



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Prevent. Protect. Prepare.

Roy Cooper, Governor

Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

UPDATE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY'S PRISON SAFETY ACTION STEPS

January 25, 2018

Ensuring the safety of Public Safety employees, visitors and inmates within prison facilities is Secretary Hooks' top priority. During his first year, he conducted site visits, met with prisons staff at all levels individually and through staff meetings, and solicited employee feedback on ways to enhance safety and improve operations at prison facilities. In addition, Prisons suffered the tragic loss of life through two horrific incidents involving inmate violence against staff. In response, the Department of Public Safety has taken a number of steps to make prisons safer and we are continuing to implement new initiatives, as well as explore opportunities for additional improvements.

The primary focus areas include increasing hiring and retention; improving training for new and veteran employees; reducing contraband in prison facilities; and enhancing overall security policies and practices. Highlights of the measures taken immediately after the October 12, 2017 incident at Pasquotank Correctional Institution, as well as measures completed, measures in ongoing or pending status, and next steps are as follows:

ACTIONS TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER PASQUOTANK

- ✓ Conducted a complete facility search at Pasquotank Correctional Institution by 100 trained and well-equipped Prison Emergency Response Team members to look for evidence, as well as unrelated contraband in the facility immediately following the October 12, 2017 tragedy.
- ✓ Shut down operations at the Pasquotank Correctional Institution sewing plant permanently.
- ✓ Suspended more than 250 offenders who fit a specific profile of convictions for assaultive crimes from participation in Correction Enterprises operations that involve the use of cutting and/or impact tools until further risk assessments can be completed.
 - Implemented a new policy prohibiting those with convictions of a violent crime against a government official and/or law enforcement officer from being assigned to any work station utilizing or providing access to cutting and/or impact tools without expressed approval of the Director of Prisons.
- ✓ Increased the number of correctional officers providing security in Correction Enterprises areas, and increased the number of rounds by the officer in charge within those areas until such time as we are able to conduct a full security review.

MAILING ADDRESS:
4201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4201
Telephone: (919) 733-2126



www.ncdps.gov
An Equal Opportunity Employer

OFFICE LOCATION:
512 N. Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27604-1159
Fax: (919) 715-8477

COMPLETED*Enhancing Overall Security Policies and Practices*

- ✓ Requested the Governor's Crime Commission (in June 2017) to research best practices nationwide in several areas of prison management and provide recommendations to the Secretary. The GCC's final report with recommendations was provided to DPS in December 2017 and is currently under review.
- ✓ Requested the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to conduct an independent and comprehensive review of the safety and security operations at Pasquotank Correctional Institution (PCI), as well as all aspects of Correction Enterprises' safety protocols following the October 12, 2017 tragedy at PCI Sewing Plant. In early November 2017, six NIC investigators conducted a complete review of the Sewing Plant at PCI and two other Correction Enterprises' plants. The review included staffing patterns, inmate-worker placement assessments, training and operational policies and procedures. The NIC provided its report to NCDPS in January 2018.
- ✓ Revised the Offender Disciplinary Procedures effective January 3, 2018. The changes strengthen the policy by upgrading certain charges to a higher level and, thus, will hold inmates more accountable for rules violations and discourage violent behavior.
- ✓ Met with the three North Carolina US Attorney's Offices, the Conference of District Attorneys and various law enforcement agencies to develop stronger partnerships with prison managers and to help encourage charges and prosecutions against both staff and inmates for criminal activity.
- ✓ Enhanced partnerships for the sharing of intelligence and information between internal and external stakeholders to address criminal activity within prisons and increased the staff within the department's intelligence unit to better manage intelligence gathering.
- ✓ Established an inter-agency advisory committee to consider and recommend additional technology and individual devices to enhance the safety and security of Prisons and Correction Enterprises staff, prison facilities and plant operations. (Committee includes representation from Prisons operations, Adult Correction Special Operations and Intelligence, Legal, State Highway Patrol and Emergency Management). This committee is reviewing adding Tasers to the safety packages for correctional officer supervisory positions.
- ✓ Purchased batons to fully equip correctional officers in medium custody facilities. Batons were already deployed to close custody facilities.

Increasing Hiring and Training

- ✓ Increased our recruitment efforts and improved our hiring process, resulting in a 9.03% increase in correctional officer hires in 2017. Retention continues to be an ongoing challenge making the vacancy rate essentially flat.
- ✓ Addressed the salary disparity between prison program section employees and correctional officers through in-range salary adjustments. Programs staff were not included in the recent salary study for correctional officers and did not receive salary increases; however, certified program staff often assist correctional officers with inmate counts and other supervision tasks.
- ✓ Hired a full-time military recruiter who is establishing contacts with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the North Carolina National Guard to increase the recruitment and hiring of military veterans to work as correctional officers.

Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees

- ✓ Required newly hired officers to begin attending basic correctional officer training at the start of their second week on the job, following one week of orientation at their work location. This requirement was implemented in July 2017.
- ✓ Directed Prisons to work with the Office of Staff Development and Training to eliminate the backlog of officers on the job who had not attended basic training. Backlog has dropped from 600+ to 120. All officers assigned a post are scheduled to be trained by March 2018.
- ✓ Added two hours of situational awareness training to the Basic Correctional Officer curriculum effective January 2, 2018. In addition, four hours of in-service situational awareness training has been developed for various facility staff and will be deployed in early 2018.
- ✓ Met with the Community College System to discuss ways to further collaborate in the delivery of training to new hires and managers in order to provide a better pathway to promotion for officers as well as supervisory training.

