



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

March 12, 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 Investigation Report on the ‘two uses of force on Black men at Stafford Creek Corrections Center’ completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Recommendation	Response
DOC should initiate its own investigation related to staff behavior during both incidents and take any necessary corrective action.	The department has reviewed the incidents mentioned in this report. Following the department’s review, an investigation into the actions of those involved has been initiated. The results of the investigation will better inform any necessary corrective action.
Use of force incidents should be reviewed within 30 days and prior to disciplinary hearings, if at all possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If DOC administrators find concerns about staff actions in precipitating use of force incidents, consideration for that should be given as part of the disciplinary hearing and particularly any sanctions.	The department, in conversations with the OCO, has mutually agreed to consider an appropriate time frame to conduct the policy required use of force reviews during the next policy review cycle.
DOC staff should train all custody staff on using de-escalation tactics instead of force, starting with SCCC as a pilot.	When employees are met with resistant/aggressive behavior and ongoing de-escalation techniques fail to resolve the situation, unless an emergent need to intervene is present, employees shall call for supervisory presence before taking any additional action. The Assistant Secretary for Prisons will message this expectation/reminder to all prison employees in a written directive. The department shares the belief that conflict



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	<p>avoidance, de-escalation tactics and trauma informed methods are preferred method of engaging with those in its custody and preventing potential use of force situations. As such, the department agrees additional emphasis on these skills should be created and/or enhanced for employees in multiple training and learning environments.</p>
<p>DOC should offer regular training for custody staff centered around race equity and racial bias/discrimination, starting with SCCC.</p>	<p>In coordination with the State Human Resources Office and in accordance with Executive Order 12-02, the Department is working with the equity, diversity, inclusion and respect (EDIR) team to create an EDIR policy, which will create an anti-racism statement that will inform a department strategic plan on EDIR. Encompassed within the plan will be trainings to address concerns around race equity and racial bias/discrimination.</p>
<p>OMNI records need to be updated to reflect correct information for Complainant B.</p>	<p>The department has worked to ensure that the records reflect correct information for this individual.</p>
<p>Complainant B should have the “threatening” infraction removed from his record.</p>	<p>The department has transcribed the audio recording of this conversation for review. After this review, the department will take appropriate action.</p>
<p>All cameras should be checked regularly to ensure they are in proper working order and charged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DOC should also consider the potential benefits of utilizing body cameras.	<p>Although post orders, on shift training, and OJT require employees to ensure all assigned equipment is present and in working order DOC agrees to reemphasize this expected practice to employees with responsibility specific to cameras.</p> <p>DOC has determined body cameras are cost prohibitive without additional budget allocations.</p>



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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. The Department takes seriously allegations of racial injustice and will address any substantiated allegations with appropriate measures.

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,

on behalf of
Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections