate Confinement Form. Typically the form advised of the date of notification, the authority under which the inmate was separately confined, and the date of any scheduled review.

4. While it is obvious that the physical structure of the Segregation Unit reflects the age of the building, with numerous anomalies that would not be acceptable by today's standards, the reality is that the structure's days are numbered. The planned opening of the new correctional centre is schedule to occur before year end and for this reason ISO did not carry out a detailed inspection of the physical plant.

Although there was no intention for this Inspection to delve into risks within the Segregation Unit due to physical structure, ISO noted that the Superintendent still applied due diligence by identifying that the CCTV coverage within the Segregation Unit was lacking appropriate coverage. He has directed the installation of an additional camera opposing the existing camera in the common area to eliminate any blind spots. ISO found such action to be appropriate and commendable, regardless of the expected short life-span remaining for the current building.

Focus B: Sentence Calculation, Pre-discharge Reviews

Methodology

Sentence Calculation is the process calculating the custody period based on the sentencing documents issued by the Courts. (e.g. Warrant of Committal). If done improperly, may result in either an *Inadvertent Release* (Inmate released prior to the date intended by the Court) or an *Undue Hold* (Inmate detained in custody without lawful justification). Additionally, sentences are recalculated whenever additional sentence documents are provided by the courts or an inmate fails to earn remission (via monthly remission review) or forfeits earned remission (via the disciplinary process).

ISO reviewed 10 files of sentenced inmates, chosen throughout the review period, which intentionally included a variety of short, lengthy, simple and complex sentences.

ISO also met separately with the Sentence Administrator, WCC Deputy Superintendent of Programs and an acting Supervisor who from time to time may be responsible for the release of offenders on their scheduled date of release. Topics of discussion included:

- intake processes
- sentence calculation practices
- forms in use
- inmate notification practices ('ERD' for example)
- how staff determine inmates are scheduled for release, and
- pre-release checks

Policies and Legislation

The Corrections Act and Regulations do not establish any parameters related to admission and discharge processes, sentence calculation or related notifications to inmates and staff. Such parameters and direction are established in WCC policy.

This inspection noted the following relevant WCC Policy, "D1.3: transfers and releases":

Areas of concern are identified in **BOLD** and discussed further in this report (See heading *B: Inspection Findings*).

- 6. Inmates will only be released from custody in the following circumstances:
 - 6.1 Their sentence has expired or has other wise been satisfied through a combination of time served, earned remission and fine payment.
 - 6.2 A remanded inmate has been granted judicial interim release.
 - 6.3 A sentenced inmate has been granted parole.
 - 6.4 A sentenced inmate is transferred to a penitentiary.
 - 6.5 A sentenced inmate has been granted a terminal temporary absence.
 - 6.6 The inmate is acquitted or is otherwise released on the order of a court of competent jurisdiction, and
 - 6.7 All other warrants have expired or have been satisfied.

..

- 10. Staff will not discharge an inmate until they have:
 - 10.1 Examined all warrants on file to ensure that they have been satisfied or have expired.
 - 10.2 Reviewed CPIC to ensure that no new warrants are in force in the jurisdiction.
 - 10.3 Reviewed the court file with Courts staff, whenever possible, to ensure that no new warrants or orders are on file.
 - 10.4 Reviewed and confirmed the previous steps with a second staff member.
- 11. The officer will complete the release documentation in the required format, certifying that all of the steps in D1.3.10 have been completed.
- **12.** The officer who checks the steps in D1.3.10(d) will countersign **the release form**. (sic: should read D1.3.10.4)

Findings

- The review of ten warrant files of sentenced inmates identified, with the exception of the one file noted below, sentence calculation was thorough and accurate by
 the sentence administration staff. Recent staffing changes in the Admissions and Discharge area has lead to additional training for new staff. ISO found that the
 Deputy Superintendent has gone to great lengths to ensure the accuracy of all sentence calculation processes. ISO appreciated her expertise and her openness
 to suggested improvements in this area.
- ISO found the WCC Sentence Calculation documents contained a number of errors as follows:
 - Inconsistent format for dates. In one form alone, containing a list of chronological events, the dates were identified in four different formats. Eg. 01/Oct, 2010; Oct 01/10; 10/10/01. This was particularly confusing to a reader when days and months were ambiguous. For example 07/06/10 could indicate either July 6th or June 7th. WCC needs a standardized practice to be identified in either of the following formats: dd/mm/yyyy or yyyy/mm/dd. It would also be a best practice wherever possible to specifically imbed the required format on forms requiring a date entry.

- Non-current documents such as outdated Sentence Calculation forms and older Warrants could not be distinguished from updated versions. Best practice is to always "strike through" any document replaced by a more current version with a diagonal pen-stroke to eliminate any chance it be mistaken as current. For example, one file contained a Warrant of Committal containing inmate contact restrictions ("No Contact with Spouse/Victim"). The courts had since provided an Amended W.C. with the contact restrictions removed. Without a strike-through, a reviewing officer could conceivably misinterpret that the inmate was in breach of his W.C. by contacting his spouse. Another reviewed file had half a dozen updated Sentence Calculations. Only two of the outdated calculations had strike-throughs.
- One file was found to contain a sentence calculation error, incorrectly applying 14 days remission for an inmate serving a sentence during the month of February (28 days). The CCRA requires a remission credit of 15 days for each month spent in custody. The Deputy Superintendent has been notified and reviewed the error with the staff who completed the calculation and the secondary check of the calculation. While there can be no tolerance for sentence calculations that do not reflect an appropriate release date, there was some relief to learn that in this case the inmate had been released in advance to a half-way house.
- A number of administrative errors were noted on some custody documents that did not affect custody lengths. For example: Page two of the Admission Sheet includes a section to track changes to an inmate's sentence, both changes or additions to Warrants of Committal and changes to the inmate's Remission (unearned, forfeited, returned or re-instated). While the total sentence lengths were found to be accurate, a number of entries were noted to have data entry errors where the Days to Serve and the Remission credits were incorrect not adding as they should to the total sentence. The Deputy Superintendent has been apprised and will be reviewing them with A&D staff to eliminate potential errors and inconsistent practices.
- ISO found all other sentence calculation practices to be timely, accurate, and done to high standards. In other jurisdictions, such as B.C., complaints from inmates about sentence calculation are frequently received by their Investigation and Standards Office. ISO finds it significant that during the previous 18 months it has received no inmate complaints about sentence calculation.
- WCC Policy D1.3.10 reads: "<u>Staff</u> will not discharge an inmate until <u>they</u> have..." The current practice at the WCC conflicts with this policy, in that the Sentence Administrator, working a Monday to Friday schedule, completes the vast majority of required pre-release checks (warrants, CPIC, Courts staff whenever possible), while Correctional Officers and Supervisors discharge the inmates. This is particularly an issue for weekend releases when the person who identified the inmate as cleared for discharge is not on shift, and the staff responsible for discharging inmates does not complete the checks identified in policy. The policy as written is more appropriate for a correctional centre with a dedicated 7 day per week Sentence Management Unit rather than the WCC model.
- Although weekend supervisors do have access to Warrant Files, once an inmate is identified on the Daily Routine, the acting supervisors spoken to during this Inspection indicated that barring any obvious discrepancy in ERD they release the inmates identified on the daily schedule without any further checks. To be clear, while ISO has confidence that the pre-release review and double-check by Admissions and Discharge department staff constitute an appropriate level of review, it is not in compliance with the existing policy. Rather than amending current practice, the Corrections Branch should consider amending the policy. New policy should direct that prior to the discharge of any inmate, the discharging staff are to review the pre-release documentation to ensure that the inmate has

been approved for release on the designated ERD by the Sentence Administrator, or other staff approved by the Person in Charge, and one other staff. Signatory blocks should be incorporated into the release documentation verifying this pre-release review, the double-check, and the actual staff discharging an inmate.

