

**OCO Monitoring Visit to Stafford Creek Corrections Center
Conducted by Joanna Carns, OCO Director, and Celeste Kump, OCO Intern**

Background

- The Office of the Corrections Ombuds (OCO) received numerous concerns regarding the Department of Correction's (DOC) response to COVID-19. Additionally, OCO received several requests to enter DOC facilities and perform monitoring visits. For the above reasons, on May 12, 2020, OCO Director Joanna Carns and OCO Intern Celeste Kump conducted a monitoring visit to Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC). The purpose of the visit was to observe SCCC's response to COVID-19.

Executive Summary/ Key Findings

- Overall, the visit was positive, although there are a number of concerns listed. The overall feeling of the monitoring team was that the virus was not yet "real" to staff or the incarcerated, likely because the facility has not experienced its first positive case.
- Throughout the OCO monitoring visit, interactions between DOC staff and incarcerated individuals, among DOC staff, and within the incarcerated population appeared normal. The facility appeared clean and orderly; however, the incarcerated relayed that they did not have access to hepa stat cleaner, which is regularly used in other facilities.
- OCO staff observed a very high level of compliance of both DOC staff and the incarcerated wearing face coverings (fabric cloth coverings, surgical masks, etc.). However, OCO noted concerns regarding the implementation of social distancing, particularly amongst staff.
- OCO staff spoke with a number of incarcerated individuals during the monitoring visit. The primary concerns relayed pertained to poor telecommunication services by vendors GTL and JPAY, a desire for a loosening of the restrictions on the number of individuals out at recreation, a request for more cleaning materials, and concern that correctional staff were not properly modeling prevention practices such as social distancing.

Statutory Authority

- Per RCW 43.06C.050, OCO has "reasonable access" to all state correctional facilities in order to monitor compliance with respect to the rights and safety of incarcerated individuals.

Observations

Entrance

- At the main entrance of SCCC, DOC staff wearing only a face mask and gloves handed to the OCO monitoring team a list of the screening questions and asked OCO to read over the questions and to let him know if any of the answers to the questions was yes. DOC

took the temperature of both OCO staff with a touchless thermometer. He did not have a protective gown on or a protective screen. One of the temperatures taken was 96 degrees, which did not appear to present a problem. He also did not appear aware of when the thermometer would be cleaned and thought it may happen at shift change. Upon questioning some of the irregularities with this procedure, DOC staff relayed that the main entrance was not the normal entrance and that all staff were being directed to enter through the far side of the administrative building, at which point they would be screened by more experienced staff.

- At the end of the visit, OCO staff visited the area where staff were screened. The staff conducting the screening appeared more knowledgeable and was wearing appropriate PPE and had a protective shield. (Photo S in the Appendix.) When the temperature of the OCO staff again was low on the first try, he indicated that the practice was for the staff person to wait five minutes and then the temperature would be taken again. A large sign indicated that the thermometer must read at least 97 degrees or the temperature would need to be taken again, as a quality assurance measure. The screening questions were written on a large whiteboard and again, they were not asked individually, but the OCO team was directed to read them and then self-report if any of the answers was yes. When questioned about this practice, staff relayed that they had originally asked the questions individually to each staff, but it took too long to process staff through for shift change.¹
- Staff relayed that they are turning away symptomatic staff and regularly receive updated lists of staff names who should not be allowed entry into the facility.

Main Facility

- OCO observed COVID-19 posted DOC memos, health-safety information posters, and reminders to staff and incarcerated population throughout the facility. However, there was a lack of consistency in the posters and the information; further, the posters were printed out on 8x11 computer paper and it was not clear that they were noticeable or read by the incarcerated population. The incarcerated population was observed wearing face coverings with a high level of compliance and generally engaged in social distancing, although there were small groupings in the housing units.
- DOC staff were observed wearing face coverings throughout the facility, both inside and outside of buildings. However, they did not appear to routinely engage in social distancing, with some exceptions (see, for example, Photo A and B in the Appendix).

¹ OCO raised this concern to DOC Headquarters and since the time of this visit, DOC Headquarters created an Active Screening Station Job Aid to assist those staff working in the Active Screening Stations to reduce time processing everyone coming in, while still verbally asking the screening questions to ensure proper screening is completed (along with the temperature checks).

