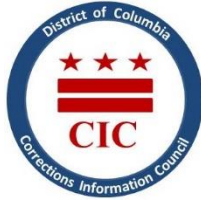


**District of Columbia  
Corrections Information Council**



**Department of Corrections  
Central Cell Block (CCB)**

Report on Findings and Recommendations

August 21, 2023



## District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

Charles Thornton, Board Chair  
Katharine A. Huffman, Board Member  
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### *About the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council*

The District of Columbia Corrections Information Council (CIC) is an independent oversight body mandated by the United States Congress and the Council of the District of Columbia to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement in correctional facilities where residents from the District of Columbia are incarcerated. This includes facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DOC), and private contractors.

The CIC reports its observations and recommendations to the District of Columbia Representative in the United States Congress, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Council of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Director of the BOP, the Director of the DOC, and the community.

Although the CIC does not handle individual complaints or provide legal representation or advice, individuals are still encouraged to contact the CIC. Reports, concerns, and general information from incarcerated DC residents and the public are very important to the CIC, and they greatly inform our inspection schedule, recommendations, and reports. However, unless expressly permitted by the individuals or required by law, names and identifying information of residents, corrections staff not in leadership, and members of the public will be kept anonymous and confidential.

### **DC Corrections Information Council**

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### Central Cell Block

**Dates of Inspection:** April 12, 2023

**Rated Capacity:** 110

**Location:** 300 Indiana Ave, NW

**Population:** 41 (12 women)

**Average Stay:** 24 hours

### Introduction

The CIC visited Central Cell Block (CCB) to see if any of the previous recommendations were implemented. The maintenance problems that affect CCB are difficult to address because the DOC is not responsible for maintenance of CCB; the Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for completing maintenance requests at CCB.

Previously, the DOC submitted work orders for areas of concern identified by the CIC, which took months to resolve. During this inspection, the CIC observed that most of those issues were now fixed.

### Key Findings

The CIC highlights the following:

#### ***Housing***

***Max Capacity: 110***

***Current Population: 41 (12 are women)***

- The average population during the week is 30 to 45 people. The average population during the weekend is approximately 60 people.
- The men are housed on the first floor, and the women are housed on the second floor.
- Transgender residents are housed on the first floor in a cell by themselves.
- Currently, there are two individuals assigned to a cell. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, residents were housed in cells by themselves.
- There are three handicapped cells and two observational cells.
- Occupants reported roaches in the cells, which come through the vents.
- Three large industrial fans are used to cool the tiers. There are two fans downstairs, and one upstairs<sup>1</sup>.
- Cells are cleaned Monday through Friday at 11:30 AM by a DGS representative.
- A PREA audit of CCB occurred on November 29-30, 2022.

<sup>1</sup> The building where CCB is located has central air conditioning, but there are structural difficulties to get air flow downstairs where CCB is located.

- There are mattresses currently available at CCB for women who are pregnant, as well as residents who are arrested on Saturday afternoon and will remain in CCB custody until Monday.

### ***Intake***

- Arrestees arrive at CCB from the police precinct.
- Upon entry, there is a medical screening and a temperature check.
- After the medical screening, arrestees are pat searched, then they walk through the metal detector.
- Arrestees are assigned a cell and supplied with food and water at the appropriate time.
- If the facility is at capacity when an arrestee arrives, they are sent back to the police precinct from which they came.

### ***Maintenance***

- During CIC's previous inspection, there were serious concerns about the sump pump and backed-up sewage. The sump pump is currently fixed, and there are no longer any issues with backed-up sewage.
- During CIC's previous inspection, there were 25 inoperable cells, which included two of the three handicapped cells. Currently, there are three inoperable cells; one has a plumbing issue, and the other two need maintenance on the doors.
- All handicapped cells are currently operable.
- All the handicapped elevators are fixed.
- The last time DGS performed work at CCB was April 6, 2023.

### ***Staffing***

- The DOC has three shifts: morning, evening, and midnight. There are eight DOC staff members per shift.
- Currently, the DOC has five vacancies at CCB.
- CCB has three bilingual officer who speak French, Arabic, and Spanish respectively.

### ***Medical***

- There are two nurses; each nurse works a twelve-hour shift.
- If an arrestee requires mental health medicine, they are sent to an outside hospital. Currently, there are no staff to handle mental health issues.
- Women with wheelchairs are not admitted to CCB, because the facility is unable to get them to the second floor - where women are housed. They must remain at the police precinct until it is time to attend court.
- There are PREA and Language Access signage in medical area.

### ***Food***

- Food consists of a wrapped sandwich, which is turkey bologna and cheese. Vegan sandwiches, which are tomato and spinach, are also available.
- There is a refrigerator containing cool drinks: lemonade, fruit punch, tea, and water.
- The food schedule is 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 2:30 PM to 3:00 PM. The night shift distributes food as arrestees enter the facility. If residents are still hungry, sometimes they receive an extra sandwich.

### ***Court***

- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, arrestees attended court virtually. As of June 2022, arrestees recommenced in-person court appearances.

## Recommendations

Based on the inspection of the CCB, the CIC makes the following recommendations:

- The CIC recommends that CCB acquire a bilingual (Spanish-speaking) correctional officer for each shift.
- The CIC recommends that DOC hire a mental health professional that can work on site at CCB to administer medications as needed.
- The CIC recommends that DOC fill the current staffing vacancies.