

Date: December 20, 2018

Subject: Wilkinson County Correctional Facility Comprehensive Audit  
To: Jodie Bradley, Warden  
Copy: Sara Revell, Region IV Vice President  
From: D. Scott Dodrill, Audit Team Leader

---

This report is the result of the MTC comprehensive audit conducted at the Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCC) the month of November 2018. The on-site portion of this audit was conducted the week of November 26 - November 30, 2018. The audit team consisted of myself, Mike Atchison, Conrad Graber, Lindsey Mueller, Rick Widner, and Michelle Coffin. The staff at the facility were very helpful in accommodating the requests of the audit team, both on-site and remotely.

## Audit Objective

The objective of this audit is to identify, report, and mitigate items that pose risks to operating the WCC in a safe and secure manner, to identify best practices and innovations, and to provide technical assistance, guidance and training.

## Executive Summary

As a result of the implementation of the comprehensive audit system and the new audit tool, not only are we combining several components into one review, but areas that have not been previously addressed, are now. For example, on the last audit at this facility in May 2017, there were three auditors, on this audit there were six.

The Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCC), located in Woodville, Mississippi, was initially opened in 1998. The facility is a Minimum/Medium/Maximum custody level prison, owned by the Wilkinson County Industrial Development Authority. The adult male offender population is from the Mississippi Department of Corrections. MTC was awarded the contract to operate the facility effective July 1, 2013. WCC houses medium and maximum custody, as well as long-term segregation and protective custody inmates. 98% of the population is maximum or close custody.

The facility is located on a 97.5 acre site and has 17.7 acres within the secure perimeter fence, which includes a 14 foot interior stun fence and seven rolls of razor wire on a 14 foot external fence. The physical plant is a 198,000 square feet structure providing a 950 bed capacity. It holds primarily high custody offenders and has a total of 8 cell type housing units and one Restrictive Housing Unit. The buildings have smoke detectors and sprinklers in all areas for fire protection. There are 165 cameras in operation throughout the facility.

The institution Administration is severely burdened with the constant demands created by a staff turnover rate that is about 89% over the last twelve months. Currently, the makeup of the security staff at this all male facility is 76% female and down 36 positions. Turnover impacts all facets of the institution operation and diminishes the ability to comply with expectations detailed in policy and procedures. For example, a huge burden is placed on roster management, as policy requires that prior to an offender being removed from a special housing unit cell for any reason, they must be strip

searched, and that the strip search must be conducted by a same sex person. If there are no males assigned to each of these special housing units, strip searches are not completed, or an activity doesn't happen. The number of new staff has also limited the ability to select a tactical team. Currently, there is none.

Another staffing issue is WCC's inclination to place inexperienced staff, (staff who have been on the job for less than a year) into positions in the Long Term Housing units. Staff with as little experience as these staff possess should not be placed in the most volatile positions. Staff should spend their first year on the job moving from one position to another, learning and growing as they go. These staff should only move into positions of greater responsibility once they have demonstrated the ability to handle such responsibilities.

The following is an excerpt from the Security Audit conducted at Wilkinson in May 2017:

"The management of offenders through the classification system is inefficient. The ability to get support from MDOC to manage this volatile offender population is critical yet appears to be only occasionally in play. The perceived approach by MDOC to classify the offenders based on available bed space leads to placement in facilities which are not able to meet offender security needs. A number of offenders at WCCF have been waiting for MDOC action for months; slow classification decision making hampers progress and adversely impacts the ability to deliver sound correctional outcomes. Under the current system of classification, offenders have learned that a rule violation during the pendency of a reduction in custody to be a time when acting out has little consequence, since they will not receive a classification change for about six months (i.e. they have nothing to lose). The audit team continues to believe that MDOC could enhance success with the High Risk Incentive Program by enabling the facility to move inmates into/out of the program. Internal movement between EMCF and WCCF as agreed to by the wardens', also should, in the opinion of the audit team, be something MDOC should summarily approve, but that is also not something which is happening. The general conclusion reached by this audit team is that the Classification system, to include Red Tags, is inefficient, outdated and the ability of assigned staff to manage it shows more resources are desperately needed."

This audit team believes this statement to still be applicable today.

The need for a new roof and hardening of the cells is paramount. Both areas create major safety problems throughout the facility. A memo from John Sprayberry, MDOC Deputy Administrator-Facility Planning, dated November 26, 2018 claims that the roof project is ready for bid (whatever that means). He further states that the cell hardening project has made no progress towards fruition. These areas are repeat deficiencies from previous audits. Additionally, water around the facility cause issues with the buildings and sink holes as the institution struggles to get the drainage away from the buildings themselves.



Several audit sections that were reviewed, were in as bad, or worse shape than during the audit of 2017; i.e., count, use of force, restrictive housing, PREA. Some examples of the concerns in these areas are as follows:

Review of video illustrated that count is not being accomplished as per policy. The review indicated that food slots were not closed, double counts were not accomplished, cell windows were covered making it impossible for staff to see into the cells, some staff did not even look towards the cell doors as they passed, and on one unit, staff never even entered the pod to attempt a count.

Three Use of Force videos were reviewed. The two Planned Use of Force videos had major issues that requires re-training of staff, especially supervisors. These type of mistakes, especially the common sense ones, should not be occurring in an institution that has as many use of force incidents as this facility does. It is unbelievable that a supervisor would stick their entire arm holding a gas canister through a food slot into a hostile inmate's cell. It is just as unfathomable that a supervisor would allow an unrestrained inmate to wander around the pod while a use of force situation was on-going with a different inmate. Also, a supervisor that takes the role of the #1 staff member on the use of force team is no longer a supervisor at that point, leaving no one 'in charge' of the situation.

The documents that the institution submitted as the individual activity logs of the Long-Term Segregation inmates in H-J-K pods were neat and completely filled out (NOV). The logs indicated that the inmates had been offered some rec and showers, but less than the required three showers and five hours of rec per week. Videos reviewed indicated that none of the rec that was reflected on the November logs actually occurred except for H-pod's one day of rec on Nov 5. On that day MDOC had brought in the drug dogs to search the unit. The inmates of H-pod were placed on the rec yard at 8:50a and left there until 4:00p. Once October's records were requested and reviewed, the numbers were worse and the logs were less than 50% completed. As a result of the audit review of the inmate activity logs and available video footage, it has been determined that inmates in J-K pods have not been offered any rec for the last 60 days, and H pod received only that one day of rec as a result of the search of their pod. Showers range from only 6 to 9 a month for each inmate. Several reasons were given for these discrepancies; staffing shortages, weather, lockdowns. None of these possible reasons were indicated in the records, even though there is an icon for 'weather' as part of the log. It needs to be noted that the institution has been totally lockdown free only 46 days so far in 2018. This figure includes state mandated lockdowns and days when one or more pods in the institution are locked down due to pod/unit misconduct.

After review by the audit team, showers were given to the inmates in H-J-K unit on Wednesday night (Nov 28), and rec was offered on Thursday (Nov 29) of the audit week.

As far as outside recreation for the open inmate population, it is hard to tell when that was last accomplished. Inmate interviews and staff input put the date as being in August. I have no information to contradict those assertions. Furthermore, I believe that use of the gym for indoor recreation is nearly as rare.

