

Operational Assessment

Mercer County
Trenton, NJ

Prepared by:
Karen Albert and Mark Martin
Technical Assistance Request No. 15J1049
National Institute of Corrections

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National Institute of Corrections

Washington, DC 20534

DISCLAIMER

RE: NIC Technical Assistance No. 15J1049

This technical assistance activity was funded by the Jails Division of the National Institute of Corrections. The Institute is a Federal agency established to provide assistance to strengthen state and local correctional agencies by creating more effective, humane, safe and just correctional services.

The resource person(s) who provided the onsite technical assistance did so through a cooperative agreement, at the request of the Mercer County Department of Public Safety, and through the coordination of the National Institute of Corrections. The direct onsite assistance and the subsequent report are intended to assist the agency in addressing issues outlined in the original request and in efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the agency.

The contents of this document reflect the views of Ms. Karen Albert and Mr. Mark Martin. Points of view or opinions expressed in the Technical Assistance report are those of the authors and do not represent the official opinion or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. Upon Delivery of the final Technical Assistance report to the agency that requested the assistance, the report becomes the property of that agency. The National Institute of Corrections will not distribute the report to non-NIC entities, or consider it an agency record under the Federal FOIA, without the express, written approval of the agency.

Special Note: Appendix F includes a feedback response from Warden Ellis and his staff. Ms. Albert and Mr. Martin acknowledge that the brief site visit could have resulted in a misinterpretation of information available at the time. An assessment of this nature is but a "snapshot" look of facility operations and conditions that are dynamic and can provide differing perspectives on any given day. The technical resource providers also recognize that there are possible differing approaches to operating philosophies. Ms. Albert and Mr. Martin appreciate the additional input and clarification provided by Warden Ellis and his staff and have given it due consideration. However, based on their observations during the site visit, review of documentation provided, and interviews with staff and inmates, Ms. Albert and Mr. Martin believe the recommendations presented in the report are sound and consistent with their corrections operating philosophy. The technical assistance providers are pleased that Warden Ellis and his staff have identified areas for improvement based on the assessment and plan to move forward on those as time and resources permit.

Overview and Introduction

The Mercer County Correctional Center (MCCC) is an 871 bed facility located in Lambertville, NJ. The MCCC is a local jail facility originally built in 1892, with an expansion in 1995. Prior to the expansion, the facility served as a work camp for sentenced inmates. In 1998, the adjacent detention center closed and the pretrial inmates held within were relocated to the MCCC.

Desiring to improve facility operations, the warden contacted the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), specifically Ms. Panda Adkins, to seek technical assistance to conduct an operational assessment. A recent Office of the State Comptroller report¹ questioned the use of overtime, and the facility is currently undergoing regular renovations to address the pervasive disrepair of bathrooms and other areas. Crowding was a significant issue in the fairly recent past, which led to triple bunking and the use of raised formed sleeping platforms in already crowded housing units. For the most part, triple bunks are limited to dormitory housing, though rarely used; cells are limited to double bunking.

Given the scope of services that can be provided by NIC, it was determined that the Operational Assessment should take the form of a macro approach. Simply stated, a 2-day overview by two corrections professionals is not sufficient to conduct a comprehensive audit of the entire operation. Under the macro approach, detailed recommendations will not be provided; rather the focus will be more goal oriented recommendations.

Numerous stakeholders, staff, inmates and visitors were provided an opportunity to offer input into the report. Specifically, the following people should be acknowledged for availing themselves for specific meetings:

Warden Charles Ellis
Captain Richard Bearden
Lieutenant Rowe Chumra
Lt. Eric Onea
Lt. Christopher Zegarski
Lt. Michael Kownacki
Sgt George Kalinowski
Sgt. Scott Moon
Officer Walker
Officer Heather Sexton
Officer Williams
Ms. Funanish
Mr Wilson – law library
Mr. C Peters
Ms. Kimberly Raya-Scott
Supervisor of Nurses – Regina

¹ Office of the State Comptroller. An Analysis of Overtime in Adult County Correctional Facilities Across New Jersey. February 5, 2015.

Numerous additional staff and inmates were also asked interviewed during facility tours.

As a starting point, the focus was on identifying issues that focused on effective risk management. Using the risk focus principles found in the NIC Jail Administration training program, the assessment was categorized into the six major initiatives described below:

- Good Physical Plant
- Appropriate Staffing
- Active Supervision of Inmates
- Thorough Policies and Procedures
- Life, Health and Safety Issues
- Monitoring Performance and Aggressive Problem Solving
- Continuing Documentation

These elements are addressed in relation to the Technical Assistance (TA) providers' observations and discussions with staff, administrators, contract service personnel, and inmates.

The impact of crowding and a dated facility were several factors that drove the request for technical assistance. The local jail is a key component of the criminal justice system and more importantly, it is a community resource. Local jails have little control over who, when, for how long, and the conditions of people committed to the facility.

Particularly in a local jail facility it is essential to control the front end (i.e., persons arrested and committed to jail) and the back end (i.e., the degree to which arrestees can make bond, or programs are in place to serve as alternative to incarceration, or the prosecution focuses on violent crimes rather than non-violent crimes). Once in the system, the focus must be on successful reentry back into the community; we recognize that more than 97% of people who enter local jails will return to their community. Successful reentry planning cannot be understated; it improves safety to the community, and thereby reduces the recidivism.

Section A: Good Physical Plant:

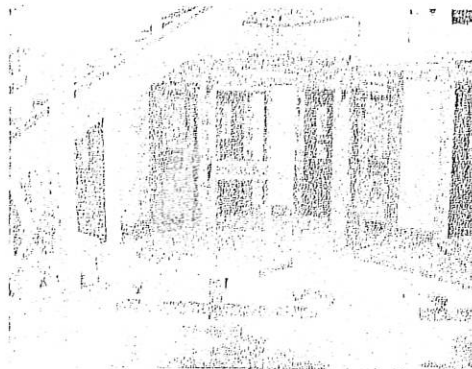
The institution includes the original facility built in 1892 that has undergone several renovations, including a major addition in 1995. A separate annex is located in close proximity – but not adjacent - to the original jail. The Annex typically houses minimum custody, short sentenced male inmates all other inmates are housed in the main facility.

Main Facility: The original facility includes housing areas on three levels, reception and discharge area, small program area, property room, visiting area in the gym, kitchen, and storage.

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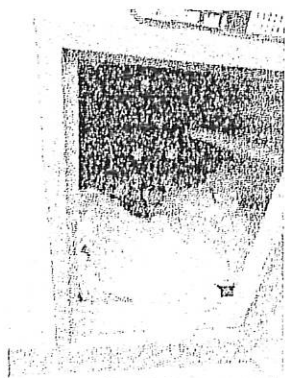
The three primary styles of housing include the following: open dormitory, sectional dormitory and cell housing.

The visibility into the dormitory areas is extremely limited except during rounds - making supervision of the inmate population difficult at best. The cell housing, designated for maximum custody includes double occupancy cells. These cells open to a dayroom that is separated by fencing adjacent to the cell doors. The fencing does not support full visibility of the housing area.



The three housing areas designated for females are two open dorms and a 6 cell unit where females who must be separated from others are housed (e.g., intake, protective custody, etc.) With minor exceptions (e.g., intake and transition housing) females are not housed according to their classification level. This practice is common in smaller facilities where housing options are limited, but is not typically seen in a facility of this size.

While toilet/shower areas are being upgraded, inmate workers are being housed on the basement level adjacent to intake. Visibility into this area is limited; staff are posted at this location on a temporary basis.



The detention housing (restrictive housing, protective custody, and behavioral issues) is accessed from the reception and discharge area. One officer is assigned to monitor the inmates in this area. Typically a male and female officer are assigned to the reception and discharge area/detention so that searches can be conducted based on gender. The sallyport control room officer provides secondary observation. Consistent throughout the facility, storage is limited, and therefore housing supplies are maintained in the plumbing chase within the detention housing.

Annex: The Annex is an older facility that was intended to operate as the work farm in years past. It is now the location for community workers and the coordination of the Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program. The dormitory design provides for separation of the 54 bed sleeping area from the dayroom area. The toilets and showers are in a separate section from the housing, but adjacent. Staffing is provided 24/7 by one officer and a supervisor who oversee the Annex and the programs operated from the Annex.

Administrative/Court Partner Entry

The administration lobby area includes a screening station with a walk through metal detector and package x-ray for screening staff and official visitors. The space is not

sufficiently sized to adequately accommodate the addition of the screening and photo-identification system for visitors. With the addition of the metal detection and package x-ray, administration staff must pass around the security equipment for screening, past persons who have been screened, thus allowing the potential for persons to pass contraband prior to entering the perimeter. Although reasonable efforts are made to supervise this area, the physical plant does not support basic security requirements.



Professional Visitation

There is no space designed to accommodate professional visitors to inmates. The former inmate dining room (IDR) has been converted into a law library, conference space, and contact visitation workstations for professional visitors including probation and parole officers and attorneys. There is space in the A and B housing where professional visitors can visit within the housing unit. The inmate area is separated from the professional visitor by fencing from the counter to the ceiling. Neither space is conducive to confidential visitation and the practice of allowing professional visitors into the heart of the secure perimeter does not support sound security practices and these visitors are not trained to identify potential contraband.

Personal Visitation

The entrance for visitors is located on the southwest side of the facility, with designated parking available nearby. Visitors enter into the Front Lobby area where there is seating, lockers for personal items, posted visiting rules and schedule, and a flat screen TV monitor with a video that addresses jail rules. There is a staff post in the visitors lobby that is staffed during visitation times. The lobby can also be viewed from the adjacent Control Room 1.