General Housing Unit H6A

- The housing unit appeared clean. OCO did not observe any porters cleaning; upon asking the staff, they relayed that the porters were on lunch break. The OCO monitoring team spoke with a porter who relayed that they cleaned hourly and that they used “yellow and green” disinfectants. They reported that soap and water were available on the housing unit. The phones had large plastic barriers erected between them, but the kiosks did not. All incarcerated individuals and staff were observed wearing face masks. Signs on the floor indicated where to stand for social distancing. However, incarcerated individuals were generally in small groups in the dayroom. They further reported that there is no social distancing when they have to engage in mass movement, such as going to the yard. They also reported that sitting two to a table in the dining hall did not allow enough space for social distancing. They reported that staff were observed not wearing masks in their office space and that one staffperson in particular was coughing, sneezing, and then handling paper that was passed to the incarcerated. Hand sanitizer was not available on the unit because all of the hand sanitizer had been removed from housing units. (Photos C-F in the Appendix)

Kitchen and Dining Area

- The OCO monitoring team observed the kitchen and dining area. On that day, lunch had been passed out in to-go containers during breakfast, so OCO was not able to observe a meal period. However, various incarcerated workers were sitting at the tables and OCO confirmed that if people are sitting even two to a table, they would be facing each other and eating in less than six feet of space between them (Photo I in the Appendix). The dining area appeared clean. The incarcerated workers were not observed cleaning but relayed that they generally clean the tables in between each use with CP1617 sanitizer and at the end of the meal period with CP205 germicidal disinfectant that they allow to sit on the tables and equipment for at least 15 minutes. They reported that soap and water is available to them for use. There was a hand sanitizer dispenser available in the kitchen, which is the only area in the facility that one remains (Photo H in the Appendix). All of the incarcerated workers were wearing masks; they relayed that staff maintain six feet of distance.
- In reviewing the kitchen area, however, OCO staff generally saw groupings of incarcerated workers not observing social distancing (see, e.g., Photo J in the Appendix). In fact, it was physically impossible to maintain social distance in some areas – such as the dishwashing area – due to the physical layout. Positively, the dishwashing staff relayed that the cleanliness has recently improved because they have a “crew that cares now.” They state that they use kettle water with near boiling water to clean the dishes, but that certain foods, such as spaghetti sauce, still stain the trays and may account for why some individuals felt that the meal trays were not sufficiently clean.

Medical Clinic

- OCO staff observed all DOC staff in the main areas wearing face coverings and wearing gloves (see, e.g, Photo K in the Appendix). The waiting area included markings on the seats where incarcerated individuals should sit to maintain social distancing. However, during OCO's visit, two incarcerated individuals were observed sitting close together and not wearing masks, so compliance in the waiting area is unknown (Photo L in the Appendix).
- Medical staff relayed that positive improvements such as changes to the pill line schedule had resulted in fewer groupings of incarcerated people. OCO noted that no markings/stickers were placed outside to indicate where the incarcerated should stand to maintain distance in the pill line.
- Medical staff stated that anyone with symptoms would receive testing. If an incarcerated person complained of symptoms, they would tell the person to stay on the unit and would go to the unit to question and test the person. The person would be put in quarantine until the testing result. The person could take their Jplayer, toiletries, etc. Staff said that they would use their clinical judgment to determine whether the incarcerated person's symptoms were COVID-19 or not.
- The OCO monitoring team had a concern about the health services staff, who worked in enclosed areas in the middle of the medical floors, as well as in an enclosed area to serve the pill line. Several staff were seen not wearing masks while eating or speaking on the phone and were not engaged in social distancing. OCO is concerned that it is exactly this type of enclosed, shared airspace and relaxed procedures that might be more conducive to the spread of the virus.

Correctional Industries

- The OCO monitoring team toured the Correctional Industries area. Incarcerated individuals were observed wearing masks and maintaining distance (see, e.g., Photo M in the Appendix). The only area of concern to the OCO monitoring team was the business area that operates as a call center – the center contains approximately 50 incarcerated individuals in an open air environment (Photo N in the Appendix). All appeared to be wearing masks, but OCO is still concerned about the large number of people in a single area.

G Unit

- G unit houses both regular incarcerated people, people on quarantine, and people on medical isolation status. Prior to the monitoring visit and during the monitoring visit, individuals have raised concerns regarding having all of these people together in the same

unit and the potential harm to the healthy individuals on the unit. The monitoring team noted a number of individuals who appeared to be elderly/infirm on the unit. The team discussed the concerns with the SCCC administration, who relayed that G unit is the only medium security unit and therefore the only unit with wet cells (with a toilet and sink in the cell) other than the Intensive Management Unit (IMU). The choice of where to house people on quarantine or medical isolation status was therefore between these two units and they decided that G unit was a more humane place to house them. In order to take adequate precautions, they had implemented three additional layers of air filtration protection in just G unit, including a higher level air filtration system, a UV air filtration system, and a higher level HEPA filter on the grates in the quarantine/isolation cells.

