

District of Columbia
Corrections Information Council



District of Columbia
Department of Corrections

2021 Annual Report



January 25, 2022



District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

Charles Thornton, Board Chair
Katharine A. Huffman, Board Member
Calvin Woodland Jr., Board Member
Nkechi Taifa, Board Member
Charlie Whitaker, Board Member

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 general public will be kept anonymous and confidential.

DC Corrections Information Council

1400 Eye Street NW – Suite 400
Washington DC 20005
Phone: (202) 478-9211
Email: dcic@dc.gov
Website: <https://cic.dc.gov/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CENTRAL DETENTION FACILITY PROFILE

Dates of Inspection: May 4, 2021
Location: SE, Washington, DC
Security Level: Minimum, Medium, Maximum

Rated Capacity: 2,164
Population on 5/4/2021: 1,013
Resident-to-Staff Ratio: 2.75 to 1

CENTRAL CELL BLOCK PROFILE

Date of Inspection: May 5, 2021
Location: 400 Indiana Ave NW
Average Length of Stay: 24 hours

Rated Capacity: 107
Population on 5/5/2021: 26
Number of Cells: 57

KEY FINDINGS

The CIC highlights the following programs and facility practices:

- Starting on April 30th, the DOC started allowing two hours of indoor recreation, whereas previously it was only one hour, in addition to one hour of outside recreation.
- 485 inmates were fully vaccinated with both shots from Moderna; 601 inmates have had the first shot, but not the second.
- Central Detention Facility (CDF) is 70% single celled.
- There are no positive cases of COVID-19 at CDF.¹
- Administrative housing residents who participated in Ramadan were not receiving their food on time.
- There were no inmate grievance forms in administrative housing unit North 1.
- There is no air conditioning at the jail.
- Barbering and cosmetology services resumed for residents with upcoming jury trials.
- Central Cell Block (CCB) is understaffed; there are eight officers on each shift.
- There are three handicapped cells in CCB, but only one is operable.
- There is constant flooding at CCB, so staff has to use a sump pump.
- There are no mattresses at CCB; inmates sleep on steel.
- There is no timeline for which maintenance performs repairs in CCB.
- CCB does not accept handicapped women in wheelchairs.
- There are two screens for inmates to attend court while at CCB, but only one is in working condition.

¹ Information subject to constant fluctuations.

- If CCB reaches capacity before MPD brings new lock ups, CCB will not accept those individuals and they are sent back to MPD.
- LGTBQI in CCB custody have the option to be housed with men or women.
- Medical personnel is present to address the mental or physical health needs of CCB arrestees.
- Since March 2020, the DOC altered normal operating procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and issued a medical stay-in-place recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DC Health.
- The DOC made notable efforts to give the resident population access to educational offerings via ADEPA tablets during the medical-stay-in-place.
- The DOC made notable efforts to extend the ability of the resident population to communicate with their loved ones via GTL tablets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the inspections of the CDF and CCB, the CIC makes the following recommendations:

- DOC should make sure that all restrictive housing units have access to IGP forms.
- DOC should make sure that all inmates who are observing religious practices receive their meals in a timely fashion.
- DOC should make sure that maintenance is appropriately performed in the cells and shower areas of restrictive housing units.
- DOC should perform maintenance repairs on the air conditioning system.
- DOC should hire more staff for the CDF and CCB.
- DOC should make sure that remote technology used for court at CCB is working.
- DOC should ensure that all cells at CCB are operable, including the handicapped cells. supplies.
- DOC should ensure that all inmates in restrictive housing units have a mattress.
- DOC should develop a plan that allows residents to have consistent outside recreation.
- DOC should develop a system to govern the distribution of GTL tablets so all residents have opportunities to use them.
- DOC needs to implement technology that improves the connectivity of tablets throughout the facility .

