



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

January 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 Report on the 'OCO's systemic work to analyze complaints related to the loss and destruction of personal property of incarcerated individuals in the Washington Department of Corrections (DOC)' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Recommendation	Response
OCO recommends the creation of an internal workgroup to access the expertise that already exists amongst facility staff to address both the below recommendations and any others that may be developed by the group for process improvement. The workgroup should include a representative from DES. The workgroup should focus its efforts on property loss due to institutional transfers and segregation placement, as the two most frequently cited causes of loss. An outcome of the workgroup would be a systemwide strategic plan to reduce property loss and would involve objective measurements, including both tort claim payouts and grievances by institution.	Corrections has created an internal work group to inform process changes with the goal of reducing loss due to institutional transfers and placement in segregation. Process changes will be captured in DOC policy 440.000 Personal Property . Corrections will invite participation from the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), including review of suggested process changes and development of curriculum. Scope and outcomes of the workgroup will be established by the workgroup.
Create and implement a standardized, mandatory training for all facility line staff with clear expectations, timeframes, and needed actions. To expedite work, review and build on the tools that have already been developed at individual institutions, but may not be widely disseminated or used across the department.	Corrections agrees and will use the recommendation as a focus point for the revision of DOC policy 440.000 Personal Property . A training course, which identifies changes to DOC 440.000 Personal Property , will be developed and presented as required training for all custody staff, unit supervisors and correctional program managers.
Improve the quality of the documentation and accountability for property packouts. Examples include:	Corrections agrees to implement a property pack out checklist for use by employees anytime a pack out is conducted. A checklist



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unless a security issue exists, I/Is should always be allowed to pack their own property.• Any staff member who handles a box or package of personal property should sign their name, ID number and the date that they handled the package containing the I/I's personal property.• Take digital photos of all boxes showing contents and photos of individual items and make the photos part of the official inventory of contents. Have photos uploaded to DOC's internal network and take photos of the box contents before the I/I is allowed to take possession of the box.• Have the incarcerated sender review the contents prior to shipment with a staff member and have both sign a receipt that states that both parties have viewed the contents before and after shipment.• Utilize current technology to track shipments. Example: bar code the shipping labels, use tracking numbers that are scanned into the OMNI system.• Two step verification of the condition the working condition of electronics that are shipped. I/I tests the device in front of the shipping personnel from DOC. Both the I/I and the officer witnessing the test and inspection of the device (or musical instruments) verify that the electronic device works and/or that the device/instrument is in good, fair or poor condition. The verifications are made part of the electronic record. A duplicate paper copy is given to the I/I on both ends of the shipment.	<p>will identify necessary steps to complete in the pack out process to minimize loss of personal property. The checklist will also provide record of employees who have handled personal property items.</p> <p>Personal property must continue to be searched and inventoried by employees. This ensures proper accountability of items, verification of ownership and provides assurance personal property is free of contraband.</p> <p>Corrections will consider revision of language in DOC policy 440.000 Personal Property to increase the opportunity of those residing in general population settings to participate in the pack out process.</p> <p>Corrections does not have the capacity to require and support photos be taken of each pack up. Because pack outs occur within all types of settings, to include segregation, infirmary and other specialty settings, incarcerated individuals are not always available to review and sign for transferring property. DOC believes the implementation of a pack out checklist, providing policy guidance of expected timelines and formalized training for all custody staff will reduce property loss and related tort claims and grievances.</p> <p>DOC will require the use of the electronic property record to track the status and location of personal property. The electronic property record provides the ability to identify location of personal property items as in-transit, in-cell, property room, evidence room. Policy changes and training will be provided to require use of the electronic record to account for location of personal property.</p> <p>Corrections agrees to review the process of inspecting and recording working status of all</p>
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	<p>major non-consumables (electronics) prior to shipment. The DOC form 19-081 Major Non-Consumables Inspection Form will be reviewed as a part of the workgroup review process of DOC 440.000 Personal Property.</p>
<p>Prohibit I/Is from handling other I/Is personal property unless under direct supervision of DOC staff.</p>	<p>Corrections agrees and will use the recommendation as a focus point for the work group, revision of DOC policy 440.000 Personal Property and development of training.</p>
<p>Create clear expectations of timeframes in written policy, as opposed to post orders, so that property is immediately secured for individuals who have been removed from a cell or living unit for segregation or medical issues. The property should be immediately removed and inventoried.</p>	<p>Corrections agrees and will use the recommendation as a focus point for the work group, revision of DOC policy 440.000 Personal Property and development of training. This recommendation represents the largest deliverable requested within the report's recommendations.</p>
<p>Consider the use of commercial alternatives (e.g. UPS/USPS/Fed Ex) for shipment of personal property, or allowing I/I to choose if at their own expense.</p>	<p>Corrections agrees to identify shipping alternatives for the incarcerated population. Because select facility mailrooms have not historically worked with some of the commercial shipping alternatives, the workgroup is communicating with each facility to determine common commercial shipping alternatives and will also work on communications materials to promote alternatives, once determined.</p>
<p>Conduct a review of the current tort claims process, including soliciting greater feedback from the incarcerated population to determine how to make the tort claim process more use friendly. Consider providing a monthly breakdown of property payouts per institution across DOC and posted publicly to increase a sense of accountability at the institutional level. (See two example tables in Appendix A that identify that WSP has had the highest number of tort claims over the past two fiscal years, but that CBCC had the highest rate of tort claims compared to its population.)</p>	<p>Corrections will review the property tort claim process and invite participation of the Department of Enterprise Services as well as solicit input from incarcerated individuals. Additionally the Corrections will consider publishing a regular report of property claims by institution.</p> <p>The goal of revising policy and establishing formal training is to reduce property loss. Corrections will consider using the rate of tort claims and substantiated grievances as measures of success.</p>



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Create a clear, consistent process for appeals of property disposition.	Corrections agrees and will use the recommendation as a focus point for the work group.
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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.

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