Reducing Contraband in Prison Facilities

- ✓ Enhanced the Prisons entry/exit policy, making it mandatory for individuals entering most prisons to undergo a pat/frisk search procedure to discourage and prevent contraband. This went into effect October 16, 2017.
- ✓ Ordered and installed more Cell Sense towers in prison facilities ensuring that all facilities are fully equipped with the cellphone detection devices aimed at preventing the entry of cellphone contraband.

- ✓ Requested prison perimeter patrols by the State Highway Patrol aimed at preventing throw-overs of contraband.

ONGOING/PENDING

Enhancing Overall Safety and Security

- Ordered a review and audit of the safety and security of all Correction Enterprises operations. Those reviews are ongoing.
 - Suspended Correction Enterprises operations temporarily at Lanesboro Correctional Institution Metal Products Plant and Caledonia Correctional Institution Cannery to conduct safety, security and accountability audits. The security audits have been completed and operations have resumed at the Caledonia Cannery.
 - A security audit has also been completed at the Central Prison Laundry.
 - Security audits are currently pending at the Pender Correctional Institution Sewing Plant, Scotland Correctional Institution Sewing and Braille operations and the Apex Warehouse.
- Created a Security Accountability Unit within Prisons. Working with the National Institute of Corrections, this unit will help develop new safety audit training, policies and procedures and ensure regular and comprehensive safety audits occur at all prison facilities. Security Accountability Unit staff will be trained by NIC while conducting a security audit of three prison facilities in February 2018.
- Directed Emergency Management to work with Prisons to integrate the floor plans of the state's prison facilities into the State Emergency Response Application (SERA).
 - SERA is a secure web-based application designed to assist first responders, law enforcement and emergency managers in efficiently responding to hazards and threats at fixed sites.
 - SERA will provide prison profile and process information, as well as spatially display prison floor plans, key assets and vulnerabilities for first responders. This information can be crucial for first responders when responding to an emergency.
- Directed staff to complete a comprehensive review and update of all Prisons and Correction Enterprises policies and procedures.
- Requested NIC to review and revalidate inmate classification protocols. NIC will begin this nine-month assessment supported by a team of prison staff in January 2018.

- Ordered a thorough review of the inmate assessment policies utilized to assign offenders to Correction Enterprises and other work operations. Working with NIC to identify best practices.
- Ordered stab resistant shirts for the 13,000 certified employees who work in prisons which are intended to be part of the daily uniform to increase personal safety.
- Developed a long-range strategic plan for upgrading, purchasing and installing additional or replacement video cameras in all facilities. We will seek funding to do so.
- Developed a plan to provide body alarm technology to all prison employees through radio device upgrades and lanyards designed as personal alarm technology for sending notification and location information in critical situations. We will seek funding to implement.

Hiring and Retention

- Implementing a plan to provide e-mail accounts to the approximately 9,000 correctional officers who do not have email access, to improve communication channels to those employees. The plan will be implemented in stages, with approximately 3,000 correctional officers getting e-mail access by the end of 2018.
- Conducting a comprehensive review of the current cumbersome hiring process to provide a more efficient and customer-friendly experience.

Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees

- Implementing a new Field Training Officer (FTO) program to provide on-the-job training for new correctional officers. The new FTO program is modeled after the prior Mentoring program and will incorporate elements of the current Career Readiness program. Training for new FTOs will begin March 1, 2018.

Reducing Contraband in Prison Facilities

- Contracted with a vendor to install Managed Access System (MAS) equipment in 2018 at two close custody prisons. MAS is a radio frequency technology that is deployed within the facility perimeter, building locations, housing areas, etc. to detect, intercept and block the use of unauthorized cellphones. This disrupts the use of cellphones for unauthorized calls, text and data transmissions to the outside of the facility. The technology also includes drone detection alerts, providing notice of incoming drone activity.
- Started the process of planning and installing additional fencing to increase the perimeter from exterior to interior areas where people can retrieve items (contraband) thrown over the fence.

NEXT STEPS

- Establishing a Prison Reform Advisory Board consisting of experts in the field of corrections. The board members will provide ongoing expert advice on best practices for maintaining prison safety.
- Appoint a designated project manager who will work with the Prison Reform Advisory Board, employees at all levels of the agency, the Office of State Budget and Management, Fiscal Research staff, as well as external stakeholders, to help ensure all prison safety action steps are achieved and identify and initiate further steps as needed.
- Improve internal and external communications with respect to prison operations.
- Enhance correctional officer recruitment efforts to include development and implementation of a marketing strategy, rebranding of NC Prisons and updating correctional officer recruitment materials.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the current Basic Correctional Officer training program and in-service training for supervisors.
- Complete reviews of the Governor's Crime Commission December 2017 report and the National Institute of Corrections January 2018 report to further outline a strategic plan for additional immediate needs and items to be implemented over time.
- Engage the General Assembly to address immediate safety security equipment needs as well as policy changes.
- Engage the General Assembly to address hiring and retention concerns -- salary, hiring incentives, and other retention needs.