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
CENTRAL DETENTION FACILITY PROFILE.....	3
CENTRAL CELL BLOCK PROFILE.....	3
KEY FINDINGS	3
RECOMMENDATIONS	4
INTRODUCTION.....	6
DECEMBER 22, 2020 SUMMARY OF SITE VISIT	6
MEDICAL STAY IN PLACE.....	6
SOCIAL VISITS	7
LEGAL VISITS	7
VIRTUAL COURT DATES	7
LEAVING THE FACILITY.....	7
GLOBAL TEL LINK (GTL) TABLETS.....	8
AMERICAN PRISON DATA SYSTEM (ADPS) TABLETS	8
OUTSIDE RECREATION.....	8
MAY 4, 2021 INSPECTION SUMMARY OF CDF.....	8
HOUSING UNIT NORTH 1	9
HOUSING UNIT SOUTH 1.....	9
HOUSING UNIT SOUTHWEST 2.....	9
OUTSIDE RECREATION AREA.....	9
MAY 5, 2021 INSPECTION SUMMARY OF CCB	9
METHODOLOGY	11
UPDATES.....	12
MEDICAL STAY IN PLACE.....	12
SOCIAL VISITS	12
LEGAL VISITS	12
VACCINE EDUCATION	12

INTRODUCTION

The DC Department of Corrections (hereinafter, DOC) operates two jail facilities: the Correctional Treatment Facility (hereinafter, CTF), and the Central Detention Facility also known as the DC Jail (hereinafter, CDF). The facilities are adjacent to one another and are located in Southeast Washington, D.C. The DOC also operates the Central Cell Block (hereinafter, CCB) which is located at 300 Indiana Avenue Northwest Washington, D.C.

The CDF houses male residents, a majority of whom are held pending adjudication of a criminal case or are sentenced to a period of incarceration following conviction for a misdemeanor offense. Other CDF residents include those held on United States Parole Commission (USPC) warrants, those awaiting transfer to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and those held due to a writ or hold typically awaiting transfer to another jurisdiction. The CCB houses male and female residents who have been arrested and are awaiting to see a judge for an initial appearance to determine whether they will be released from the CCB or sent to the CDF to await further proceedings with their criminal case.

Throughout the 2020 fiscal year, the District of Columbia was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CIC was unable to conduct normal on-site inspections of DOC facilities due to health and safety concerns, but CIC was still able to communicate with residents via written correspondences, and phone calls and emails from families. In fiscal year 2021, the CIC was able to perform an on-site visit and talk with staff and residents about conditions and their experiences both at work and in custody, respectively ². Following the site visit, CIC conducted its onsite inspection of CDF on May 4, 2021, and CCB on May 5, 2021 (the CIC did not inspect CTF).³ For a complete explanation of the report methodology, see Appendix A: Methodology.

DECEMBER 22, 2020 SUMMARY OF SITE VISIT

As part of the DOC site visit and inspection December during fiscal year 2021, the CIC toured areas of both the CDF and CCB, including restrictive housing units in which the CIC received resident concerns.

During the DOC site visit, the CIC learned about the modifications DOC implemented since March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the medical-stay-in-place. Below is an overview of those findings:

MEDICAL STAY IN PLACE

Since March 2020, the DOC implemented a medical-stay-in-place as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DC Health. This process was utilized to limit the movement of residents to help stop the spread of COVID-19 within the facility. Staff and inmates

² See DOC Site Visit Report, March 18, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1528626>.

³ See DOC Inspection Report, September 30, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1569561>.

were given personal protective equipment, all social visitation was stopped, legal visitation was modified, most court appearances were conducted remotely via video, and if feasible - residents were placed in single cells as opposed to the normal two-man cell. Staff members were provided COVID-19 educational materials every Wednesday. Nurses were initially placed at entrances to take temperatures as people entered the CDF facility; this process is now done by machine. Residents were allowed out of the cells for one hour daily, but there was no outside recreation, and outside work detail was restricted to the housing unit.⁴

SOCIAL VISITS

Social visitation was suspended. At the time of the site visit, all social visitation was suspended since March of 2020, and there was no definitive information regarding the restoration of those privileges.