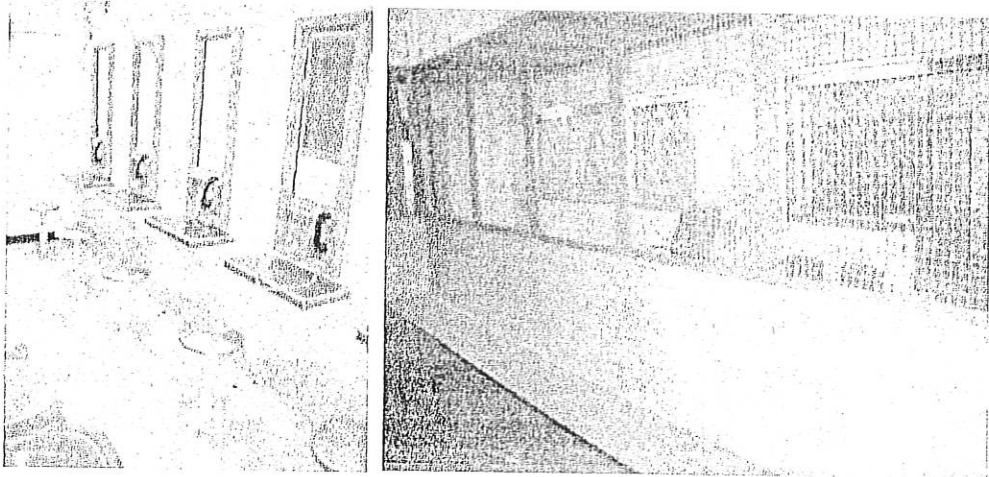
Information regarding inmate visiting is provided in the Inmate Handbook and posted on living unit walls. Inmates fill out a visitors list at admission. Visits are scheduled over the week by housing unit and are limited to 30 minutes per visit.

Visits for the general population occur in the adjacent gym. Inmates and their visitors visit through mesh screen that is in a wall that separates a movement corridor from the main gym area (called "screen visits" in the SOP and Inmate Handbook). During visitation time,

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chairs are set up on either side of the screen for the inmates and visitors. Visitors enter into the corridor from the lobby and inmates enter into the gym from their respective housing units. Inmates' chairs are placed 3-4 feet back from the screen to prevent contact and possible passage of contraband. While this arrangement accommodates a larger number of visitors at one time, there is no acoustical or visual privacy among those visiting.

There is also an adjacent noncontact visitation area used for maximum custody and protective custody inmates with six visiting stations. Inmates and their visitors can view each other through security glazing and communicate via telephone (called "window visits" in SOP). Fixed steel stools are provided for seating on both the visitor and inmate sides. Several maximum custody inmates who are limited to noncontact visits in this area complained about the difficulty in hearing their visitors' voices through the telephone intercom. These may need to be checked to see if the volume level can be adjusted.

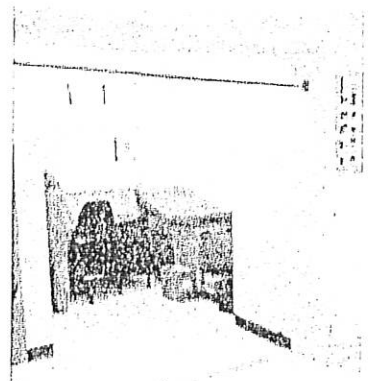


Inmates who were interviewed did not express any concerns regarding visitation other than the telephone issue described above. From a security standpoint, the proximity of the visitor parking and lobby entrance to the fenced intake vehicle sallyport is a concern, but not something easily resolved. The staff station in the Lobby is also the location where inmate mail is received and processed for delivery. The processing of mail in this public area could be problematic. A small stack of mail was observed on the lobby post desk unattended.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider relocation of mail processing to a more secure location.

Health Care

The health care area is located in two areas: clinic area with four exam rooms, and health care housing; and a separate areas with offices and interview space – primarily used by mental health practitioners.



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The medical/dental area is on the main level in a suite that includes an exam table, dental chair, medication cart/dispensary, charting and file storage. The exam rooms are sufficiently sized and are occupied most of the day. Triage rooms are located in various locations; however, they do not provide for appropriate privacy for triage.

A physician is available five days per week, and dentist is available two days per week. Nursing care is provided at all times. Inmates are not permitted to maintain medication on their person other than aspirin type products and vitamins. Medication is distributed daily at 7:30AM, 12 Noon, and 8:00 PM. Inmates are released with a 2 week supply of medication if health care staff are advised in advance of the pending release.

Mental health treatment is provided by a psychiatrist (1 day per week), one psychologist, two mental health therapists and social workers. Approximately 30 inmates are seen by the psychiatrist weekly.

Medical housing provides for limited observation and the health care area is busy most of the day and the assigned officer is stationed to receive inmates for appointments. Two rooms are designed as ADA compliant, but the need to house more than one inmate per room limits the actual accessibility potential.

RECOMMENDATION: Explore retrofitting one of the medical rooms for negative pressure. This would require setting up a separate ventilation system that vents to the facility exterior.

There are four control areas:

- One control area is in the centralized "star" area and is responsible for operating the electro-mechanical doors in the main facility as well as monitoring the cameras throughout the facilities. All other doors are key operated requiring the officer to leave his/her post to operate security doors. The armory is located inside the control room on a lower level that is accessed from a spiral staircase.
- A sallyport/R&D control room (Control Room 3) is located in the R&D area.
- Additional control rooms are located adjacent to the C and D Dormitories (Control Room 1) and adjacent to the A and B Pods (Control Room 2). Control Room 1 oversees operations in the C and D Dormitories and controls access to those living units. Control Room 1 also assists the Front Lobby Officer in managing the visiting and mail processing functions. Control Room 2 oversees and controls access to the A and B Pods.

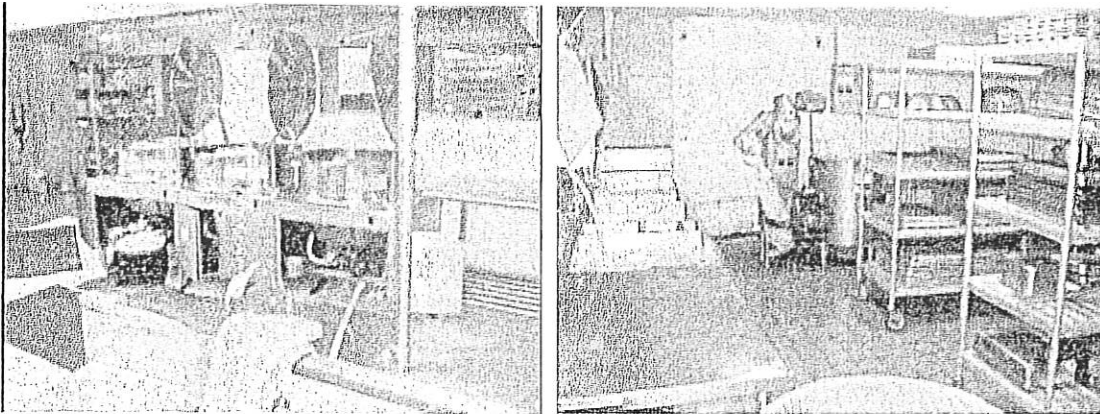
RECOMMENDATION: Consideration should be given to combining the control functions at the intake area and using the current control corridor as a control point for searches (food, visitors, staff, inmate, etc.).

Food Service

Food service is contracted through Aramark, a private food service vendor. Aramark has held the contract for food services since 1993. Aramark staff are supplemented with Inmate Kitchen Workers who work on two shifts: 5:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 1:30 PM – 6:30 PM.

Each shift includes approximately 13-15 Inmate Workers.

The facility has a full service kitchen with what the Food Service Director described as adequate, functional space for this scale of operation. Meals are based on a five-week cycle menu with accommodations made for special medical and religious diets. Menus and actual meals served are reviewed and approved by an Aramark dietitian. Meals are served in disposable Styro foam trays, portioned up in the kitchen and delivered to the housing units.



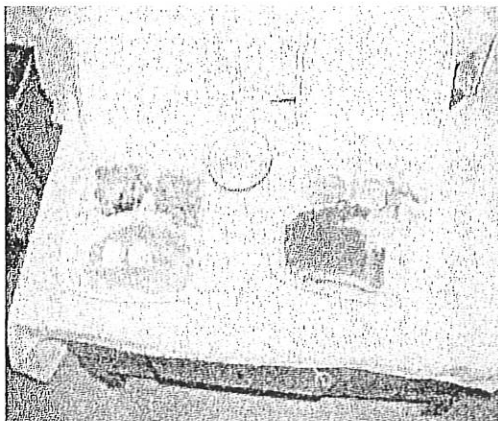
Sanitation and safety inspections are conducted at least annually by the Hopewell Township Health Department and annually by the state Health Department. There does not appear to be a formal internal safety and sanitation inspection checklist or process to assess sanitation on a more frequent basis by non-vendor personnel.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish an internal assessment and audit process to regularly assess safety, sanitation, and security conditions in the food service operation. A departmental staff member, with appropriate training and expertise, should be designated as a Fire, Safety, and Sanitation Specialist to take the lead in developing, implementing, and managing internal fire, safety, and sanitation inspections. A schedule of regular daily, weekly, and monthly internal inspections should be established, along with a process to make timely corrections of any identified deficiencies. (See Section E.)

Although it appears dietary standards are being met or exceeded in the meals provided, there were a number of complaints from both inmates and staff about the content and palatability of the meals.

RECOMMENDATION: Create a suitable space with tables and seating in the food service area where inmate kitchen workers can take their meals.

RECOMMENDATION: Get an independent assessment of the quality and palatability of meals served to address concerns expressed by both inmates and staff. While the meals may meet dietary standards, they may be lacking in taste and variety. Food is often a source of discontent among inmates in jails generally and has been a trigger for major disturbances in other institutions. Quality and palatability cannot be overlooked.



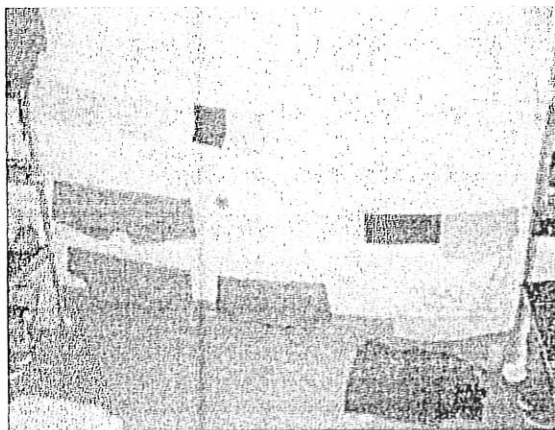
Food trays in housing

Many of the housing units had microwave ovens that were said to be used to reheat food in the Styrofoam trays. Inmates were allowed to keep their food trays beyond meal time and reheat it at later times. Allowing food to be consumed that has been sitting at room temperature is a significant food safety concern. Excess Styrofoam trays were also observed in cell and living areas.

RECOMMENDATION: Dispose of food waste and containers promptly following designated meal times to prevent hoarding and possible food-related illness from improper storage.

Laundry

Although there is a laundry area designed to serve the facility, it has never been used according to staff. This is due to the insufficiency of the waste treatment facilities to handle the volume of wastewater which would be generated by laundry operations. In the alternative, laundry services are contracted and provided offsite. These services do not provide for the laundering of inmates' personal items of clothing however. As a result, inmates wash their personal items in housing unit lavatories and hang them to dry on makeshift clotheslines in their cells or dormitory areas. See Section E. where the sanitation and safety concerns regarding this practice are further discussed.



RECOMMENDATION: Provide a means for laundering of inmates' personal items of clothing to eliminate the need for makeshift clotheslines in cells and dormitory areas.

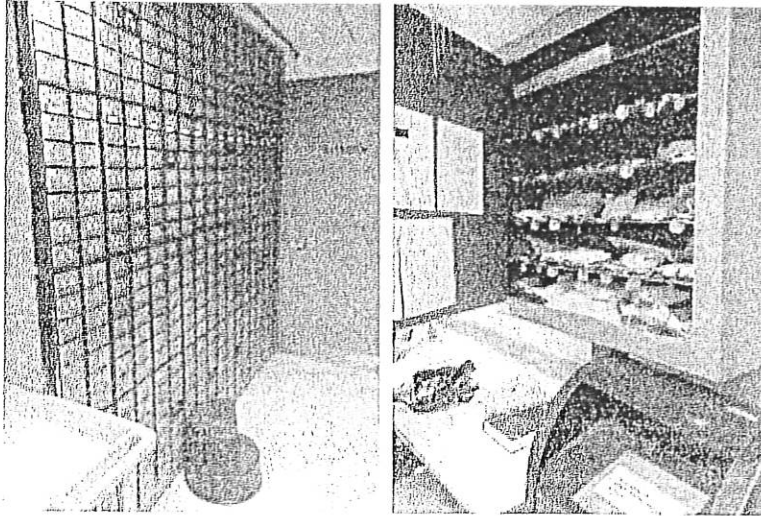
Reception and Discharge (R&D)

The intake area is located on the basement level of the facility. New arrestees are brought in through the vehicle sallyport which is gated to decrease the likelihood of security breaches. The control panel that operates the security gate, as well as the doors in the intake area, are inoperable and the vendor has not indicating a projected time for repairs. In the interim, an officer is posted in a vehicle at the gate. The interior of the control room door must be operated via key thus thwarting the benefit of the interlocked pedestrian sallyport.

The layout of the R&D area is not conducive to the processing flow. Inmates are staged in a central area with seating for as many as four arrestees awaiting process or one of two holding cells that are not visible from the processing areas. Fingerprinting occurs in a room that is shared with nursing staff conducting the medical/mental health interview and inmates making contact with family/friends to secure bond. Photographs are taken in another room separated by the sergeants' office.

Valuable property (essentially everything except clothing) is inventoried and stored in safety deposit boxes that require a two-key system.

The supervisor has a key and the R&D officer maintain the key to the key box on his/her ring.



Program Areas

The Programs Department consists of two classrooms, library, and offices for counselors. A small desk for a custody staff pose is located at the entrance to the Program Department. There are also "quiet rooms" adjacent to several of the housing units which may be available for program use but are not furnished sufficiently for program activities. Overall, space dedicated for program functions is extremely limited.

Program services available to inmates include GED, ABE, Life Skills, ESL, and religious services. Therapeutic groups may also be offered at times to some



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housing units. Inmates are advised as to what program opportunities may be available upon admission and how to access these services, however there does not appear to be proactive assessment or case planning initiated at this time. Opportunities for participation in actual classroom activities are limited to the lack of program space and limited staffing. The Programs Coordinator estimated that an inmate participating in educational programming may receive no more than one hour of classroom time weekly. They may work on assignments throughout the week at their housing units.

Program staff include seven counselors including the Acting Program Administrator. In addition to working directly with inmates in assigned housing units, counselors are responsible for facilitating inmate contact through the contracted telephone services, distributing intra-agency mail, and facilitating inmate contact with their Attorneys. The facility does utilize some volunteers including a number of individuals and organization that provide religious services and study and students from the Banner Center of the College of New Jersey who provide tutoring and facilitate discussion groups on current issues. The facility also coordinates with several community organizations in discharge planning for inmates preparing for release.

The Acting Program Administrator expressed a need for more classroom space, additional counselors, and specialized visiting space for CPS to facilitate supervised visits between inmates and their families.

RECOMMENDATION: Counselors appear to spend a significant amount of time coordinating and facilitating both internal and external communication for inmates, taking away from time in classroom or counseling work. These responsibilities should be reviewed to determine if this is the best utilization of counselors' time. See Section D. for additional recommendations regarding inmate programming.

Maintenance

Although the functional aspects of the Main Facility make inmate management difficult, the physical plant is in reasonable condition relative to its age and use. There is a considerable turnover of the inmate population in this facility, which makes it difficult to provide the preventative maintenance to effectively maintain the facility. Regardless of the age of any facility, an effective housekeeping and maintenance program can considerably extend the effective life of a facility. Consider that one year of a 24/7 facility operation is the equivalent of 4.2 years of typical school or office building. As such, even the new addition of the jail is the equivalent of more than 64 years old.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a master plan to outline a plan for renovating, updating or expanding the facility. Detail the priorities, time frames and cost for addressing the maintenance master plan.

Staff Areas

Space for staff is limited to a staff dining area, muster room and staff locker room. The staff training rooms are limited whereby staff could practice drills and have reference

materials applicable to the jail operations (e.g., policies and procedures, standards, training materials, etc.). All staff spaces are located inside the perimeter so staff must leave any item that is not permitted in the facility inside their vehicle.

RECOMMENDATION: Locate space for staff outside of the secure perimeter, but in close proximity to the facility. The space should be suitable for training and for storing personal items.

Section B: Appropriate staffing:

Appropriate staffing suggests that there must be the right number and type of staff in the right place at the right time doing the right thing.

Good hiring, screening, selection, placement and retention of staff are major components of having the RIGHT STAFF. Staff are hired on the basis of appropriate skills and personality characteristics (e.g., desire to work with people, ability to perform routine repetitive tasks, ability to use appropriate judgment when immediate life-safety decisions must be made, etc.).

The right NUMBER of and having staff at the RIGHT PLACE is a product of a well through out staffing analysis. Currently post designations are included in SOP 570 and include the following during the day shift:

- Shift Commander (1)
- Sergeants (7)
- Master Control (1)
- Living Unit Officers (18)
- Control Rooms (3)
- Medical (1)
- Relief Officers (6)
- R&D Intake (1)
- R&D Property (1)
- Escort/Unassigned (1)
- Outside Security
- Star (1)
- Kitchen (1)
- Jail Entrance (1)
- Master Control Search (1)
- Detention Center (5)
- Recreation (1)
- Transportation (4)
- Grounds (1)
- Corridor (1)
- Video Conferencing (3)
- Program Services (1)
- Laundry (1)
- Storeroom (1)
- Maintenance Security (1)

Staff bid to a post based on seniority. Vacancies are filled on the same basis. The typical result is junior staff being assigned to areas that may require a higher degree of training and experience. The Detention housing is an example of this phenomenon.

The lack of good sight-lines and, in part, the physical layout of the facility, particularly the housing, has resulted in more staffing posts than we would typically anticipate. In some cases, 3.5 staff are assigned to supervise/ monitor as many as 70 maximum custody inmates. By way of comparison, many agencies manage as many 48 or more general

population maximum custody inmates with one officer. Admittedly these individual cells are, in some cases, triple bunked and therefore the crowding presents its own unique volatility issues.

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct a staffing analysis that includes designating posts, a description of posts and coverage at each post. Calculate the number of staff required to cover posts on a 24-hour/7-day per week basis. One very useful resource is the Staffing Analysis Workbook for Jails, Second Edition. This workbook, available on the National Institute of Corrections Information Center website (www.nicic.org) describes how jails can implement comprehensive staffing analyses, which have now become standard practice in many jurisdictions. This particular resource was identified in the Comptrollers report.

Having staff doing the right THING focuses on providing training, monitoring performance and coaching and counseling staff as necessary.

Effective staff training is one of the primary reasons why jail facilities lose lawsuits. This is due in large measure to a lack of keeping up with evolving changes in legal and evidence based operational practices. Often this includes the basic skills that any employee should know (e.g., physical and area searches, counts, handcuffing, etc.) and skills appropriate for specialized posts (e.g., control rooms, supervision of special management inmates, etc.). The training program should reflect the skill set and the expectation of the agency – including the mission and the guiding principles where these are documented.

The current training program focuses on meeting mandatory training. Training programs appropriate for jail staff are too numerous to list here, yet intake processing, court and legal documents, medical, legal issues, mental health, behavior management, are a few that should be considered. Mercer County has talented staff who are capable of providing training to other staff if they have the foundation instructor training and the appropriate content. Using this approach, several staff could receive specialized training and then hold the training for all other staff in the agency, thus reducing the total cost of the training program.

The annual training plan lists the training topic and hours but does not identify the potential training gaps that may need to be addressed.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider collaborating with neighboring jurisdictions to determine what additional training programs are available through these resources. If necessary, develop in-house training programs to address specific and relevant training needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop an annual Training Plan that will outline agency training needs coupled with training resources available. The annual training plan should outline the planned budget, the number of people to be trained in each subject matter, specialized training if any, and potential locations for holding

training. A provides a list of training program components. The draft agenda is provided in Appendix D.

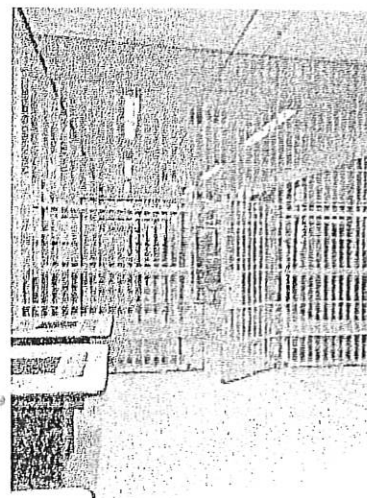
Performance appraisals of staff are not currently conducted. Performance appraisals are an excellent means to document employee performance and identify gaps in skills and training. The lack of a means to evaluate staff performance was noted as non-compliance in the most recent inspection report.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider implementing a performance appraisal system to identify employee performance deficiencies and measures to correct the deficiencies.

Section C: Active Supervision of Inmates:

Most of the inmates are observed when an officer conducts a round of the area via the adjacent corridors/catwalks/day area. Observation alone is not always sufficient. Corrections practitioners often suggest that observation merely results in surveillance rather than supervision. To illustrate the distinction, surveillance allows staff to observe behaviors in their immediate view, and then react to situations when staff must intervene. Conversely, staff who are supervising inmates have ongoing contact with the inmate population and therefore are able to detect subtle changes in behavior such as escalation of an incident, suicidal tendencies following sentencing, etc., which allows staff to address issues before they become volatile.

In areas where staff observe two housing units (e.g., Southwest and Northeast) from a post at the front of the units, there is no visibility of shower/toilet and much of the sleeping areas. The DOC has found the physical plant in non-compliance because it does not provide sufficient space to accommodate the population. Moreover, the practice of triple-bunking could lead to increased inmate behavior management issues, and housing three inmates in a cell has the potential for abuse to occur whereby one inmate serves as a “lookout” while another inmate may be victimizing the third inmate.



Given PREA² requirements, additional supervision or, at a minimum observation of all inmate areas is essential. However, when the facility is double or triple bunched, there is a greater likelihood an inmate may be victimized without the staff being aware.

² Prison Rape Elimination Act enacted in 2003. Major provisions include: development of standards (these have recently been issued, data collection regarding the incidence of rape (survey results indicated that inmate-on-inmate victimization occurred most often in the victim's cell {56%}). Effective date of the Standards: August 20, 2012; compliance deadline: August 20, 2013.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue efforts to operationalize requirements of the Prison Rape Elimination Act. The newly implemented PREA standards and the PREA Resource Center are excellent resources for obtaining copies of the standards and specific requirements. This legislation outlines requirements for preventing abuse as well as future reporting requirements.

There are several major considerations to active supervision of inmates: effective classification of inmates, ability to appropriately and physically separate inmates based on their risk and needs, recognition that all space is staff space, and effective inmate behavior management. Although each of these concepts can be implemented independently of the others resulting in improved supervision, the combination of all of the concepts yields the greatest benefit.

Effective classification requires that inmates are screened upon commitment to ensure they are physically, mentally, and emotionally stable to be received into the facility; and classification to assess several of the predictors of behavior while in jail. Screening focuses on determining basic housing considerations such as the need for immediate mental health or medical issues that should preclude acceptance into the facility and a determination of preliminary housing considerations (e.g., separation orders, high risk inmates, etc.). There are three primary decision points for assessing risk and needs: admission (to accept or not accept), holding in booking, and housing in the facility (reassessments are included as scheduled/needed).

The Mercer County classification officer currently uses the NIC sample point additive objective classification instrument that has been programmed into the New Jersey County Correction Information System (CCIS). Classifications are conducted as a paper review (a review of criminal history, current charge, employment and stability history). An interview is not conducted in the initial classification process. Indeed, there is not an interview/check-sheet completed upon commitment/inmate where an inmate is asked to share any separation requirements, vulnerabilities or other issues that may significantly impact an inmate's housing.



Once the classification paper-process has been completed, the inmate's name and custody level is entered on a "Move Sheet," and the shift supervisor or area supervisor determines the appropriate housing location.

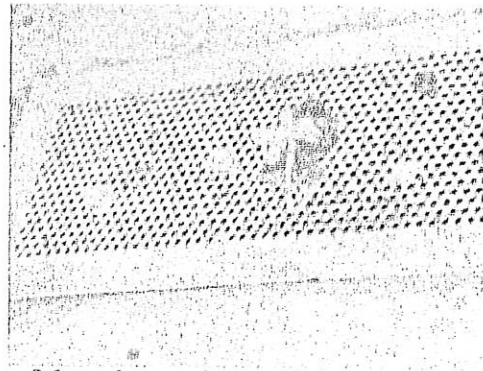
Medical screenings occur at three levels: intake, initial assessment, and physical screening. The medical intake screening is germane to managing an inmate's mental health and medical concerns.

A "staffing"³ is conducted within several days to review each inmate's housing assignment, counselor assignment and signing for receipt of the programs listing. This process is fairly scripted in terms of there are only a few questions asked of the inmate – primarily if he/she is working toward making bond, and if there is a willingness to work. The inmate signs an acknowledgment that the classification meeting was held.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop an intake questionnaire focusing on high risk and need conditions and behaviors. With proper interpersonal communication skills training, any officer, not just health care could perform the intake screening. Include questions to address the potential for victimization and direction regarding appropriate responses to victimization. Sample "initial" risk/needs assessment instruments are available from the Internet. NIC also provides training in implementing Objective Classification. These risk/needs assessments focus on whether inmates require separation from other inmates while undergoing their intake processing (e.g., classification, health care assessment, etc.)

RECOMMENDATION: Include an interview as part of the risk/needs assessment to obtain additional information relevant to making initial housing decisions.

Effective behavior management considers the importance of *meeting inmates' basic needs*, *expectation of rational behavior* and *minimizing idle time*. Meeting basic needs is significant because the failure to do so often results in inmates finding creative, albeit inappropriate means to meet these basic needs. One noteworthy example at Mercer is the lack of air balance in the facility. Inmates are covering their vents with cardboard and soap to diffuse the airflow and provide for air freshening respectively. This behavior creates two problems: first, it meets the definition of a rule violation, and therefore staff must make a decision to charge with inmate with an infraction or to allow the infraction to occur thus diminishing the significance of the rules; and second, it increases the use of toilet paper or other objects which gives the appearance that inmates are abusing these supplies, therefore resulting in the more controls placed on supplies – resulting in a downward spiral.



A second example of inmate response to basic needs not being met is the lack of opportunity to have their underclothing washed on site. The lack of sufficient water supply to accommodate an in-house laundry is certainly a barrier, however inmates are currently washing clothing in their sinks and showers, and then drying them via self-made clothes lines. The clotheslines are typically viewed as contraband in other jail facilities due to their potential use in escape attempts or means to effect suicide. This rule violation is also overlooked by staff due to the necessity – or basic need – to dry their clothes.

³ The "staffing" includes the classification officer, counselor and a member of the security staff (typically the grievance/discipline coordinator).

For the purpose of this discussion, the expectation of rational behavior and the concept of “all space is staff space” will be addressed together. When an inmate is not provided expectations, they will create their own expectations resulting in the biggest or most dangerous inmate in the housing area establishing expectations.

Similar to the broken window theory⁴ whereby when expectations are not enforced, this facility, through years of lack of monitoring and establishing high expectations has suffered unnecessarily. Examples observed/reported during the site visit include:

- Trash accumulated in cells and cellblocks
- Property hanging from cell walls
- Light fixtures covered
- Spoons not returned with meal trays
- Shower and toilet areas dirty and rusting.
- Excessive amounts of clothing and personal items beyond what is authorized
- Styrofoam meal trays, some with uneaten food, not picked up or disposed of after meals

As noted during the meeting with key decision makers, many of these occurrences are no longer noticed by inmates, but regrettably, they are also not noticed by staff. The message to the inmates and staff is that it is not a concern. This is not a criticism of staff or management; indeed without the resources to inspect and hold the inmates and staff accountable for actions/failure to act, it is virtually impossible to resolve these issues.

In the older sections of the facility, inmate spaces and officer spaces are clearly delineated. Officers do not enter inmate housing areas unless conducting specific business. This perception suggests to the inmates that the housing areas belong to them.

The final consideration for actively supervising inmate is the importance of occupying inmates’ idle time with productive activities. With the exception of the workforce, inmates are locked in their cellblocks for approximately 23-24 hours each day with the dayroom being considered an acceptable recreation area. Any person left with so much unoccupied time will often find counterproductive activities to fill that time.

The goal would be to fill the inmates’ day with productive activities. This can be in the form of expanded work crews, structured activities and more unstructured activities. Inmates frequently complained about not getting access to the telephone.

⁴ A successful strategy for preventing vandalism is to fix the problems when they are small. Repair the broken windows within a short time, and the tendency is that vandals are much less likely to break more windows or do further damage. Clean up the sidewalk every day, and the tendency is for litter not to accumulate (or for the rate of littering to be much less). Problems do not escalate and thus respectable residents do not flee a neighborhood. The theory thus makes two major claims: that further petty crime and low-level anti-social behavior will be deterred, and that major crime will, as a result, be prevented. Criticism of the theory has tended to focus only on the latter claim.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a work group including facilities maintenance/grounds crew personnel, facility staff and other interested parties to brainstorm opportunities for inmates to better serve the community. This group could also determine selection criteria and supervision requirements.

The one program area for a population of 871 is not sufficient to conduct programs that would be meaningful for reentry planning or to address the treatment, education, recreation, and spiritual needs of the inmate population. Based on observation, the program space does not appear to be sufficiently sized to accommodate more than 20 at one time. Based on hours of program availability (a few hours during the day to account for shift changes, meals, etc.), it is likely that no more than 80 inmates, or 10% of the total population can participate in group programming. Education and treatment programming has been statistically proven to reduce recidivism.⁵ These programs can often be offered at no cost to the agency other than the cost of screening volunteers for clearance into the facility. Moreover, these volunteers will often bring approved literature to the facility so that inmates can continue their studies when they are in their housing units/cells. Additionally, many groups are willing to donate appropriate library materials to the facility, though there is limited space in the program room to store these materials.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a work group to draft an action plan to prioritize programming opportunities for inmates. Expand programming on a small group basis; and recognize that initially all inmates will want to participate in all programs merely because it affords them the opportunity to get out of their housing unit. The screening and selection for inmate participation will become clearer with time.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider a program housing area for inmates who are interested in addressing their treatment, education or spiritual needs. Many of these treatment related housing options have been successful in other facilities, and the studies indicated that the inmate population in these programs are generally better behaved.

Section D: Thorough Policy and Procedure:

Policies and procedures for the operation of the Mercer County Corrections Center have been established in the form of Standards and Operating Procedures (SOPs). The Training Lieutenant has primary responsibility for development and maintenance of the SOP's. According to SOP 001, complete copies of the SOP's are maintained in each Control Room and staff are provided a flash drive loaded with all of the SOP's according to the Training Lieutenant.

Responsibility for training new staff in the SOP's is delegated to the new employee's Mentoring Supervisor, although there is no direction given as to how this training is to be provided or what it is to include. New employees are required to sign a Mentoring

⁵ Much of this research is included in the "What Works" literature that addresses the criminogenic factors such as age, education, etc., and responsivity to treatment as contributors to reducing recidivism.

Training Form verifying that they have received the training. There is no formal testing of new employees on their knowledge and understanding of the SOP's.

There does not appear to be a provision for the annual review and update of the SOPs. The latest review and revision as indicated in the SOP index was 2012. There are provisions for staff to make recommendations for amendments to the SOPs in SOP 010.

The SOPs include Post Orders for each of the designated posts in the facility. The post orders generally provide a description of the purpose of the post, supervision of the post occupant, and a listing of responsibilities of the post. None include a listing of scheduled duties that must be completed within specific timeframes on a given shift.

Note: When asked how they would seek clarification of the SOPs on particular issues, many staff responded that they would ask the Training Lieutenant directly rather than their supervisors. Indeed, they advised that their supervisors would often refer them to the Training Lieutenant. Although the Training Lieutenant, having drafted many of the SOPs, is a good source of information, line officers should be getting this clarification from their Supervisors. Supervisors should be accountable for knowing and conveying information to staff as needed on SOP content and intent.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a policy for annual review of the SOPs, with revisions made as needed. One method of review is to schedule specific SOPs for review each month over the course of the year so that, by the end of the year, a review of all SOPs is completed. This will aid in keeping policies and procedures current and relevant.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a standardized, formal method of training new employees in the facility SOPs. The current process leaves much to the discretion of individual Mentoring Supervisors, potentially leading to incomplete and inconsistent training.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a more formalized approach to introducing new and revised SOPs to staff to ensure their understanding of any new concepts and/or changes in practice.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a method of testing new employees on their knowledge and understanding of the SOPs. This will provide a means to assess the effectiveness of the training and place the County in a more defensible position in litigation.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider revising the post orders into a more standardized format that includes the following:

- Post name
- Hours of duty
- Issue and review dates
- Listing of equipment required for the post

- General instructions
- List of scheduled duties in chronological order
- List of unscheduled duties and the frequency with which they should be done

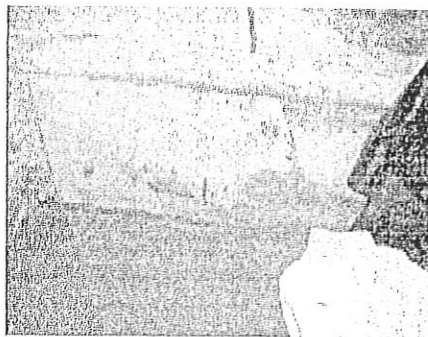
RECOMMENDATION: When developing new procedures or revising existing ones, avoid including telephone numbers, specific names of individuals and agencies, and other information that may change. This type of information is best included in an attachment or posted elsewhere with a reference to the location of the information made in the SOP. In this way, changes in contact information, schedules, etc. can be easily updated without issuing a revised SOP.

RECOMMENDATION: When developing new, or revising existing SOPs, and when revising the Inmate Handbook, avoid and eliminate the use of slang terms that may be familiar to veteran staff but not to new staff or inmates (“screen visits”, “window visits”, “runners”, “catwalks”, etc.). Include definitions of key terms where needed.

Section E: Prioritize the Resolution of Life, Health, and Safety Issues.

The operational assessment included an assessment of life, health and safety related issues. Many positive attributes were noted including inmates’ access to medical care through the contracted medical services, efforts and funds dedicated to renovate bathroom areas, providing cleaning supplies to housing areas, etc. The following conditions were noted by the technical resource providers in the course of the operational assessment.

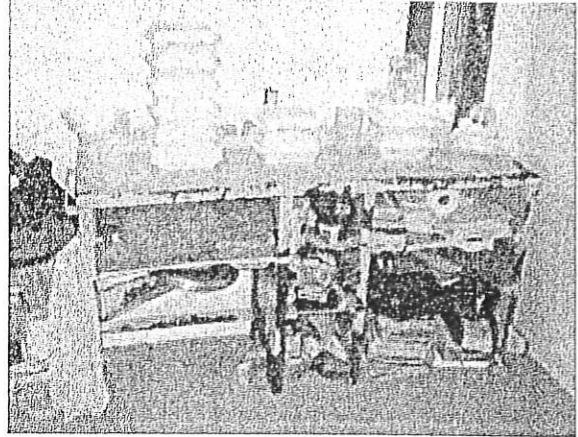
- High noise levels in living units, particularly Pods A and B.
- Plumbing broken and inoperable in many living units.
- Rust and mold present in many living unit bathrooms
- Low water pressure and leaking faucets
- Ventilation grills partially covered, some with soap bars presumably an attempt to freshen the air
- Damage to walls with cracks and or missing blocks in one bathroom area
- Some lighting not working; lens cover of at least one light fixture splattered with a black substance
- Upper level shower leaking through the floor into the shower below on the lower level in Pod B.
- Showers in Pod B must be turned on and off using valve in pipe chase. Pipe chase door was open and accessible to inmates.



Operational Assessment: Mercer County Correctional Center

- Walls, floors, and fixed metal fixtures in most living units in need of through cleaning and painting.
- Swing out metal stools that were integrated into the fixed steel tables and storage units in Pod A and B units have been removed or are broken.
- Metal boxes for storage of inmates' personal items in Pod C and D dormitories are rusted and uncleanable. Some have been removed. Mesh bags have been provided to inmates for storage of personal items.
- Excessive amounts of personal items and trash were observed in many cells,

creating a potential fire and health hazard. Items observed included stacks of Styrofoam food trays, extra books, extra clothing items, extra personal hygiene items (11 bars of soap at one bunk), magazines and other papers



- No means available to inmates for laundering of personal items. Inmates hand wash personal items in their sinks and then hang the items to dry on makeshift clotheslines (in violation of policy). The Inmate Handbook indicates there is a schedule for pick-up and laundering personal items.
- Insufficient cell and dayroom space available to inmates in living units at capacity. (per New Jersey Standards and ACA Standards).
- Insufficient number of operable showers, toilets, and washbasins for the number of inmates housed in most living units at capacity (per New Jersey Standards).
- Insufficient tables and seating for inmates in dayrooms for the number of inmates housed in most living units at capacity. Inmates must eat in rounds or some inmates eat meals in their cells. (per New Jersey Standards).
- No dining area or suitable space available for inmate kitchen workers to eat.
- Limited space and resources available for inmate programming given the size of the facility. Program area includes two classrooms and a library. There are spaces in some housing units identified as "Quite Rooms", however these are not suitably furnished to support program activities. Program services are provided mostly by Correctional Facility program staff with limited involvement of outside organizations. Counselors are assigned to work with inmates in designated housing units however they all have ancillary duties (such as handling request slips, managing the inmate access to the phone system, arranging phone calls for legal referrals, distributing intra-agency mail, etc.) that take a significant portion of their time.
- Although there is sufficient exercise space in outdoor yards and an indoor gym, there is limited exercise equipment available to inmates to use during exercise periods.

- Critical security systems inoperable. Fences entry gate to the Intake vehicular sallyport has been inoperable for some time. Equipment failure on control panel in R&D Control Room has identified the cause, but there have been delays in getting it repaired.

What do the conditions listed above have in common? Problems or shortcomings in these areas may result in illness or injury to inmates, staff or others who are associated with the facility.

The connection between some of these types of conditions and illness/injury is obvious:

- Unsanitary facilities may cause a variety of medical conditions.
- The presence of pests or vermin may cause injury, such as an insect bite or rodent bite.
- Contaminated water may cause illness.
- Inadequate or contaminated ventilation may cause illness.
- Mold can cause illness and breathing problems.
- Excessive amounts of combustible materials in cells creates a potential fire hazard.

Space requirements for cells, rooms and dayrooms, such those included in the New Jersey Jail Standards, have been created to promote health and, in some instances, safety. The space requirements have safety implications because housing inmates in too-close proximity increases the likelihood of conflict between the occupants, which could result in injuries.

Sufficient lighting, artificial and natural, also promotes health and may increase safety for inmates, staff and others. An inmate who attempts to read without sufficient light may develop problems with his/her eyesight. Health is promoted by providing inmates with access to natural light, which has been confirmed by various studies.

Ventilation and temperature systems may become less effective over time, especially if routine and preventive maintenance is not consistently provided. In addition to breakdown in the equipment, other factors may reduce the effectiveness of these systems, such as dirty air vents that become clogged and restrain air movement.