WCC Policy D1.3.11 and 12 are not being complied with. While a release document is in the development stages, at the time of review WCC did not have a
form that is signed off by the discharging officer and the staff who completed the secondary check. The preliminary draft of a new form provided by WCC will
undoubtedly confuse staff, and therefore requires additional review and modification. A second generation release document has been circulated for review and
comment which showed significant improvement.

Progress observed during the Review Period

- Since the implementation of the new corrections Act the WCC has updated staff information and inmate notification forms. The *Daily Routine Form* is a positive example which includes details for staff on the scheduled events of the day, including sections for *Releases*, *Court Appearances*, *Planned Escorted Movements*, *Temporary Absences and Interviews/Events/Visits*. The *Release* section identifies the inmate, security rating, location, the time of scheduled release, and where appropriate identifies that an inmate's sentence has been satisfied per the calculated "ERD" (earliest release date). The identification of an individual in the *Release* section by the Sentence Administrator is indication to Supervisors and staff that the proper checks have been completed (warrants, courts and CPIC) and that the inmate has been cleared for release.
- The Sentence Calculation History is a complex form developed by the Sentence Administrator. Much more than a typical 'Excel' spreadsheet, the primary use of the form is to determine the Earliest Release Date (ERD) for each offender based on the warrant information. The form also tracks the person completing the calculation, the person that checked the calculation and any changes to the calculation such as remission that wasn't earned or remission lost through the disciplinary process.
- The Sentence Administrator has also drafted useful information packages such as the Sentence Administration Assistant note, intended to provide details of sentence administration. Such packages are particularly useful during periods of backfill and provide a ready reference for individuals training in the Admissions and Discharge section.

Inspection Recommendations

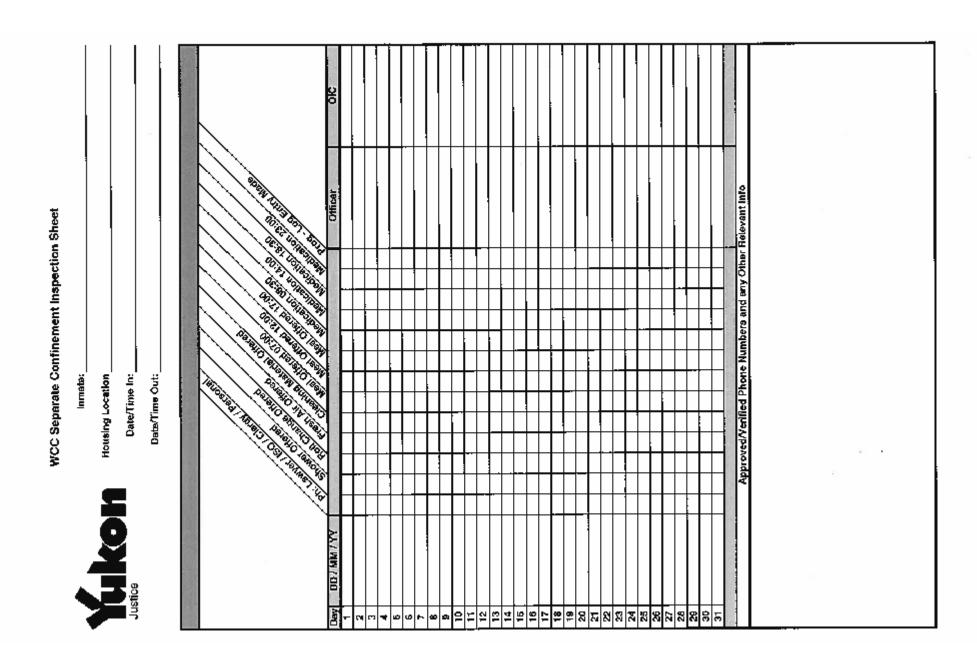
1	That WCC Management ensure all separate confinement reviews are completed and appropriate notifications provided in a timely manner.
	The WCC may wish to consider developing an electronic method to track all segregation placements, reasons for such placement, and the dates of upcoming review/notification deadlines
2	That WCC Managers ensure processes are developed which allow staff ready access to information related to the status of separately confined individuals, and scheduled release or review dates.
	This could be accomplished in several ways including:
	 Identify on the Daily Inmate Placement Sheet the status and date of the next due review for each individual. This info would then be automatically carried forward with each successive daily printing; An updateable notice board at the nearest staff station to the Segregation Unit identifying the Regulation under which each inmate is held and the release or next review deadline.
3	WCC Management needs to improve the content of the 'Separate Confinement Notification Form' which is intended to inform affected inmates of applicable protocols and rights while housed in the Segregation Unit.
4	That WCC Management take additional measures to ensure staff are completing inmate Progress Log entries, particularly