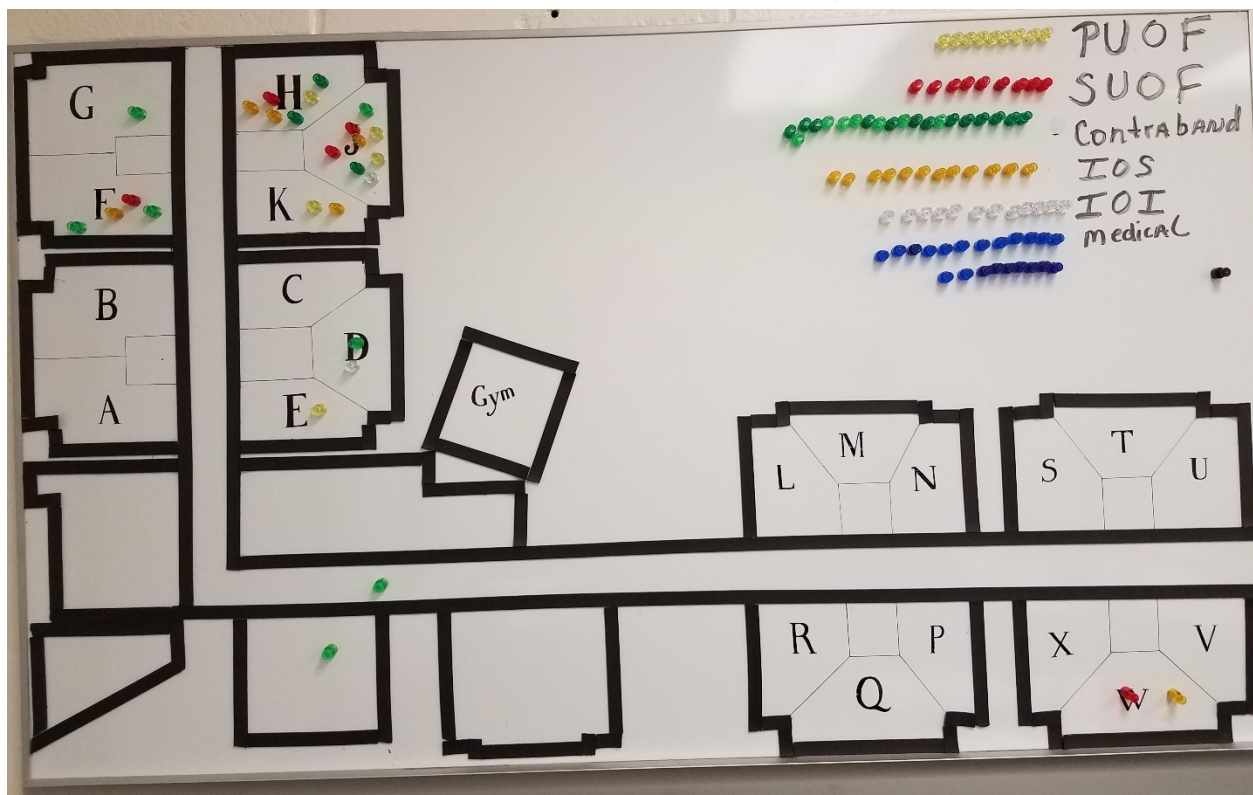
In the last couple of years the Long Term Segregation pods cell door locking devices were changed from an electric closure to a turnkey operation. As a result, staff have begun carrying the cell keys on their person. There have been at least three instances where inmates have assaulted staff and taken the keys. These situations are exacerbated by the facts that staff do not carry the keys on a key chain



attached to their body; that a single key opens EVERY cell on the unit; staff are operating shorthanded, necessitating the officer with the key be next to the inmate, escorting him; and shoddy appliance of hand restraints by staff.

During showers on 11-9-18 in J-pod, inmate Hampton assaulted staff and grabbed the keys from one of the two officers supervising him. The staff vacated the unit while the inmate freed five other inmates from their cells. The six inmates then barricaded the door into the pod with an unsecured table that was in the common area. This action defeated staffs' attempts to enter the pod. The inmates then took the keys and opened the cell door of inmate Johnson, who they removed from his cell and repeatedly stabbed. As a result of a lack of gas ports into the unit, it took staff 9 minutes to drop gas into the pod from the roof, and a total of 27 minutes before they were actually able to breach the door and enter into the area. Six armed inmates had the cell keys and complete freedom within the pod for 27 minutes. Only a lack of desire kept these inmates from killing/assaulting other inmates within the pod.

These type of conditions lead to frustration and lashing out from the inmate population. This is illustrated quite clearly in the institution incident board maintained for 2018. 24 of the 26 serious incidents that have occurred at this facility this year, occurred in the pods housing the Long Term inmates.



Approximately 30 inmate interviews were conducted by the audit team. These inmates were selected randomly from a complete list of the inmates at WCC. During interviews with Long Term Segregation inmates they claimed that they were not receiving hygiene supplies, state issued items, or cleaning supplies on a regular basis. Audit team members talked to inmates who displayed that they did not have any sheets or blankets. (Whether this was as a result of their never receiving such items, or whether they were sold or taken from them is unknown). Two complete pods of inmates claimed that