



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

June 19, 2020

Joanna Carns
Office of Corrections Ombuds
PO Box 43113
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to respond to the ‘OCO Rapid Monitoring Visit to Coyote Ridge Corrections Center’ completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds (OCO).

The Department of Corrections takes very seriously the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the Washington state correctional facilities. The agency appreciates the opportunity to have your staff tour the Coyote Ridge Corrections Center and evaluate the facility’s implementation of the protocols and procedures, especially cleaning and communication tools, put in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The information provided by the OCO was useful to ensure the Department of Corrections is doing everything it can to ensure an incarcerated individuals health and safety while incarcerated, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OCO Recommendation	DOC Response
Extend the time out of the cell—at the conclusion of the second observation visit, DOC increased the daily time out of cells from 20 minutes to 30 minutes for everyone. DOC also informed us that they are looking for more efficiencies moving forward.	The facility was able to increase the out of cell time for all incarcerated individuals from 20 minutes to 30 minutes per day. This is still the protocol that is being followed. As the response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the department will continue to implement updated protocols and precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of the staff and the incarcerated population in the Washington correctional facilities.
Rapidly create a system to respond in the case of a medical emergency, as all cells do not have alarm systems and there are fewer chances of direct immediate communication with staff.	The facility has increased staffing levels on every tier to accommodate for being available to respond to incarcerated individuals requests. Those individuals who are on quarantine status do have the



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

	<p>ability to open the cell door and call for a staff member at any time, as the doors are no longer double locked. All individuals have a cell mate and would have the ability to open the door and call for help in the event an individual needed immediate attention. For those individuals who are in units that are not able to open the door at any time, there is an informal flagging system that has been used where an individual can flag down a staff member by waving an item in front of their cell. Additionally, a staff member is doing routine cell checks every 15 minutes for all housing units.</p>
<p>Ensure a timely response for use of bathroom facilities. For those with medical conditions that may require more trips to the facilities, create a non-HIPAA-violating process for quicker responses. DOC has placed more staff in the dry cell units to ensure timely access to bathroom facilities.</p>	<p>Every individual that is not able to open their cell door at any time, is being routinely checked on every 15 minutes. If an individual has a need to use the restroom, within 15 minutes a staff member will be able to allow the individual to use the restroom during their routine checks, or can be flagged down if it is an emergent need. For individuals who have the ability to open their cell doors, an individual can open their door and request to use the restroom and a staff member will allow the individual to use the restroom.</p>
<p>Increase mental health staff availability.</p>	<p>The department has mental health staff on call and available at all times. Mental health staff are assigned to a specific living unit and are making rounds to do mental health checks twice daily during the business week. In the event mental health resources are needed after hours, there are staff available on-call to respond immediately. Mental health is continuing to provide resources to the population to ensure their mental health needs are</p>



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

	continuing to be met.
Provide in-cell activities and entertainment including televisions. DOC administration acknowledged that these additions are ways to quell some of the tension and boredom expressed by the population. DOC is looking into additional options.	The facility was able to purchase TV's (112) for all cells that did not previously have them. These are currently being deployed to all units. All individuals who own JPay players are able to take them as their property. All units have books, cards, games, and puzzles that are available for use. Additionally, recreation staff have created in-cell exercise packets to encourage incarcerated individuals to participate in in-cell exercise activities. The facility will continue to explore additional ways to quell the tension and boredom.
Increase communication with the incarcerated population regarding changes at the facility.	The facility is communicating with the population on a frequent basis. All information is being printed and provided to each cell individually by staff. Additionally, Superintendent Uttecht created a video that was shared on the local facility TV channel reminding incarcerated individuals about the necessity to follow the COVID-19 precautionary protocols that are being implemented, to include a request for the incarcerated person to come forward if they are sick.
Create the availability to practice cultural and religious activities, without interruption from cellmates, and in an environment that allows for unrestricted expression of their beliefs.	Each individual has the ability, within reason, to practice their religious and cultural beliefs. Even while confined in a cell, they are free to exercise their religion, while the agency maintains the safety and security of the facility in maintaining restricted movement. The facility does have two chaplains that work a variety of scheduled shifts and are available to walk around and provide religious support as available. Currently, the facility is under a restricted movement that will not allow for



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

practicing of cultural and religious activities, without interruption from cell mates, in an environment that allows for unrestricted expression of their beliefs.

We also appreciate your team's understanding of the unique implementation across facilities and the addition of policies and procedures being put in place to protect our populations. Moving forward, Washington Department of Corrections will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Corrections Ombuds on any future quality assurance visits.

Sincerely,

Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections