



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

January 27, 2021

Joanna Carns  
Office of Corrections Ombuds  
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW  
Olympia, WA 98505

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OCO Report on the ‘the investigation into the use of emergency restraints on an incarcerated individual at Airway Heights Corrections Center’ completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
The use of emergency restraints should be classified as a type of use of force and all use of force policies should be followed.	The use of emergency restraints, the restraint chair, and multiple restraint bed are, by themselves, not a use of force. If the individual is compliant with placement in restraints, a use of force has not occurred.
DOC should thoroughly retrain staff, particularly all healthcare staff, on policies 420.250, 420.255, 610.010, and 620.100, surrounding the use of emergency restraints, assessment, and appropriate documentation. This may occur after the larger systemic review mentioned above and expected resulting changes.	The department will schedule refresher training with healthcare staff on emergency restraint use to include health care responsibilities related to protocols required to occur prior to and during the use of restraint bed or restraint chair.
DOC Policy should contain language that prohibits utilizing external persons to enforce the use of emergency restraints for the purposes of a medical procedure, absent exigent circumstances and a court order.	It is not practical or advisable to restrict external entities from using force, force options, and/or restraints they are trained to use given a lawful reason to do so.  This situation was not a use of force, and no external entity used force or restraints (including for medical purposes).
DOC should assess and determine if any staff involved in this incident should receive disciplinary or other employment action.	The department assessed the situation and found that staff acted in accordance with policy requiring no disciplinary or other employment action.



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

The information provided by the OCO was useful to ensure the Department of Corrections is doing everything it can to ensure an incarcerated person's time in the agency's facilities is a fair and safe space for all incarcerated individuals.

We also appreciate your team's understanding of the unique processes across facilities and the addition of policies and procedures being put in place to address them. We are working towards proactivity and improving quality assurance processes throughout the department. Moving forward, Washington Department of Corrections will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Corrections Ombuds to implement additional policies, procedures, and security measures to continue to improve the facility operations.

Sincerely,

Steve Sinclair, Secretary  
Washington Department of Corrections