as they relate to inmate movements and placement decisions.
Where inmates are placed in segregation, appropriate entries should identify the lawful basis for such placement.
That WCC review and update policy on pre-release practices. ISO recommends that the Admissions department complete all pre-release checks and double-checks of warrants etc., and that a releasing supervisor –prior to releasing any individual- is responsible for verifying the check and double checks have been completed.
As currently written, policy requires that the supervisor signs that they have verified the expiry of all warrants etc. If it is intended that the primary duty of pre-release checks rests with Admissions staff (e.g. Sentence Administrator) rather than the supervisor perfecting the discharge, policy requires amendment.
That WCC develop and implement the release documentation in accordance with policy D1.3.11.
That WCC standardize day/month/year formats and wherever possible imbed the accepted format on forms.
That WCC ensure the non-current Warrants and Sentence Calculation forms be struck-through diagonally to indicate a more current document exists.

Appendix A: Pursuant to the *Corrections Act Regulations (CAR)*, Separate Confinement requires the following Notifications and Reviews:

Reason for Placement	Type of Notification and by Whom	Timeline for Notification	Reviews required
Short-term Separate Confinement, CAR s.20	Written reasons by the Person in Charge, per CAR s.20(4).	Within 24 hours.	Release is required within 72 hours unless applying CAR s.21* *Exceptions apply to those detained under the Mental Health Act, per CAR s.20(3).
Long-term Separate Confinement, CAR s.21	Written reasons, length of planned separate confinement and reasons for the length, by the Person in Charge.	Within 24 hours.	15 days Upon request inmate request for review, a response is required "within a reasonable time".
Voluntary Separate Confinement, CAR s.22	Written notification of agreement provided by the Person in Charge.	No timeline legislated.	Inmate can request in writing at any time that his placement be reviewed.
Segregation placement pending a disciplinary hearing, CAR s.28	Written Notice by the Person in Charge, per CAR s.27.	As soon as practicable.	24 hours after decision for such placement, and every 24 hours thereafter, until disciplinary hearing is concluded or circumstances which required the separate confinement no longer exist.
Disciplinary Segregation, CAR s.33(3)(b)	Written reasons for penalty or corrective measure imposed, by the Independent Adjudicator.	As soon as practicable.	None during the imposed disciplinary sentence.

Appendix B: Separate Confinement Inspection Sheet



Appendix C: Separate Confinement (Notification) Form

Validation Community & Damacle and Services Branch, Yuksan Department of Justice	SEFAKAIE CONFINEMENI FURMI NOTE: ROBINOS PORTO P
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Person in Charge	Date line
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Inmete characters	Deta Time
SECTION III: Segmenation Penaling Discissimany Hasting Tale completed to Beanning Basens in Change	800
You are being placed in Separate Confinement in accordance to s. 28 of the Corrections Act and Regulations 2010 for the following reasons.	is Corrections Act and Regulations 2010 for the following
Person in Charge	Date Time
SECTION IV: Special instructions for Separate Confinementifie to compared by the Parson in Charge)	THELIE (To be completed by the Papace in Charge)
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1.51	
Population Restrictions; 🖰 yes 📋 no	
Additional Comments:	
Review Date & Time:	
Person in Charge	Date Time