Maintaining compliance means keeping these mechanical systems in good repair, including replacing filters and cleaning ducts as prescribed by the manufacturers. This should be part of ongoing maintenance procedures.

Most of the conditions listed also impact staff and other non-inmates who work or visit the facility. Light, ventilation, temperature, and sanitation are all working conditions that could pose risks to non-inmates as well.

Correctional facilities should have a system of routine internal and external inspections to identify and resolve life, health, and safety issues. Internal inspections should include:

- Sanitation inspections;
- Fire safety inspections;
- Security inspections;
- Inspections of the building, HVAC, electrical, plumbing and other building systems.

Fire, safety, and sanitation inspections are often combined into one activity. Generally, the purposes of these combined safety and sanitation inspections should ensure that:

- All areas of the jail are clean and orderly;
- Lighting, ventilation, and heating equipment is functioning properly;
- No fire, health, or safety hazards exist;
- All detection and suppression system, equipment, tools, and security devices are functioning properly;
- All inmates are receiving appropriate supervision and training in the use of hazardous materials, equipment, and tools;
- All plumbing equipment including bathing, sink and toilets, washing and laundry facilities are functioning properly;
- All identified deficiencies are promptly reported and corrected.

Internal inspections should include development of checklists that include items and locations unique to the facility. There should also be a procedure for recording and reporting findings and follow-up to correct deficiencies. Many standards require a *weekly* inspection by a designated staff person, a *monthly* inspection by a qualified fire and safety officer, and *annual* inspections by independent, qualified auditors. Designated staff in their respective work areas should conduct *daily* inspections with their findings noted on a daily log. Also, employees should have a means to report issues not discovered during routine inspections. Some jails establish a *safety committee* to work with the safety officer to address identified issues.

RECOMMENDATION: Designate a qualified staff member to serve as the facility's lead Fire, Sanitation, and Safety Officer. Provide a job description and opportunities for the designated individual to receive training on codes and related fire, sanitation, and safety issues.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish an internal inspection regimen for the entire facility and grounds, focusing on identifying and resolving fire, safety, and sanitation issues. Develop checklists for use by the Fire, Safety, and Sanitation Officer, supervisors, and officers to conduct daily, weekly, and monthly inspections.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide a means for laundering of inmates personal items of clothing to eliminate the need for makeshift clotheslines in cells and dormitory areas.

RECOMMENDATION: Enforce rules relating to sanitation, hoarding of excess personal items, abuse and misuse of jail property, and other behavior that impacts safety and sanitation. Reset expectations of inmate and staff behavior regarding these issues and implement changes incrementally to avoid chaos and resistance. (i.e. Rule of the Month)

RECOMMENDATION: Take immediate action to address plumbing issues in living units where bathroom areas are yet to be renovated. Conditions in these units cannot wait to be addressed until they are scheduled to be renovated.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider removing the third bunk from cells that current have a three-tiered bunk to reduce the number of bunks in dormitories to bring the capacity down to a more manageable level and improve sightlines somewhat. The reduction in population has made this possible and the elimination of the bunks will bring the facility closer to compliance with state and professional standards. This action should be done in conjunction with the ongoing population management initiatives and use of alternatives.

Section F: Ongoing Monitoring of Performance Coupled with Aggressive Problem

Solving: Jail Administrators/Wardens must be expected to be problem identifiers, problem solvers and change agents. The warden must provide line staff with proper “tools” to perform their job properly and constitutionally. Administrative liability is associated with failure to meet these expectations and can result in findings surrounding failure to direct, failure to train, and failure to supervise.

Supervision of staff is a significant component of monitoring performance, and is more than observing staff performance to identify failure to comply with approved policies and procedures. It is also ensuring that staff have the necessary resources to perform their duties in an effective and efficient manner.

Systems must be in place to encourage input from staff, and for staff to receive ongoing feedback from the administration staff. Rather than surveying staff, volunteer staff could participate in groups to address specific issues. Staff are in the best position to offer suggestions for improvement, but often there are many barriers to obtaining this input (“we’ve always done it this way,” “I’m close to retirement and just want to do my job”). This is clearly an agency that seeks change for the better, but supervisors must be in a position to ease this transition for their staff by involving staff in the decision making process.

RECOMMENDATION: Seek out training opportunities for supervisory staff beyond basic supervisory techniques. Ensure the training includes team building,

) motivating staff etc. Two programs offered through NIC that may be particularly beneficial to executive level staff are: Jail Administration and Inmate Behavior Management. Registration for both programs can be accomplished on the NIC website: www.NICIC.gov.

RECOMMENDATION: Involve supervisory and line staff in the decision making process where appropriate to do so. This may include developing procedures for certain policies; establishing criteria for work force selection; determining the best way to implement new changes.

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct regular staff meetings with an agenda and set time. Allow appropriate time for discussion; establish expectations for both management and staff to resolve issues.

Monitoring performance goes beyond just staff; it also includes overall performance of the operation. The physical plant condition, fluctuations in the inmate population, and trends in the corrections profession are all performance indicators that may trigger operational changes. Like many jail operations, the MCCC appears to spend full-time work in just managing the myriad crises that occur on a daily basis. These ongoing issues make it difficult for management to consider long term implications of the resolution of these issues, or trends that may be indicators of faulty manufacturing of equipment or the need to modify operations.

An ongoing assessment process or internal audit system can be of great benefit in evaluating current operations/performance and predicting future issues and needs. The steps in developing an internal audit system include:

1. Identify the key operational functions or activities to be assessed;
2. Select the most effective method of reviewing each function or activity;
3. Determine the frequency of reviews;
4. Identify the appropriate position within the organization to the review of each function;
5. Establish a schedule for the reviews; and,
6. Establish a process to correct identified deficiencies.

The best method of review could include a regular review and sign-off of reports; periodic review/examination of records; review of census information/other aggregate data collected; inspection of facilities, equipment, and/or furnishings; and, visual observation of activities. When issues are identified, it is important to develop a corrective action plan to address the problem.

Although it is difficult to quantify cost avoidance by implementing performance-monitoring steps, it is intuitively a rational approach to identifying issues that may have far reaching future implications.

From this data a master plan can be developed so current and future costs can be identified and so staff are not trying to complete all tasks at the same time.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop an internal audit system that includes the steps listed in this section. Include line staff in the development of the system. Many resources exist to assist in developing an audit system. The National Institute of Corrections Information Center (NICIC.gov) is an excellent starting point. A sample copy of an internal audit system schedule is provided in Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a data collection system similar to the reports completed by the counselors. Use this data to determine if staff are meeting the expectations as well as determining whether additional resources are needed.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a system for managing action plans, projects and audits to ensure the performance monitoring system is being implemented as anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a master plan for longer term projects such as the toilet/shower/sink replacement including how that project fits in with other capital improvement projects.

Continuous Documentation: Although this section could be combined with the Ongoing Monitoring of performance, it is a significant issue for the MCCC. Lack of appropriate documentation is a significant reason why jails lose lawsuits. The lack of documentation raises the issue of whether practices may indeed be consistent with mandates and case law; but without supporting documentation, it is difficult to verify compliance. Effective documentation combines manual and automated records management so that information is appropriately documented and is maintained in a format that is easily accessible. On the other hand, automating all records could be cost prohibitive.⁶

Post documentation is maintained in a large bound book that can hold approximately five months of documentation.

The MCCC does have an automated records management system that can track discipline, court status and other essential information. This CCIS system is not available to the housing unit officers and therefore information requested by the inmate is given to the sergeant, counselor or others for resolution. This practice is time consuming and does not allow counselor staff to work toward addressing reentry issues or behavior

⁶ An example of cost prohibitive automation may include automating weekly security and safety inspections. The information would be useful because it could record when maintenance is required on a specific item and project out a long-term maintenance/replacement plan. However, the system requirements for such a database could be cost prohibitive. Manually, the weekly inspection files could be pulled to determine if there are consistent entries that require resolution. Although the manual option is not as effective, the cost-benefit may not justify automating this particular record.

management/programming when most of their effort is responding questions about court dates, etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider expanding access to the jail management system so that line officers may respond to questions inmate raise on regular basis (court dates/status, commissary funds, etc.)

Conclusion

The MCCC is clearly on a path of continuous improvement in a cost efficient manner. The continued exploration of resources and legal requirements coupled with the continued desire to improve operations will aide MCCC in creating a risk avoidance operation.

The staff have demonstrated their desire to effect improvements, and with the correct resources, the current staff are capable of making the improvements a reality.

Each initiative put in place to address the issues illustrates the commitment to improving the overall operation. Talented and committed staff have demonstrated that, unlike some agencies, the technical assistance provided by the National Institute of Corrections will be taken seriously.

Appendix A

Housing Summary

Unit #	Housing Unit Designation	Cell Type	# of Cells	# of Beds
West Wing				
WW Left	Female Gen. Pop.	Dormitory	1	40
WW Right	Female Intake/Transition	Dormitory	1	40
North East Wing				
NE Floor 1 Left	Male Gen Pop	Dormitory	1	42
NE Floor 1 Right	Male Intake/Transition	Dormitory	1	42
NE Floor 2 Left	Male Gen Pop/ Max Overflow	Dormitory	1	42
NE Floor 2 Right	Male Gen Pop/ Max Overflow	Dormitory	1	42
NE Basement	Inmate Workers	Dormitory	1	50
Southeast Wing				
SE Floor 1 Left	Male Medical/Mental Health	Dormitory	1	36
SE Floor 1 Right	Male Gen Pop/ Max Overflow	Dormitory	1	42
SE Floor 2 Left	Male Gen Pop/ Max Overflow	Dormitory	1	36
SE Floor 2 Right	Male Gen Pop/ Max Overflow	Dormitory	1	42
Pods				
Pod A Lower	Max Custody - Male	Triple	13	30
Pod A Upper	Protective Custody - Male	Triple/Double	13	37
Pod B Lower	Max Custody - Male	Triple	13	39
Pod B Upper	Max Custody - Male	Triple	13	39
Pod C	Male Med/Inst. Inmate Workers	Dormitory	1	136
Pod D	Male Medium	Dormitory	1	136
Receiving & Discharge/Detention/Ad Seg/Medical/				
Detention 1-7 & 10-14	Male Disc. Detention/Ad Seg	Double/Triple	12	37
Detention Cells 8 & 9	Female Det/Ad Seg		2	
2210	Holding Cell	Multiple	1	3
2220	Holding Cell	Multiple	1	3
Medical	Medical Housing	Single/Double	4	15
Special Housing	Female Intake/ PC/Ad Seg./Det.	Double	6	12

Appendix B

SAMPLE TRAINING PROGRAM CHECKLIST

1. TRAINING CHECKLIST
 - a. Format Acceptable
 - b. Content meet standards
 - c. Clearly defines agency training issues
 - d. Annual review/regularly updated
 - e. Review/approval by administrator in writing.
 - f. Other needs.
2. ANNUAL AGENCY TRAINING PLAN
 - a. Developed new each year
 - b. Addresses all job classes
 - c. Addresses new and existing employees
 - d. Job analysis-based for new employees
 - e. Needs/problem based for existing employees
 - f. Yields minimum required hours for each job
 - g. Other needs
3. TRAINING COORDINATOR POSITION
 - a. Based upon formal job description
 - b. Incumbent has been officially designated
 - c. Incumbent has been formally trained
 - d. Incumbent is rewarded
 - e. Other needs:
4. JOB ANALYSIS FOR NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING TOPICS
 - a. Defines all tasks
 - b. Reduces gross tasks to core tasks
 - c. Analyzes core tasks by domains of learning
 - d. Identified cognitive and psychomotor core tasks
 - e. Address more than just detention office class
 - f. Other needs:
5. NEEDS/PROBLEM ANALYSIS FOR EXISTING EMPLOYEE TRAINING TOPICS
 - a. Covers all job classes
 - b. Conducted Annually
 - c. Clearly identified needs or problem performance
 - d. Yields cognitive and psychomotor topics
 - e. Yields individualized training strategies
 - f. Addresses individual and operational problems
 - g. Other needs
6. TRAINING STRATEGIES INCLUDE DEFENDABLE ALTERNATIVES TO CLASSROOM-BASED TRAINING
 - a. FTO for veteran employees
 - b. Shift overlap training
 - c. Experimental drill training
 - d. Shift scenario training
 - e. Independent study program
 - f. Training presentations at staff meetings
 - g. Correspondence c, (ACA)
 - h. Video tapes (AJA)
 - i. Bulletins (AJA JOBS)
 - j. Other needs:
7. FTO/OJT PROGRAM FOR NEW EMPLOYEES
 - a. Based upon job analysis
 - b. Comprehensive topic checklist manual
 - c. Observation reports
 - d. Proficiency-based reports
 - e. FTO program manager
 - f. Trained FTOs
 - g. FTOs are evaluated
 - h. Systematic FTO teaching process
 - i. Good documentation
 - j. Other needs:
8. TRAINING DOCUMENTATION
 - a. All six elements of defendable training are documented for each training event
 - i. Specify objectives and content
 - ii. Relevancy to the job
 - iii. From an appropriate source
 - iv. Of sufficient duration
 - v. Something relevant is learned
 - vi. Appropriate staff attend.
9. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS
 - a. Instructors are selected on the basis of their training – whether internal or external
 - b. Overtime considerations

APPENDIX C

Monitoring Performance Through Inspections and Audits					
Review Code	Functions and Activities	ACA Standard	Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Staff
General Administration					
A-1	Mission and goals	1A-03, 04	Review	Annually	Administrator
A-2	Org. structure/chain of command	1A-18	Review	Annually	Administrator
A-3	Facility policies and procedures	1A-21	Review	Annually	Administrator
Fiscal Management					
A-4	Accounting procedures	1B-08	Review	Annually	Administrator
D-1	Cash management	1B-09	Inspect physical handling and review documentation	Daily	Administrator
A-5	Fiscal activities		Review and sign-off	Ongoing	Administrator
			Accounting procedures and fiscal activities	Independent financial audit	Annually
A-6	Inventory control		Conduct physical inventory	Annually	Administrative staff
Personnel					
A-7	Staffing requirements		Conduct staffing needs assessment	Annually	Administrator
A-8	Drug-free workplace policy	1C-15	Review and update policy	Annually	Administrator
A-9	Employee performance reviews	1C-16	Review personnel files	Annually	Administrator
Training					
A-10	Training plan	1D-01	Review/approve annual plan	Annually	Administrator
A-11	Training needs	1D-02	Conduct assessment	Annually	Training coordinator
A-12	Training adequacy/effectiveness		Review and evaluate training impact	Annually	Training coordinator
A-13	Required training		Review training records	Annually	Administrator
Security					
A-14	Post orders	3A-05	Review and update	Annually	Administrator
D-2	Jail log		Review and sign-off	Daily	Shift supervisors
D-3	Security		Observe during daily patrol	Daily	Shift supervisors
W-1	Security	3A-11	Observe during weekly visit to housing and activity areas	Weekly	Facility administrator or designee
W-2	Security	3A-12	Formally inspect all security devices/features	Weekly	Chief security officer
M-1	Security Equipment (firearms, chemical agents, etc.)		Inventory and inspect all items	Monthly	Chief security officer
M-2	Key/Tool Control		Observe use of checkout/in system; inspect storage areas; review records	Monthly	Chief security officer
M-3	Shakedowns; searches		Review documentation of shakedowns, facility searches, etc.	Monthly	Chief security officer

Monitoring Performance Through Inspections and Audits

Review Code	Functions and Activities	ACA Standard	Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Staff
M-4	Fire and life safety	3B-02	Conduct comprehensive inspection with checklist	Monthly	Qualified fire and safety officer
Q-1	Fire inspection and equipment		Inspect and test	Quarterly	Qualified fire and safety officer
A-15	Fire inspection	3B-09	Independent inspection	Annually	Local or state fire officials
B-1	Power generators		Conduct equipment test	Bi-weekly	Qualified staff
Q-2	Emergency systems (alarms, stand-by lighting, communications systems, etc.)		Conduct equipment tests	Quarterly	Qualified staff
A-16	Written evacuation plan	3B-10	Review and certify	Annually	Qualified independent inspector
A-17	Emergency plans	3B-13	Review and update	Annually	Administrator; safety officer
Sanitation and hygiene					
D-4	General sanitation and cleanliness		Observe all facility areas	Daily	Line and supervisory staff
W-4	Sanitation inspections	4B-10	Formally inspect all facility areas	Weekly	Qualified staff
M-5	Sanitation inspections		Conduct comprehensive inspection	Monthly	Sanitation specialist
A-18	Sanitation inspections		Independent inspection	Annually	Local or state sanitation and health officials
A-19	Water supply		Test and certify	Annually	Qualified independent source
M-6	Pest control		Inspect	Monthly	Qualified staff or outside source
W-5	Food service operations	4A-10	Inspect sanitation levels	Weekly	Administrative or food service supervisory staff
Inmate supervision and management					
W-6	Well-being checks and counts		Observe; review logs	Weekly	Administrator or designee
M-7	Classification		Review several case records for documentation of classification	Monthly	Administrator or designee
M-8	Special management		Observe general conditions; review logs	Monthly	Administrator or designee
	Major incidents; use of force		Review reports	Ongoing	Administrator or designee
Rules, discipline, and grievance					
A-20	Inmate rules of conduct	3C-02	Review and update	Annually	Administrator/designee
Q-3	Disciplinary process		Review several case records for documentation of disciplinary action taken	Quarterly	Administrator or designee

Monitoring Performance Through Inspections and Audits

Review Code	Functions and Activities	ACA Standard	Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Staff
A-4	Grievances		Review grievance records and dispositions	Quarterly	Administrator/designee
Food Service					
A-21	Dietary allowances		Review menus	Annually	Qualified dietician
Q-4	Dietary allowances		Review and evaluate menus	Quarterly	Food service supervisory staff
M-9	Meal preparation and service; quality		Observe food service operations and meal service	Monthly	Administrator or designee
Health Care					
Q-5	Health care effectiveness		Review statistics, meetings with health care authority	Quarterly	Administrator
A-22	Health care delivery system	4C-05	Review and assess	Annual	Health care authority
M-10	Access to services		Review several case records for documentation of medical services provided	Monthly	Administrator or designee
W-7	Medical equipment, supplies and pharmaceuticals		Inventory and inspect	Weekly	Nurse
Q-6	First aid kits	4C-28	Inspect and re-supply	Quarterly	Nurse
Admission and release					
M-11	Admission and release process		Observe; review admission and release documentation in several case records	Monthly	Administrator or designee
M-12	Property	5A-16	Inspect property room; observe handling of property during admission/release	Monthly	Administrator or designee
Programs and services					
A-23	General access to programs and services	5B-02	Review programs and services and assess adequacy to meet inmates' needs	Annually	Administrator or designee
Q-7	Laundry		Review and assess services	Quarterly	Supervisory staff
Q-8	Library services		Review library program	Quarterly	Program coordinator
Q-9	Religious services		Review inmate requests for religious services; assess adequacy of current resources	Quarterly	Program coordinator
Q-10	Counseling and education services		Review inmate requests; assess availability and adequacy of services	Quarterly	Program coordinator
M-13	Mail services		Observe handling and distribution of mail	Monthly	Supervisory staff
Q-11	Visiting		Observe the visiting process	Quarterly	Supervisory staff
A-24	Telephone services		Review inmate access	Annually	Supervisory staff
A-25	Work release and inmate work programs		Review work release and inmate work programs	Annually	Program coordinator
A-26	Commissary		Review commissary services	Annually	Administrator or designee
Maintenance					
Q-12	Preventive maintenance		Review maintenance logs; compare with preventive maintenance schedule	Quarterly	Maintenance supervisor

Schedule of Reviews (One Month) - SAMPLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 A-1	2 W-1 W-2 W-4 W-5 M-5	3 W-3 M-1	4 W-6 M-7 M-8	5 W-7	6
7	8 A-2	9 W-1 W-2 W-4 W-5 M-6 Q-12	10 W-3 M-2	11 W-6 M-11 M-12	12 W-7	13
14	15 A-3	16 W-1 W-2 W-4 W-5	17 W-3 M-3	18 W-6 M-9	19 W-7	20
21	22 A-4	23 W-1 W-2 W-4 W-5	24 W-3 M-4 Q-1 Q-2	25 W-6	26 W-7 Q-6	27
28	29 A-5	30 W-1 W-2 W-4 W-5	31 W-3			

Appendix D

Mercer County, NJ Operational Assessment Agenda (Draft)		
Date	Activity	Description
Wednesday, June 17th		
9:00 AM	Initial Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Expectations/desired outcomes for the assessment • General overview of the facility, special features, current issues, trends • Overview of assessment process/methodology • Confirm schedule • Secure workspace for consultants • ID staff to accompany consultants
10:30 AM	Facility Tour	Brief tour of facility to better understand layout and organization of the facility
Lunch		
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Conduct Assessment	Assessment areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, safety, sanitation, environmental conditions, etc. • Intake and Release
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Continue Facility Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of confinement • Classification, special management, etc.
Thursday, June 18th		
8:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Continue Facility Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food service, laundry • Inmate care; health care, personal hygiene
10:00 AM - Noon	Continue Facility Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures • Facility order, inmate rules, discipline, inmate rights, grievance process, etc.
Lunch		
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Continue Facility Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and activities, treatment services, exercise, education, library, mail, telephone, visiting, religious programs, etc. • Administration, personnel, staffing, training, records, etc.
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to conference or interview space would be helpful.
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Exit Meeting	Report/discuss preliminary assessment findings; answer questions; review next steps; close-out visit

Appendix E

DATA REQUEST

Facility Design Capacity	
Average Daily Population	Previous three years
Average Number of Daily Admissions	Previous three years (identify peak periods during the day, week, year)
Average Number of Daily Releases	Previous three years (identify peak periods during the day, week, year)
Population Breakdown	County, state, revenue, male/female, adult/juvenile, etc. Identify any significant changes in population breakdown over previous three years to current period.
Classification	Copy of classification plan and description of each classification designation, e.g., minimum, medium, maximum, special management, special needs (medical, mental health) community, etc.
Housing Plan	Description of inmates housed in each unit (pod), e.g., by custody level and gender. Number of beds per pod.
Facility Design - Floor Plan	8" x 11.5" or 11" x 17" size copies of floor plan.
Standards	Copy of applicable state jail standards
Inspection Reports	Previous five state inspection reports, if applicable
Facility Activity Schedule	A weekly calendar of events
Policies and Procedures	To include post orders. Policies and Procedures Manual (in electronic form, if available). If too cumbersome, please send a table of contents so most salient policies may be selected for review.
Programs and Service Offerings	Program/Service description, eligibility criterion, frequency, etc.
Organizational Chart	Include any Sheriff's Office positions that provide services to the jail (e.g., human resources, budget, training)
Current Staffing Plan	Basic schedule, shift rosters, rotations, specialty assignments.
Current Staff Work Schedule	Scheduled hours, days off, etc. (8 hours shifts, 12-hour, 10-hour, etc.)
Authorized Positions	Listing of each job classification to include authorized number of FTE staff for each job classification and a listing of positions added or eliminated within each job classification for the past five years.
Training Plan	Annual training plan for 2015 and 2014
Critical Incident Summary	Number and types of critical incidents, to include location (by housing unit and other locations), and by shift.
Union Contract	Applicable collective bargaining agreement(s), other personnel agreements.
Service Contracts	List of contracts such as health care, food service, commissary, maintenance, etc.
Personnel Actions related to employee misconduct in the jail.	Include employee actions related to employee-inmate relations, violations of security regulations. Do not include tardiness or other administrative employee actions.

Appendix F

On June 17 and 18 of this year, the Mercer County Correction Center was pleased to welcome Ms. Karen Albert and Mr. Mark Martin, representatives from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), to the facility in order to evaluate the jail in a number of key areas. Based on its visit, the NIC produced an Operational Assessment designed to help initiate improvements throughout the facility.

Upon receipt of the draft assessment, key staff was given an opportunity to consider the NIC's conclusions. While the NIC offered many sound recommendations, we feel that in some areas of the report our institution was inaccurately represented. We offer responses to those areas of the Operational Assessment as enumerated below:

Administrative/Court Partner Entry

Page 5: Staff is admitted to the secure perimeter after being searched, and the Search Officer and the monitoring of the cameras in the area prevent contraband from entering.

Health Care

Page 8: Triage areas in medical are in private areas off the corridor, and in the old "IDR" area a large room is distant enough from the queue of inmates waiting for triage and sufficient to ensure privacy. This has not been challenged by nursing staff.

Control Area

Page 8: The armory beneath Master Control is a supplemental arsenal; the primary arsenal is outside the secure perimeter as per Title 10A Chapter 31, and its access is severely restricted.

Food Service

Page 9: Fire, safety, and sanitation inspections are done by the area Supervisor several times throughout their tour of duty, and a more formal inspection is conducted by the Fire Marshal semiannually, the Health Inspector annually, and as reported and required by the Correction Centers Safety Committee.

Page 10: Food follows a 5-week rotating schedule and provides good diversity. Complaints among inmates are normally for the quantity of food provided, and rarely for the quality.

Laundry

Page 11: Inmates washing and drying their own laundry is not condoned, and is actively discouraged. An exchange of inmate clothing occurs on a regular schedule.

Reception and Discharge (R&D)

Page 11: Maintenance issues are ongoing and are remedied as soon as it is feasible. The gate issue mentioned in the report has been resolved.

Appendix F

Section B: Appropriate staffing:

Page 14: A closer examination of the materials recommended by the NIC is required to determine how the staff-to-inmate ratio was determined.

Page 14 & 15: The training recommendations promoted by the NIC in the assessment -- intake processing, court and legal documents, medical and legal issues, mental health, and behavior management -- are in fact implemented during agency training or at the Academy. An adherence to mandated training is not a vice or foible; it is a lawful compliance to the mandates of the New Jersey Police Training Commission, which are promulgated from the authority of the Attorney General. Specialized training has been frequently used to "train the trainers" who then instruct staff using the range of their experience.

Section C: Active Supervision of Inmates:

Page 15: Active supervision is the default management stance for those living units where the physical structure affords the opportunity; however, the "Old Jail" does not permit direct contact with inmates. A "catwalk" is utilized to maintain visual surveillance. Additionally, officers are directly present for counts, searches for each shift, and whenever it becomes necessary to enter the living unit.

Page 15: Triple bunking is not currently in use; however, the bunks remain as an option if the need arises.

Page 19: Inmates are afforded numerous activities to combat boredom and promote education. In addition to television, plenty of gaming materials are provided for passive recreation, and meetings off the living unit with a counselor, outside representatives for spiritual, secular and personal awareness, and for professional programs are available. On C and D Pods, a second television is provided for current events, special sporting events, and Latino programming.

Section D: Thorough Policy and Procedure:

Page 20: Many suggestions offered by the NIC are well founded. The Correction Center continually audits SOPs whenever the need exists. Staff is encouraged to discover deficiencies in the SOP and to report them. Changes, once made, are distributed and emphasized through memorandums and daily "line-ups."

New employees are instructed in each individual Standard or Operating Procedure during agency training. Mentoring supervisors provide refresher training on a daily basis to affected staff in their areas of responsibility.

Section E: Prioritize the Resolution of Life, Health, and Safety Issues

Page 21: A great many of the maintenance concerns itemized in the assessment are being ameliorated through the restoration of the bathroom areas. Maintenance issues in general are prioritized as they affect security and safety and are resolved as soon as resources become available.

Page 23: Exercise equipment is readily available to inmates who take an interest in their use: soccer balls, basketballs, weighted exercise balls, "Swiss" stability balls, jump ropes, pingpong, and pull-up bars are

Appendix F

available. Many inmates utilize their recreation time to walk, do isometric exercises, or simply enjoy their time out of doors (weather permitting).

Page 23: Pests are continually controlled through the use of a private vendor that is doing a superb job. There is no evidence of contaminated water at any source in the Correction Center and our inspection results are well within safe levels for all contaminants. Our ventilation shafts are maintained through an aggressive cleaning schedule that was last completed four months ago.

Page 23: Our light levels or lumens on the living units are monitored in accordance with Title 10A:31 and have been found to be adequate in all areas.

Page 25: The inspections listed are addressed under Food Service above, and for areas outside the kitchen, documentation is available to show compliance with all inspections as they are routinely conducted by qualified inspectors.

Page 25: Laundering is addressed under Laundry, page 11, above.

Page 25: Inmates are sanctioned as described in the Inmate handbook, which mirrors state facilities. Sanctions for misuse or destruction of County property may include restitution.

Page 25: Every effort is being made to address plumbing issues at the Correction Center as expeditiously as possible.

Section F: Ongoing Monitoring of Performance Coupled with Aggressive Problem Solving:

Page 26: Supervisors are routinely chosen for supplemental training off site with private vendors including Skillpath, NST, Fred Pryor, CareerTrack, Northpointe, and other well-known training venues.

Page 26: Supervisors meet daily with the Warden and Captain and are active in the decision-making process. Additionally, these meetings serve as an opportunity to report and resolve issues. Monthly meetings are conducted to foster exactly the environment recommended in the assessment.

Page 27: See "Section D: Thorough Policy and Procedure:" page 20 above.

Page 27: The Operations Lieutenant, in coordination with the Warden, Captain, and other persons and departments, coordinates projects both long and short term.

Page 28: The Correction Center is actively pursuing vendors for a jail management system.

In conclusion, we were fortunate to have Ms. Albert and Mr. Martin take the time to visit the Correction Center, and we appreciated the assessors' candor in pointing out areas where we can improve. Please consider this response as additional information to aid your assessment, and not a refutation or rejection of their work. We look forward to reviewing and initiating changes based on NIC's recommendations.