



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

July 9, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Monroe Correctional Complex appreciates the opportunity to respond to the 'Office of the Corrections Ombuds Heat Monitoring Report,' documenting the observations made by the Ombuds site visit team during their site visit to the Monroe Correctional Complex on Monday, June 28, 2021.

The Department of Corrections takes very seriously the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the Washington state correctional facilities. The department appreciates the observations and acknowledgement of the Ombuds Office as to the cooling measures, including cooling, misting and ice water stations, sprinklers, cell window coverings and free sunscreen, present and in use at all the visited Monroe units.

Further, the department appreciates the cited outcomes documented in the report. These outcomes are exploratory options and purchasing possibilities, such as covering glass ceilings with a reflective film and purchasing more fans, being actively considered by the facility to assist the incarcerated population in remaining cool.

The department values the opportunity to reply to the three recommendations not directly addressed by the cited outcomes. The following represents its considered responses:

- While the Monroe Correctional Complex did allow individuals to block the air vents in their cells, free of potential consequences, when the air coming into the cells is too warm, it did not promote the behavior or the fact that individuals would not be infracted during the extreme heat conditions. The facility will consider whether such communications should occur if such need arises in the future.
- The Monroe Correctional Complex will investigate what outdoor solutions may be available to assist with shading cell windows that are subject to direct sunlight when temperatures are high.
- When it comes to adjusting water temperatures within the showers, the Department of Corrections is bound to have water temperatures set at a certain temperature range to meet the required health, environmental and safety standards for the operation and maintenance of correctional facilities as set by the Washington



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Department of Health. Because it could not adjust the shower water temperatures, it did establish the previously cited sprinklers and misters in the outdoor recreation yards and the indoor cooling stations for individuals to utilize.

In addition to the cooling suggestions contained within the report, the facility implemented extra security checks for staff to check on individuals, specifically looking for individuals who may have been experiencing heat-related illnesses. Also, staff on shift were provided refresher training and their knowledge reinforced on associated symptoms of heat-related illness.

Finally, the facility appreciates the patience and calmness reflected by the majority of the incarcerated individuals during the uncomfortable and extreme heat faced by the facility. It also appreciates the diligence of its staff and collaborative nature of the incarcerated population and staff working together to alleviate the heat where possible. The Monroe Correctional Complex values the site visit of the Ombuds staff to the facility on such a hot day and the time taken to visit the various tiers and units. Moving forward, the facility will continue to work collaboratively with the Office of Corrections Ombuds on these matters of health, safety and welfare of those in the state's custody.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "EJAL".

Eric Jackson, Superintendent  
Monroe Correctional Complex  
Washington Department of Corrections