LEGAL VISITS

Most legal visits occur virtually. There are four ways in which the DOC conducts non-contact legal visits:

1. There is a designated area on the first floor where residents can visit with their lawyers via video; or
2. If a resident is housed in a single cell, s/he can visit with an attorney via cell phone through a case manager; or
3. Residents can use the regular phone system for a free unmonitored legal call if the attorney calls the facility and registers in the Global Tel Link (GTL) database, which requires them to provide their name, phone number, client's name, and client's DC number; or
4. Residents can visit with their attorneys in person, but in a non-contact fashion behind the glass in the visiting hall.

If necessary, residents can still physically visit meet with their attorney in person, but the resident will quarantine for 14 days before returning to general population.

VIRTUAL COURT DATES

Most residents attend court dates virtually. The DOC erected technology in each of the visiting areas, which allows residents to appear at court via video. Residents who must attend court physically are quarantined for 14 days before returning to their original housing units.

LEAVING THE FACILITY

Residents who physically leave the facility for any reason are quarantined for 14 days before returning to general population.

⁴ See DOC Site Visit Report, March 18, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1528626>.

GLOBAL TEL LINK (GTL) TABLETS

There are 437 Global Tel Link (GTL) tablets. Tablets are loaned to residents for free on a first come first serve basis.

There are several profiles for usage of the tablets, which each contain access to different content⁵:

1. Free
2. Education
3. Promotional
4. Standard
5. Phone Dialer

GTL tablets, also known as entertainment tablets or black tablets, are provided so residents have an additional means of communicating with loved ones, and to provide entertainment while confined to cells for 23 hours a day. There are 437 GTL tablets at the DOC, 285 at the CDF, and 152 at the CTF. The total population of the DOC as of December 18, 2020 was 1,461 residents, which equates to approximately one tablet for every three residents.

AMERICAN PRISON DATA SYSTEM (ADPS) TABLETS

There are 1,189 American Prison Data System (ADPS) tablets. ADPS tablets are available to any resident who wishes to enroll in school and are available from 9 AM to 11 PM. There are 160 different courses on these tablets, including DCPS high school content and religious service content. There are also medical, grievance, and general request forms on these tablets. There is no cost associated with these tablets; they are not for entertainment purposes. There are 1,189 educational tablets for 1,450 residents.

OUTSIDE RECREATION

Since March of 2020 residents have not had any outside recreation. Several residents expressed serious concerns regarding the issue. DOC executive staff expressed awareness of the issue, but did not have a definitive plan at the moment regarding the resumption of outdoor recreational activities.

MAY 4, 2021 INSPECTION SUMMARY OF CDF

The CIC inspected the CDF on May 4, 2021. As part of the inspection, the CIC visited restrictive housing units North 1 and South 1, general population housing unit Southwest 2, and the outside recreation areas⁶.

⁵ See DOC Site Visit Report, March 18, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1528626>.

⁶ See DOC Inspection Report, September 30, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1569561>.

HOUSING UNIT NORTH 1

North 1 is a restrictive housing unit designed for individuals who have been found guilty of a disciplinary infraction, or those pending review of the adjustment board to determine if they should return to general population. CIC observed empty cells that were flooded and a caving roof in the shower area. Residents did not have access to inmate grievance procedure forms (IGP forms), and some residents did not have mattresses.

HOUSING UNIT SOUTH 1

South 1 is a restrictive housing unit for residents who have been found guilty of a disciplinary infraction, or have been placed in restrictive housing for some other reason by the DOC administration. Residents spoke to CIC staff about not having adequate cleaning supplies for their cells, showering only twice a week, and not having access to education or entertainment tablets.

HOUSING UNIT SOUTHWEST 2

Southwest 2 is a general population unit. Residents in this unit receive two hours of recreation: one hour indoor and one hour outdoor. At the time of the inspection, CIC observed 12 phones in this unit, but only 5 were operable. There were 65 ADEPA tablets, and 15 GTL tablets. Residents also indicated that medical does not respond within 24 hours after submission of a sick call request.

OUTSIDE RECREATION AREA

At the time of CIC's inspection, outside recreation had been canceled from 6 AM-2 PM, Monday through Friday, due to construction, but some residents were still able to participate in outside recreation during the evening time if there was adequate staff and the weather permitted. DOC executive staff informed the CIC that recreation under modified operations is supposed to occur for one hour a week per housing unit. Restrictive housing units do not receive outside recreation. Due to construction and staffing issues, the flow of outside recreation has been slow.

MAY 5, 2021 INSPECTION SUMMARY OF CCB

There are eight staff members on every shift at the Central Cell Block (CCB). Staff indicated that they are understaffed, and they recalled at least 15-20 staff persons per shift when CCB was ran by the Metropolitan Police Department. CCB uses a 15-question assessment form when individuals are admitted to CCB to determine the proper cell placement, as well as mental and physical health needs.

There are 57 cells. Three cells can accommodate men requiring wheelchairs. During the time of CIC inspection, two of the handicapped cells were inoperable. There are no beds. Residents sleep on a metal bunk. The air conditioning is controlled by the building. CCB was hot, and there is regular flooding.

There are two floors within CCB: men on the first floor and women on the second floor. LGBTQIA community members have the option of choosing between either. There are also two cells with cameras for individuals who pose a high risk of hurting themselves or others.

There are two screens for remote court appearances. Only one was working. Video court starts at 1:30 PM and ends at 6 PM, Monday through Friday. Individuals awaiting contact with the United States District Court for the District of Columbia participate in court via telephone.

METHODOLOGY

In October of fiscal year 2021, the CIC and DOC staff discussed the possibility of a site visit at the DOC, since the CIC had not physically inspected the facility since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020). The DOC granted the CIC a site visit for December 2021⁷.

In accordance with D.C. Code 24-101.01(d)(1)(2019), after the site visit, the Corrections Information Council (CIC) sent a request to tour the Central Detention Facility (CDF), and the Central Cell Block (CCB). The CIC conducted an onsite inspection of the CDF on May 4, 2021, and an onsite inspection of CCB on May 5, 2021⁸.

The CIC will continue to inspect and report on conditions of confinement within DOC facilities, and communicate with executive staff regarding existing circumstances and developments.

⁷ See DOC Site Visit Report, March 18, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1528626>.

⁸ See DOC Inspection Report, September 30, 2021 <https://cic.dc.gov/node/1569561>.

UPDATES

MEDICAL STAY IN PLACE

As of December 22, 2021, the DC DOC has proactively decided to move back to the modified medical stay in place. The posture has resulted in a cessation of social visitations; moved programming and educational opportunities back to a virtual space; and reduced recreation in its facilities to maintain social distance and alleviate the spread of COVID-19. There is also facility wide testing and continued education on proper mask wearing and vaccinations. DOC continues to offer a COVID-19 vaccine to all residents and is offering the booster to all residents who are eligible⁹.

SOCIAL VISITS

Starting in June 2021, the DOC began gradually allowing social visits. As of December 22, 2021, social visitation has again been suspended due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Video visitation will resume once all housing units at DOC have been removed from quarantine and isolation status.

LEGAL VISITS

The DOC had begun to allow contact and contactless legal visits without an appointment. As of December 22, 2021, only contactless legal visits are available, except for those residents who have jury trials.

VACCINE EDUCATION

Unity Healthcare medical staff provides vaccine education to residents, which is accomplished through intake interviews and visits to the units.

Vaccines and boosters are available for all residents. All new residents are notified at intake on vaccination services. DOC also provides vaccine education on residents' tablets and physically on housing units, while Unity Healthcare medical staff provides in person information to residents on the benefits of vaccination.

As of December 16, 2021, approximately 45% of the population at CDF was vaccinated.¹⁰

The DC DOC intends to resume normal operations at CTF and CDF once all housing units are cleared from quarantine.

⁹ DC DOC Coronavirus Prevention. January 25, 2022. <https://doc.dc.gov/page/coronavirus-prevention>.

¹⁰ Information subject to fluctuations.