- The OCO monitoring team noted that the unit appeared clean and that incarcerated persons appeared to be wearing masks. The OCO team spoke with the porters who reported that they cleaned the cells after each use by a quarantined or isolated individual. The porter who cleaned the dayroom stated that the quarantine individuals were let out at the end of the day and following them, he sprayed down the touch points with the disinfectant and let it sit. The porter responsible for the showers indicated that he would like new/replacement brushes to be able to do a more thorough cleaning job for the showers.
- Individuals appeared to be maintaining some distance, but were at times in groups, particularly when sitting at the tables together. The phones had dividers between them but the kiosk machines did not (Photo O in the Appendix). Staff were wearing masks but were not observed using social distancing.
- The monitoring team spoke with the two people on quarantine and the two people on isolation. The individuals were separately housed in single cells. There was a row of cells that were being reserved for quarantine/isolation persons if needed (Photo Q in the Appendix). Overall, they seemed to all be receiving the required visits by medical and mental health staff. They had access to soap, running water, and disinfectant to clean their cells. They received linen exchange once per week and could exchange clothes three times per week. The persons in medical isolation could take a shower once per week. One of the persons on isolation reported that he did not have access to his property; although he had paper and pencil, he did not have envelopes or address book to send letters to loved ones. The other person stated that he would appreciate more books and puzzles; specifically, he requested his Quran. He also stated that his cell was not clean when he arrived and that it took him several days to clean it.² (Photo R in the Appendix shows his cell after he cleaned it.) Other than these concerns, the persons on isolation appeared in good spirits without large issues and were waiting on their return to general population.

² As stated above, the OCO monitoring team spoke with the porter who cleans the cells who stated that they were all cleaned exactly the same. OCO does not have further evidence either way to substantiate the concern, but it was brought up with the Superintendent.

Incarcerated Individual Communication

- The OCO monitoring team met privately with the tier representatives and spoke with individuals on the housing units related to the COVID-19 response. The following is a summary of the communication that was received during the visit:
 - A lot of frustration regarding JPAY and GTL was relayed, particularly around poor service and poor customer service.
 - The incarcerated would like to receive more information regarding COVID-19, including regular updates on the data across the system.
 - The incarcerated were given two bandanas and coffee filters to make masks, but together they were too thick to breathe through. They haven't been given replacements.
 - Staff are wearing masks but not modeling social distancing. The incarcerated cannot social distance in their cells.
 - They do not have access to Hepastat. They need better dispenser handles for the spray bottles because they break.
 - Staff overall is the same in terms of attitude – not worse – but third shift (afternoon) is “horrible” with “bad attitudes.”
 - Now that the state is opening back up, they would like more recreation time.
 - The staff took away the hand sanitizer because of the concern that guys would steal/ingest it, but they put the hand sanitizer dispensers in locations where it was easier to do that (see Photo P in the Appendix). If they had put it by the officer stations, it wouldn't have happened. They need a hand sanitizer station in recreation.
 - Some staff are not wearing masks in their offices and/or are coughing or sneezing and handling papers and/or “joke” with the incarcerated population about having been exposed to COVID-19 but still come in to work.

Appendix A



Photo A

Description: Officers at guard shack wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing.



Photo B

Description: Tier representative meeting with staff and incarcerated seated with spacing between.



Photo C

Description: H6 housing unit with plastic barriers in between phones.



Photo D

Description: H6 bathroom area with signs posted



Photo E

Description: H6 kiosks with limited space between the incarcerated individuals



Photo F

Description: H6 housing unit with limited persons out in the dayroom; groupings at tables



Photo G

Description: Walkway with markings to encourage social distancing



Photo H

Description: Hand sanitizer station in Dining Hall



Photo I

Description: Incarcerated workers sitting at designated seating at dining tables; even limiting to only two to a table, there is less than six feet of distance.



Photo J

Description: Grouping of incarcerated workers in the kitchen.



Photo K

Description: Medical staff wearing face mask and gloves with protective screen to screen incarcerated individuals at the infirmary.



Photo L

Description: Incarcerated individuals in waiting area without face masks and at less distance than six feet.



