

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**



September 14, 2023

Reverend Donald L. Isaac
Executive Director
Corrections Information Council
1400 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Director Isaac:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the Corrections Information Council (CIC) visit related to heat report. CIC visited the Central Detention Facility on July 20, 2023. DOC appreciates our ongoing partnership with CIC whereby we look both to seek improved circumstance and outcomes for District of Columbia inmates returning to the community.

DOC continues to encourage CIC to begin to use measurable standards or a standardized instrument to audit DOC facilities which will allow DOC to understand CIC standards and further know what to expect from CIC as an inspecting body. We continue to encourage CIC to draft or implement recognizable standards to ensure that DOC is able to appropriately ensure compliance or respond to inquiries.

I hope that you find this information responsive to your observations. Should you require additional information or further clarification of our submittal, please contact me at (202) 673-7316.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Faust". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "T" and "F".

Thomas Faust
Director

CIC Findings and Recommendation Related to Heat:

1. *DOC was compliant with its policy that “during cooling season, the temperature shall be maintained at a level no higher than 84 °F.” Also, the humidity averaged approximately 50% inside of those cells. There were some cells that felt cool; however, there were some cells that still felt uncomfortably warm, despite being in-compliance with the baseline temperature.*

CIC Recommendations:

1. *Please consider lowering the baseline temperature requirement to lower than 80 degrees. We acknowledge that the administration has already implemented cooling measures at 80 degrees, which is lower than the stated policy; however, the temperature is affected by conditions such as humidity and structural issues related to the sun heating up certain walls more than others. We also acknowledge the structural limitations of an older facility, and simply recommend a policy reconsideration of the baseline temperature required to implement “priority one” action steps.*

DOC Response to Findings and Recommendations Related to Heat:

1. The DOC is inspected three times per year by the DC Department of Health (DOH). DOH utilizes the American Correctional Association (ACA) Expected Practices and the American Public Health Association (APHA) Standards to audit the facilities. One of the APHA standards used for temperatures reads in part:

Temperature, Humidity, and Ventilation Control

The control system should maintain in indoor air temperature of at least 68° during the coldest months. Inmates must not be required to perform strenuous physical activity when temperature and humidity levels meet or exceed the following standards:

<u>Temp</u>	<u>Relative Humidity</u>
95	55
96	52
97	49
98	45
99	42

When indoor air temperatures exceed 90°F, special precautions must be taken to ensure that inmates are provided with extra showers, access to cool water to drink, and other appropriate measures. Special attention must be taken to protect inmates taking medications that limit their capacity to tolerate excessive heat.

DOC standards currently exceed those outlined by APHA. Additionally, DOC has a policy for addressing both heat and cold weather emergencies. The current DOC temperature baseline of 80 degrees for additional cooling measures was also established

in collaboration with our medical provider. Extra provisions including blankets and extra clothing are provided in the winter and extra water and fans are provided during warmer temperature conditions.

CIC Recommendation Related to Fans:

2. *Remove all dust and debris from the fans, which can affect air quality within the units.*
3. *Please consider adding fans to the lower levels within units to help circulate the air from fans located on the top levels.*

DOC Response to Recommendations Related to Fans:

2. Dust and debris have been removed from all fans. Fans are now on a routine cleaning schedule.
3. Additional fans have been ordered, and will be added.

CIC Recommendation Related to Staff Professionalism:

4. *Line staff or correctional officers who are on-duty should not call or communicate with resident's family members or associates who contact the DOC about residents or conditions of their confinement.*

The CIC discovered that DOC acknowledged that a correctional officer on duty called a resident's family member (it may have been a return call), which was perceived by the resident as inappropriate and disrespectful. In order to minimize the possibility of punitive and/or dangerous outcomes for both staff, officers, and residents, we recommend that DOC implement a policy to eradicate such interactions.

DOC Response to Recommendations Related to Staff Professionalism:

4. Per DOC policy 3300.1 Employee Code of Ethics and Conduct Section 11 reads in part:
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
 - a. No employee shall exhibit conduct that would adversely affect his/her job duties or the efficiency of the agency's operation, or violate any Federal law, municipal ordinance, or regulation of the District of Columbia.
 - d. Employees are expected to maintain professionalism in the workplace. Employees shall treat others cordially and respectfully at all times to include: verbal and non-verbal communication, and interaction with Department staff, inmates, visitors, volunteers, contractors and anyone else involved in the Department's day to day operations. Employees that display discourteous and offensive behavior shall receive disciplinary action. Such actions include but are not limited to:
 1. Bullying or berating others,
 2. Physical or verbal intimidation, such as shouting or angry outbursts directed towards others,
 3. Derogatory verbal comments or gestures,

4. Negative Name-calling, 5. Use of profanity towards others, 6. Intentionally humiliating others verbally or by using inappropriate physical gestures; and 7. Written or electronic communication sent with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm another person, uses abusive or obscene language, or includes a threat that would cause a reasonable person who is the target of the threat to fear for his or her safety.

DOC will be revising this policy to specifically prohibit correctional officers from calling residents' family members. DOC will also continue to reinforce the importance of professionalism, at all times. Staff receive annual training. Any individual found not in compliance with this policy will be held accountable.

CIC Recommendation Related to Procedures for Families to Report Concerns:

5. *Does the DOC have a policy or protocol to address the following questions? What is the procedure when family members (or associates) call to report concerns about a resident or their conditions? What is the proper telephone number? With whom do they speak? Does the phone operator serve as a conduit for direct messages to line staff or officers, or is that communication handled administratively? Is there ever a need for an officer to know the identity or contact information of a family member (or caller), and if so – under what conditions might that be acceptable?*

DOC Response to Findings and Recommendations Related to Heat:

5. Our current policy is under review and will be updated and streamlined within the next month. At this time our website gives the following contact numbers: DOC Headquarter 202-698-4932, and 202-673-7316; CTF Command 202-790-6601; CDF Command 202-398-4932; and CCB at 202-727-4222. Additional numbers are provided, please click the link. <https://doc.dc.gov/node/300012>