Photo M

Description:
Correctional
Industries
work area



Photo N

Description:
Correctional
Industries business
area

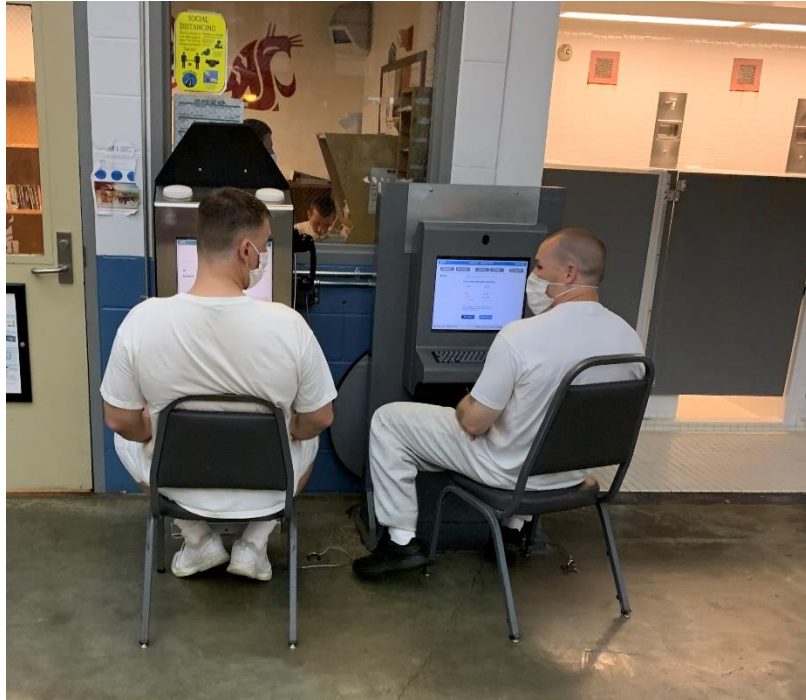


Photo O

Description: G unit kiosks with limited distance between individuals



Photo P

Description: G unit. Person is standing in front of pillar where hand sanitizer was placed low to the ground, demonstrating the poor visibility of the location.



Photo Q

Description: G unit cells cleaned and prepared for quarantine/medical isolation individuals.



Photo R

Description: G unit; occupied isolation cell

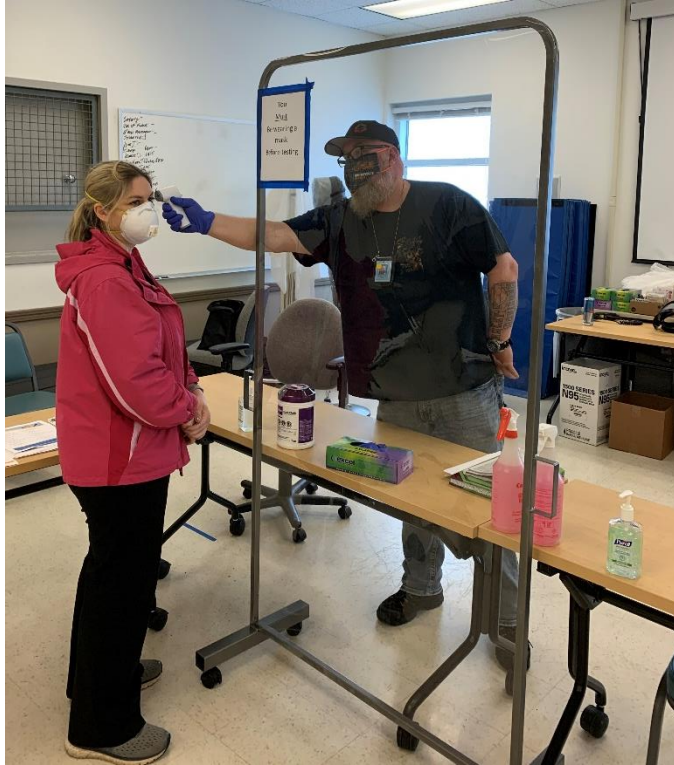


Photo S

Description: Entry staff conducting a temperature check with a touchless thermometer behind a plastic barrier. Staff was wearing a face covering, eye coverings, and a glove.



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

June 5, 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 the 'OCO Monitoring Visit to Stafford Creek Corrections Center' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

The Department of Corrections takes the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the Washington correctional facilities very seriously. The agency appreciates the opportunity to have your staff tour the Stafford Creek Corrections Center and evaluate the facilities implementation of the protocols and procedures 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 protect the incarcerated populations health and safety while incarcerated, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stafford Creek Corrections Center has one main entrance that is being utilized in their facility during the COVID-19 pandemic. If an individual is to enter the main doors of the facility, they will be directed to enter through the main screening area where the implemented screening is required to be completed prior to their entrance into the facility. The system allows for the facility to manage all entrances to the facility and ensure that all individuals are properly screened prior to their entrance into the facility.

The facility has also implemented many protocols for ensuring social distancing is occurring in all areas of the facility. In the dining area, the incarcerated individuals are only allowed access to the seating area amongst those who are in their specific housing cohorts. The measure helps to alleviate some of the concern of those individuals interacting at the dining tables that don't allow for the recommended social distancing.

Additionally, the facility has reminded all correctional staff to monitor those individuals in the medical waiting area for compliance of wearing facial coverings and following social distancing protocols. The facility also recognizes that during the time of the OCO monitoring visit the separating screens for JPay kiosks were in production, and since the visit, the facility has been able to install spacing screens between all JPay kiosks throughout the facility.

We 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. We will continue to proactively implement precautionary measures as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. Moving

"Working Together for SAFER Communities"

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forward, Washington Department of Corrections will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Corrections Ombuds on any future quality assurance visits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Steve Sinclair", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections