State of Arizona Office of the Auditor General

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

SECURITY OPERATIONS

Report to the Arizona Legislature
By Debra K. Davenport
Auditor General
December 2000
Report No. 00-20

DEBRA K. DAVENPORT, CPA
AUDITOR GENERAL

**STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

December 22, 2000

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Jane Dee Hull, Governor

Mr. Terry L. Stewart, Director
Arizona Department of Corrections

Transmitted herewith is a report of the Auditor General, A Performance Audit of the Arizona Department of Corrections—Security Operations. This report is in response to a June 16, 1999, resolution of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The performance audit was conducted as part of the Sunset review set forth in A.R.S. §41-2951 et seq. I am also transmitting with this report a copy of the Report Highlights for this audit to provide a quick summary for your convenience.

This is the first in a series of reports to be issued on the Department of Corrections.

As outlined in its response, the agency agrees with all of the findings and recommendations.

My staff and I will be pleased to discuss or clarify items in the report.

This report will be released to the public on December 26, 2000.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

Enclosure
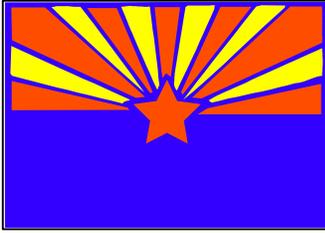
Department of Corrections
Security Operations

Services: Security Operations is one of the five subprograms under the Prison Operations program in the Department of Corrections. Its mission is to efficiently operate and maintain safe and secure prisons. Security Operations performs a wide range of services within the system:

■ Inmate management, classification, transportation, employment, safety, and discipline;
■ Essential services such as food, clothing, housing, education, and health care;
■ Security systems, communications, and facilities; and
■ Security staff training, allocation, and management.

Program Revenue:
Approximately $232 million (fiscal year 2000)

Legend: General Fund ■ Other
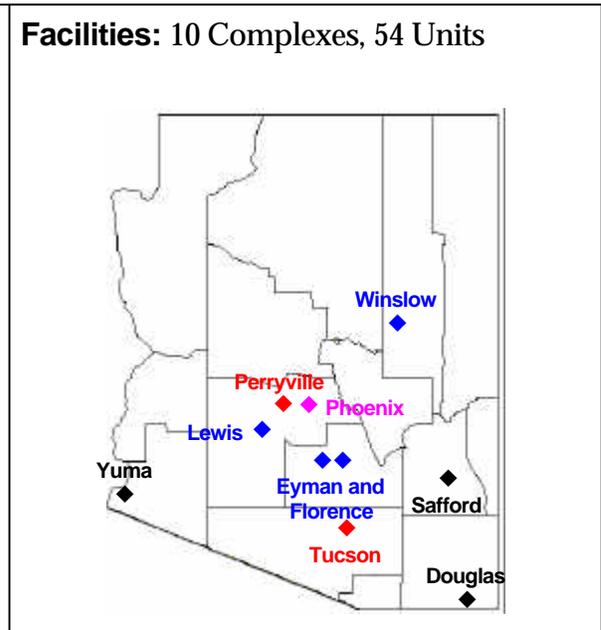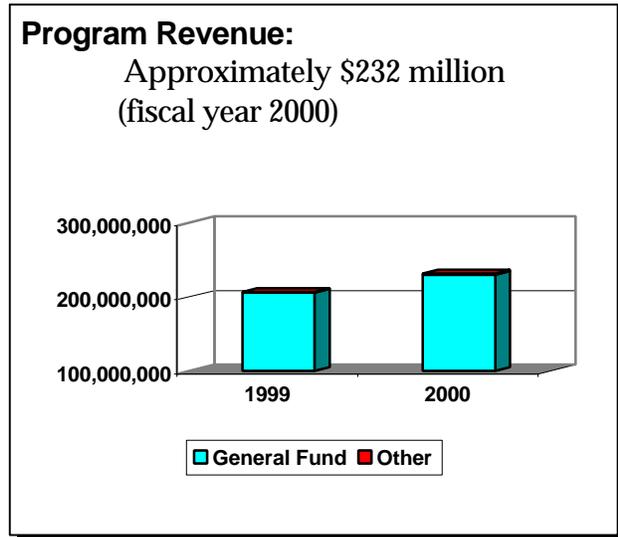
Personnel: 7,517 full-time staff
(fiscal year 2000)

■	Wardens/Deputy Wardens =	100 FTEs
■	Programs/Administrative =	142 FTEs
■	Clerical/Support =	38 FTEs
■	Technical =	37 FTEs
	Total	317 FTEs
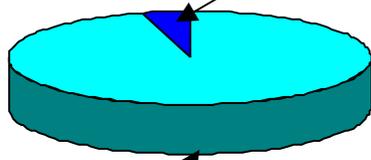
Security Staffing = 7,200 FTEs

Facilities: 10 Complexes, 54 Units

Winslow
Perryville
Phoenix
Lewis
Yuma
Eyman and Florence
Safford
Tucson
Douglas

Program Goals:
Although Security Operations is charged with providing oversight for a large number of areas, its five program goals represent a small number of security-related functions:

1. Prevent escapes from secure institutions and work crews.
2. Reduce staff assaults.
3. Reduce inmate assaults.
4. Prohibit the introduction of drugs into secure institutions.
5. Proactively minimize disturbances through staff training.

Adequacy of Goals and Performance Measures: The goals and performance measures appear to be appropriate for Security Operations' mission. For example, the performance measures regarding the number of inmate random positive drug tests, number of escapes, and number of disturbances, appear to be appropriate measures to indicate outcomes of security measures. However, some improvements could be made:

- Some security-related goals are included in other programs' goals. For example, a goal regarding effective custody and control over inmates appears in another subprogram of Prison Operations, Criminal and Administrative Investigations.

- The Department could redefine some output measures to better assess the results of improved procedures. For example, current measures on quarterly unit searches do not indicate the percentage of searches that yield contraband.

Equipment: The Department has purchased many items used by Security Operations.

Weapons—A total of 2,415 weapons, including Remington 870 shotguns, Colt AR 15 rifles, Glock 9 mm semiautomatic handguns, sniper rifles, and riot control weapons.
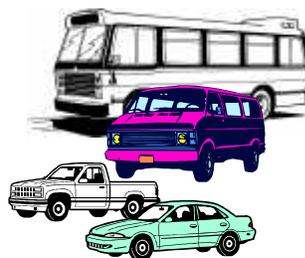
Vehicles—A total of 1,992 vehicles, including 93 buses, 468 automobiles, 547 vans, and 884 trucks. Of these, 321 are alternative-fuel vehicles.

Hand-held radios—6,166.

SUMMARY

The Office of the Auditor General has conducted a performance audit of Security Operations at the Arizona Department of Corrections, in response to a June 16, 1999, resolution of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. This performance audit was conducted under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes §§41-1279 and 41-2951 et seq. The audit is the first in a series of six audits of the Department of Corrections. The remaining audits will focus on Support Services, Human Resources, Agency Infrastructure, Private Prisons, and Arizona Correctional Industries.

The Department operates ten prison complexes statewide: Eyman and Florence (both located in Florence), Douglas, Lewis (located in Buckeye), Perryville (located in Goodyear), Phoenix, Safford, Tucson, Winslow, and Yuma. In addition, the Department contracts with two private firms to operate three prisons. Correctional Services Corporation operates prisons in Florence and Phoenix and Management Training Corporation operates one prison in Marana.

Some Prison Facilities' Designs Continue to Pose Security and Safety Problems (See pages 13 through 25)

The number of escapes has decreased.

Although the Department generally operates a secure prison system, some prison facilities have design, maintenance, or other problems that diminish inmate and staff safety. The Department has made significant improvements to its facilities since 1991, when the last Auditor General Report was issued. Most importantly, the number of escapes from the Department's prisons fell from 56 between January 1984 and May 1985 to 12 in 1990, and then to 0 in 1997 and 6 in 1998. In addition, consultants hired for this audit to assess security at six of the prisons found significant improvement in almost all areas, including security around the prisons' perimeters, newly established policies to control the

introduction of contraband, and the Department's inmate classification system. Additionally, the Department's newest complex, Arizona State Prison Complex (ASPC) Lewis, includes some excellent design features, such as smaller, more manageable recreation yards to better facilitate officers' observation of inmates.

The design of some Department facilities reduces staff and inmate safety.

However, the design of some older prison facilities negatively impacts staff and inmate safety. For example, they may not give security officers adequate lines of sight so that inmates can be adequately monitored. The Department also assigns inmates to many temporary structures such as tents, Quonset huts, and modular buildings, as well as converted hotels. Since these buildings were not designed to house inmates, proper control and surveillance are difficult. Converted hotels, which are used at ASPC-Phoenix and ASPC-Douglas, also require significant maintenance because of their age. In addition to the buildings themselves, some sally ports (entrances for vehicles) have design and operations problems that create significant potential for escapes or contraband smuggling.

Between 1985 and 2000, inmate population grew from 8,000 to 26,000.

Inmate population growth in the face of resource limitations and staffing shortages is a key factor contributing to the Department's facility-related problems. Inmate population growth from 8,000 in 1985 to over 26,000 in 2000 has required the Department's use of lower-cost temporary structures as well as its continued reliance on older, poorly designed structures. In addition, a staff vacancy rate of over 50 percent at ASPC-Lewis, the Department's newest facility, has resulted in the Department postponing the opening of two new units there as of November 2000.

Although replacement of some old facilities is not cost-effective, the Department should improve some inmate housing to ensure a safe environment for staff and inmates. First, it should continue to make efforts to fully staff the unopened units at ASPC-Lewis. By opening the new units at ASPC-Lewis, the Department could reduce its use of temporary structures such as tents to house inmates. Second, the Department should discontinue its use of tents and other temporary structures and move inmates into more secure living units. The Department should also eventually

replace those buildings where security procedures cannot be adequately followed, such as those at certain units at ASPC-Phoenix and ASPC-Tucson.

The Department Should Continue to Improve Inmate Management (See pages 27 through 36)

Although the Department has implemented many effective policies and practices designed to manage inmates, some further improvements are still needed. The Department has generally effective policies for such things as monitoring inmates' movement within units and reducing the introduction of contraband items. However, staff sometimes fail to consistently apply the Department's policies and practices, which can significantly compromise security. For example, the Department's internal audits reveal that officers have at times failed to properly conduct strip searches of inmates. Another problem is that the Department lacks systemwide policies in two areas—controlled movement and activity pass procedures. Finally, there are too few staff at some posts that involve monitoring inmates and conducting searches. As a result, officers are unable to adequately observe inmate activity or locate contraband.

Most Other Security Practices Are Sound, But Some Can Be Improved (See pages 37 through 44)

The Department has made considerable improvements.

The Department should continue to improve some of its security practices besides those that relate directly to inmate management. The Department has made considerable strides in improving these other practices, which cover such areas as inspecting facilities and controlling access to potentially dangerous tools. However, Auditor General consultants who assessed security at six prisons found that, among other concerns, the Department does not (1) routinely test the adequacy of its keys used to obtain access to prison units during an emergency, (2) regularly conduct security challenges at the prisons to identify weaknesses in security systems, or (3) follow consistent practices regarding the dispensing of prescriptions. Some prisons give inmates injectable

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

medications, which does not allow inmates to hoard or not take their medication, while other prisons dispense as much as one week's worth of medications to inmates.

Other Pertinent Information
(See pages 45 through 50)

Gang members are isolated in maximum-security units.

The audit also presents information about the Department's policies for managing prison gangs, called security threat groups, or STGs. Both nationwide and in Arizona, STGs represent a growing disruption to prison operations, because gang members often smuggle drugs and other contraband into the prisons and commit assaults against staff and other inmates. Arizona's approach, begun in 1997, isolates gang members and severely restricts their recreation, work, and inmate store privileges in order to disrupt and deter gang activity. Inmates who have been verified as gang members are incarcerated in single-bunk cells in a restrictive maximum-security unit for the remainder of their sentence. The only method inmates may use to transfer out of the restrictive unit and increase their privileges is to renounce their gang affiliation and inform the Department about their gang's activity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd)

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Concl'd)

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

(This Page Intentionally Left Blank)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Office of the Auditor General has conducted a performance audit of Security Operations at the Arizona Department of Corrections, in response to a June 16, 1999, resolution of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. This performance audit was conducted under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §41-1279 and as part of the Sunset review set forth in A.R.S. §§41-2951 et seq. The audit is the first in a series of six audits of the Department of Corrections. The remaining audits will focus on Support Services, Human Resources, Agency Infrastructure, Private Prisons, and Arizona Correctional Industries.

Security Operations Integral to Overall Department Mission

Security Operations plays a key role in carrying out the Department's mission.

The Arizona Department of Corrections' mission is to serve and protect Arizona's citizens by imprisoning offenders legally committed to the Department and by providing community-based supervision for those conditionally released. Security Operations, a subprogram of the Prison Operations program, plays a key role in carrying out the Department's mission. It has four major areas of responsibility:

- Providing oversight for inmate management, classification, transportation, employment, safety, and discipline;

- Ensuring delivery of essential services for inmates such as food, clothing, housing, mail and property, education, and health care;

- Maintaining security systems, communications, and facilities; and

- Providing training, allocation, and management of security staff.

1

Security Operations' goals are to prevent escapes from prisons and work crews, reduce the numbers of assaults on staff and inmates, prohibit the introduction of drugs into the prisons, and minimize disturbances.

Arizona Has Experienced Rapid Growth in Prison System

Inmate population has grown significantly in recent years.

The growth in Arizona's prison population is a challenge for Security Operations. According to the Department's statistics, the inmate population of the Arizona correctional system has grown by almost 76 percent since the last Auditor General audit in 1991—from almost 15,000 inmates to more than 26,000 as of July 2000. Since 1991, the Department has opened two new prison complexes, raising the number of state-operated facilities to ten, and has entered into contracts to incarcerate inmates in three privately operated prisons.

As in other states, changing criminal codes have contributed to Arizona's prison growth over the last several years. Compared to past years, inmates' incarcerations are longer because of laws such as mandatory minimum sentences, which require judges to commit inmates for longer terms, and other laws requiring inmates to serve a greater percentage of their court sentences. Such Truth in Sentencing laws in Arizona and 27 other states require individuals convicted of violent crimes to serve at least 85 percent of their sentences. In addition, the Department now houses minors adjudicated as adults. According to corrections officials, this inmate population growth is likely to continue. Ninety-five percent of state and county correctional agencies in a 1999 national survey responded that they believed their inmate population would increase over the next five years.

Inmate Classification System Important to Prisons' Safe Operation

One of the Department's most important tools for inmate management and staff safety is its classification system, which as-

signs inmates to appropriate housing units. Each prison complex contains three or more housing units differentiated by security levels ranging from 2 (lowest security) to 5 (highest secu-

Photo 1: Lower-Security Housing Unit

Lower-security housing units, such as this one in Florence South Unit, typically house inmates in dormitories and other communal settings.

rity). Higher-security housing units, such as the Special Management Unit II at the Eyman Prison Complex, are distinguished by features such as reinforced steel doors, electronic locking and monitoring devices, microwave motion detectors, and single or

Photo 2: Higher-Security Housing Unit

Higher-security housing units, such as this one at Eyman Complex, Rynning Unit, have steel doors and single or double cells for inmates.

double cells for inmates. Lower-security housing units typically house inmates in dormitories, ten-person tents, or prefabricated housing units with communal restrooms, group activity rooms, and outdoor recreation areas. Table 1 (see page 5) displays information on each facility by location, units, security levels, and number of inmates.

Upon an inmate's entrance to the prison system, a team of officers assigns inmates to their housing units based on two primary classification scores: the inmate's risk to the public, or P score, and the inmate's institutional risk to staff and other inmates, or I score. Officers score inmates based on rankings from 1 (lowest risk) to 5 (highest risk).[1] The nature of the offense the inmate committed is the principal basis for his or her public risk score. For example, officers assign an inmate who represents a significant risk to the public because of his use of a lethal weapon during a crime a high P score. Officers initially assign an inmate's institutional risk score based upon the inmate's behavior while in jail or during a previous incarceration. For instance, an inmate with the highest I score is considered dangerous and likely poses a high security risk to staff and other inmates. The Department reassesses each inmate's classification scores every six months based on the inmate's behavior while in prison.

In addition to determining where an inmate will be housed, classification scores determine the amounts and types of allowable inmate property, movement around the prison, and the extent of visitation by family or friends. For example, officers usually assign inmates with the highest public and institutional risk scores to an individual cell, ensure that at least one staff member escort them any time they leave their cells, and allow them no physical contact with friends and family. In addition, high-risk inmates are allowed only a few types of personal property, such as

---

[1] Some inmates can lower their risk score to 1 through their behavior while incarcerated. Officers may assign such inmates to security level 2 housing units.

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Table 1

Department of Corrections—Security Operations
Prison Complexes by Location, Complex, Unit, Security Level, and Inmate Counts[1]
As of June 30, 2000

Complex and Unit	Security Level	Inmate Count	Complex and Unit	Security Level	Inmate Count
Douglas			***Perryville (Goodyear, AZ) concl'd)***		
Gila	2	659	Santa Maria Reception	5	68
Maricopa	2	222	Complex Detention		33
Papago (DUI)	2	297	Total		1,564
Mohave	3	938	***Phoenix***		
Complex Detention[2]		74	Arizona Center for Women[4]	2	453
Total		2,190	Globe	2	260
Eyman (Florence, AZ)			Inmate Workers	2	40
Cook	3	929	Aspen	3	116
Meadows	3	991	Flamenco	4	96
Rynning	4	858	Baker Ward	5	27
Special Management Unit I	5	886	Alhambra Reception	5	333
Special Management Unit II	5	627	Total		1,325
Special Management Unit II Minors (juveniles)	5	15	***Safford***		
Total		4,306	Fort Grant	2	747
Florence			Graham	2	711
North	2	960	Tonto	3	381
Picacho	2	195	Total		1,839
East	3	715	***Tucson***		
South	3	388	Echo	2	454
Health Unit	5	13	Southern Arizona Correctional Release Center (females)	2	177
Central	5	922	Manzanita	3	389
Housing Unit 8	5	32	Santa Rita	3	878
Cell Block 6 (detention)	5	202	Winchester	3	545
Total		3,417	Rincon	4	641
Lewis (Buckeye, AZ)			Rincon Minor (juveniles)	4	135
Bachman	2	628	Cimarron	4	777
Barchey	3	389	Complex Detention		67
Stiner	3	731	St. Mary's Hospital	4	12
Morey	4	403	Total		4,075
Buckley, not open as of 6/2000[5]	4	800	***Winslow***		
Rast, not open as of 6/2000[5]	4	350	Apache	2	363
Total		2,151	Coronado	2	577
Perryville (Goodyear, AZ)[3]			Kaibab	4	794
San Pedro	2	362	Complex Detention		34
Lumley (females)[6]	3	0	Total		1,768
Santa Cruz (females)	3	751	***Yuma***		
Santa Maria (females)	4	348	Cocopah	2	349
Santa Maria (female juveniles)	4	2	Cheyenne	3	1,012
(continued in next column)			Dakota	4	880
			Total		2,241

[1] Inmate totals do not include 1,411 inmates housed in 5 privately operated prisons.

[2] Five of the 10 prison facilities operate detention units to house inmates pending placement in protective segregation or those who commit disciplinary infractions. The other 5 facilities without specific detention units house these inmates in cells within the units.

[3] Perryville is undergoing modification in 2000 to be used as a primarily female facility.

[4] Arizona Center for Women is expected to close in late 2000.

[5] Inmate counts for these units reflect the units' inmate capacities. Another 800 beds were unopened in other units at Lewis.

[6] As of June 30, 2000, no inmates were housed in this unit since the Department transferred the male inmates to another unit and were preparing to move female inmates into the unit.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of prison complexes' information provided by the Arizona Department of Corrections as of June 30, 2000.

hygiene items; in contrast to lower-risk inmates, who are allowed craft supplies and the ability to purchase a greater variety of food items from the inmate store.

Security Operations: Overview of Staffing and Budget

The Security Operations program is organized with reporting responsibilities at the department, regional, prison complex, and prison unit level. As shown in Figure 1 (see page 7), the Deputy Director for Prison Operations reports directly to the Department Director. The Deputy Director supervises two regional operations directors who each oversee five prison complex wardens in the Southern and Northern regions of Arizona.

Each complex warden functions as a prison's chief executive officer, and a deputy warden, assisted by an associate deputy warden, is responsible for administering each prison unit. Further, each unit is assigned a number of security staff: captain (chief of security), lieutenants, sergeants, and correctional officers. As of August 4, 2000, Security Operations had a total of 7,517 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, including 7,200 security staffing positions.

Department equipment includes vehicles, firearms, hand-held radios, and handcuffs.

The Department also manages an extensive inventory of vehicles and security equipment. It maintains a fleet of over 1,990 vehicles, including 93 buses for group transport and 321 alternative-fuel vehicles. Although correctional officers in the units do not carry any weapons other than pepper spray, the Department maintains a firearm inventory of 2,415 weapons, including shotguns, rifles, handguns, and riot control gas guns. These weapons are used for perimeter patrol, main gate security, transportation, and, when necessary, to quell disturbances. Other security devices carried by correctional officers include hand-held radios and handcuffs.

Figure 1

**Arizona Department of Corrections—Security Operations
Chain of Command**

```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Department     │
                    │  Director       │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Deputy Director │
                    │ Prison Operations│
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
┌──────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Southern Regional│  │ Regional        │  │ Northern Regional│
│ Operations Director│ Operations Director│ Operations Director│
│ (SROD)           │  └────────┬────────┘  │ (NROD)           │
│ Oversees 5 prison│           │           │ Oversees 5 prison│
│ complexes        │  ┌─────────────────┐  │ complexes        │
│                  │  │ For Each Complex│  │                  │
│  ■ Douglas       │  │ Complex         │  │  ■ Eyman         │
│  ■ Lewis         │  │ Warden          │  │  ■ Florence      │
│  ■ Safford       │  └────────┬────────┘  │  ■ Perryville    │
│  ■ Tucson        │           │           │  ■ Phoenix       │
│  ■ Yuma          │           │           │  ■ Winslow       │
└──────────────────┘           │           └──────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ For Each Unit   │
                    │ within          │
                    │ Each Complex    │
                    │                 │
                    │ Deputy          │
                    │ Warden          │
                    │                 │
                    │ Associate       │
                    │ Deputy          │
                    │ Warden[1]       │
                    │                 │
                    │ Chief of Security│
                    │ (Captain)       │
                    │                 │
                    │ Lieutenants     │
                    │                 │
                    │ Sergeants       │
                    │                 │
                    │ Officers        │
                    └─────────────────┘
```

---

[1]   Some units, such as Globe and Picacho, do not have an Associate Deputy Warden.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of Department of Corrections organization charts.

For fiscal year 2000, as illustrated in Table 2 (see page 9), Security Operations received approximately $230 million in State General Fund appropriations. Nearly all the program's funding is derived from these appropriations. Most of the program's expenditures are for personnel costs.

Substantial Improvements Since Previous Audits

The Auditor General's Office reviewed security issues within the Department in 1985 and 1991. Both audits identified numerous serious problems, but the current audit found significant improvement.

- **1985 report (Auditor General Report No. 85-12)**—This audit reported that the Department did not provide adequate security at some of the prisons. For example, some prisons, such as Florence, Tucson, and Perryville, lacked adequate perimeter security such as razor wire, inner fences secured in cement, and adequate electronic detection systems. These security inadequacies created opportunities for escapes, with over 50 inmates escaping through the perimeters of the various prisons during a 16-month period. Further, deficiencies within the facilities created unnecessary risks for inmates and staff. For example, at the ASPC-Florence Central Unit, the locking mechanism in Cellblock 2 was broken, so that to open one cell door on a tier, staff had to open all 26 cells at once.

  The audit also found that the Department did not adequately control contraband. Visits between inmates and family members were inadequately monitored by staff, inmates' living areas were not frequently searched, and medical and pharmaceutical supplies were not adequately monitored. Finally, the audit found that the Department's inmate classification process was subjective and often classified inmates at inappropriately low security levels.

Table 2

**Arizona Department of Corrections—
Security Operations
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Other Financing Uses
Years Ended or Ending June 30, 1999, 2000, and 2001
(Unaudited)**

	1999 (Actual)	2000 (Actual)	2001 (Estimated)
Revenues:			
Appropriations:			
State General Fund	$206,082,000	$230,341,300 [1]	$260,783,800 [3]
Penitentiary Land Fund [2]	1,000,000	1,375,000	1,375,000
State Charitable, Penal, and Reformaties Land Earnings Fund			270,000
Sales and charges for goods and services	10,204	13,153	13,200
Fines and forfeits	1,588	911	1,000
Other	36,343	34,171	35,000
Total revenues	207,130,135	231,764,535	262,478,000
Expenditures:			
Personal services	168,895,889	191,080,110 [1]	180,376,700 [3]
Employee related	31,747,140	34,469,724	53,316,000 [3]
Professional and outside services [2]	2,254,350	1,213,352	3,058,700 [3]
Travel, in-state	30,515	15,963	15,600
Travel, out-of-state	1,591		55,000
Aid to individuals			97,100
Other operating	3,998,597	4,447,019	24,008,300 [3]
Buildings and equipment	303,348	94,541	1,501,400 [3]
Total expenditures	207,231,430	231,320,709	262,428,800
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures	(101,295)	443,826	49,200
Other financing sources (uses):			
Net operating transfers in	143,720	2,650	
Reversions to the Penitentiary Land Fund [2]	(127)	(408,931)	
Remittances to the State General Fund	(47,189)	(37,905)	(38,000)
Total other financing sources (uses)	96,404	(444,186)	(38,000)
Excess of revenues and other sources over expenditures and other uses	$ (4,891)	$ (360)	$ 11,200

---

[1] State General Fund appropriations increased significantly in 2000. Approximately $14.3 million of that increase was to implement a new correctional officer pay plan.

[2] Monies from fees on lands granted to the State of Arizona and interest earned on the investment of the permanent Penitentiary Land Fund are appropriated to the Department. The Department allocated these monies to the Security Operations Program to reimburse county jails for the time they hold prisoners. The expenditures are reported as professional and outside services in the Statement and fluctuate yearly based on the time counties hold prisoners. Any unexpended monies at year-end are subject to Legislative authorization in future years; consequently, the unexpended monies are presented as a reversion to the Penitentiary Land Fund. The 2000 reversion does not account for any payments to counties for services performed prior to June 30, 2000, but not yet billed. Those costs will ultimately reduce the reversion; however, the amount owed was not known at the time of this report.

[3] The 2001 State General Fund appropriations and certain noted expenditure line items increased significantly due to the Department realigning costs and their related funding source. In addition, overtime pay expenditures are excluded from personal services because they are budgeted in another program.

Source: The Arizona Financial Information System (AFIS) *Accounting Event Extract File* for the years ended June 30, 1999 and 2000. The Department of Corrections provided estimates for the year ended June 30, 2001.

■ **1991 report (Auditor General Report No. 91-4)**—This audit found that although the Department had taken significant steps to improve security at the prisons, deficiencies remained. For example, the Department increased the use of razor wire on perimeter fences and replaced or refurbished broken locking systems at inmate housing units. However, the audit also found that the Department's procedures governing tool control were still deficient. For example, consultants hired by the Auditor General observed unsecured hacksaws, cutting tools, and portable welding equipment. They also determined that the Department needed to revise policies and procedures for inmate counts, post orders, and controls for keys and tool access. Additionally, the consultants found that the Department still housed inmates in Quonset huts and other structures not designed to provide adequate observation of inmates.

Security has been significantly improved.

This audit found that the Department has substantially improved security in almost all areas. Most importantly, the number of escapes from the Department's prisons fell from 56 between January 1984 and May 1985 to 12 in 1990, and then to 0 in 1997 and 6 in 1998. In 1998, only four states had fewer escapes per inmates incarcerated. In addition, consultants hired for this audit to assess security at six of the prisons found significant improvement in virtually all areas. They found that the Department *". . . is making highly commendable and largely effective efforts to provide a safe and secure environment."* For example,

■ **Perimeter security**—The consultants determined that the Department used appropriate measures to secure its perimeters, including adequate fences and sophisticated electronic detection systems.

■ **Controls against contraband**—The consultants believed that newly established policies and procedures to limit inmate property will help to significantly deter the introduction of contraband.

■ **Inmate classification**—The consultants saw no evidence, such as a high number of escapes and assaults, that the Department classifies inmates at inappropriate security levels.

Scope and Methodology

This audit focused on the Department's ability to provide adequate security to staff and inmates and to effectively manage inmates. The audit was conducted at the Department's central office and the ten prisons operated by the Department. The three private prisons were not included in the audit because they will be the focus of a future audit.

The primary method auditors used to assess security features and practices was a review by two security consultants at six prison complexes. One consultant is an attorney with over 20 years of experience examining prison systems and serving as a special master overseeing several court orders that resulted from inmate lawsuits. The second consultant is a former corrections administrator with 22 years of experience managing and operating a large, high-security prison that incarcerated over 2,200 high-security inmates. In addition, he has also examined several other prison systems to assess their security. The consultants conducted an extensive review of security practices and technology at selected units in the Douglas, Eyman, Florence, Lewis, Phoenix, and Tucson complexes.[1] The consultants assessed staffing patterns, security procedures, and adequacy of security hardware such as lighting, unit layout, and fencing. The consultants reported that "*. . . given the drawbacks relating to the poor design of several older prisons and the very difficult staffing issues the Department faces, wardens and deputy wardens are achieving more than they could reasonably be expected to . . .*" The consultants' detailed report is available upon request or may be accessed on the Auditor General's Web site:

<u>www.auditorgen.state.az.us.</u>

---

[1] Prison complexes were selected, in consultation with the Department, based on several characteristics to ensure that all types of complexes were reviewed. Characteristics considered included custody and security levels, inmate capacity, proximity to an urban area, staff vacancy rates, age of facilities, and other unique attributes. Auditors selected the complexes to provide comparisons of factors that could influence the nature of information and incident management system reports and overall prison security. For example, auditors selected complexes both near and outside metropolitan areas. Additionally, auditors selected old and new complexes.

In addition, a variety of other methods was used to conduct the audit and document evidence, including:

- Reviews of Department reports including internal audits, intelligence documents, significant incident reports, escape reports, and prison security posting assignments. Auditors also reviewed 43 reports submitted by wardens and deputy wardens upon their initial assessments of unit conditions.

- Interviews with staff of other states' departments of corrections relating to their security practices and inmate management.[1] Auditors also interviewed experts from associations such as the American Correctional Association and the National Institute of Corrections in the Department of Justice to identify best practices in prison security.

The audit includes findings and recommendations in the following areas:

- Improvements needed in prison facilities,

- Improvements needed in inmate management policies and practices, and

- Improvements in other types of security practices.

In addition to recommendations for these areas, the audit also provides Other Pertinent Information (see pages 45 through 50) concerning the Department's practices managing Security Threat Groups (prison gangs).

This audit was conducted in accordance with government auditing standards.

The Auditor General and staff express appreciation to the Director of the Department of Corrections and Corrections staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout the audit.

---

[1]   The seven states contacted were Colorado, Florida, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, and Washington. They were selected based on discussions with the Department, the American Correctional Association, and the National Institute of Corrections as demonstrating good inmate management practices.

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

FINDING I

SOME PRISON FACILITIES' DESIGNS CONTINUE TO POSE SECURITY AND SAFETY PROBLEMS

Although the Department generally operates a secure prison system, some prison facilities have design, maintenance, or other problems that diminish inmate and staff safety. The Department has enhanced its facilities through new construction and improvements to existing prisons. However, the Department must still rely on tents, converted hotels, and other facilities that are inadequate for the correctional purpose they serve. The Department has had to use such facilities for several reasons—the steep growth in inmate population, staffing shortages that make it impossible to use certain facilities that require more staff, and limited resources for new construction. Although it would not be cost-effective to replace some of these facilities, several steps can be taken to improve some inmate housing, thereby providing a safer environment for staff and inmates.

The Department Operates a Secure Prison System

Compared to conditions a few years ago, the Department has greatly improved facility security. One reason is that the Department has enhanced its facilities by constructing new prisons and improving existing facilities. For example, ASPC-Lewis, the newest of the Department's ten complexes, has excellent design and security features. In addition, the Department has made maintenance and design upgrades to existing facilities that also enhance safety and security. Since the Auditor General's previous audits, the escape and assault rates in the State's correctional facilities have declined substantially.

New construction designed for optimum security—The Department has incorporated some excellent design and security features at its newest complex in the Arizona prison system,

ASPC-Lewis in Buckeye. The prison consists of 6 units (three level 4, two level 3, and one level 2) and has a capacity of 4,150

Photo 3: Lewis Complex, Morey Unit

View of Lewis Complex, Morey Unit recreation yard from observation tower.

inmates. The Department ensured that all 6 units included smaller, more manageable yards that better facilitate officers' observation and supervision of inmates and decrease their response time in the event of a disturbance. For example, the level 4 Morey Unit's control center overlooks the recreation yard. In addition, the unit has a tall observation tower and a fenced runway separating the yard's North and South sections. According to Auditor General consultants, these features allow good observation of the entire yard and permit staff to move rapidly through the complex. Moreover, the control centers have computer monitors with "touch-screen" technology, which allows the officer assigned to the post to quickly open and close doors, and to monitor sally ports, perimeter fences, doors, and other locations, and control water and lights in each cell from a central location.[1]

Similarly, at ASPC-Eyman, the control centers in Special Management Unit II (SMU II), a super-maximum security unit which opened in 1996, are designed with security features that allow a

---

[1] A sally port is a secured entrance/exit area, between two doors or gates, in which pedestrians or vehicles can be detained and searched before they enter or leave a facility.

single officer to monitor 60 inmates in cells. Each control center is centrally located, and provides officers with excellent visibility into the three 6- to 10-cell pods it monitors. Officers can control doors and utilities and monitor sound from within the control center. Auditor General consultants reported that these control centers could serve as a model for maximum-security architecture.

Improvements to existing facilities—The Department has made maintenance and design upgrades to existing facilities that enhance safety and security. At ASPC-Douglas, cubicle walls in the Mohave Unit living areas have been reduced in height to enhance security, visibility, and staff safety. Additionally, the expansion and renovation of the prison ward at Tucson's St. Mary's Hospital added 14 beds and centralized the new control center to provide excellent security and control of inmates at every classification level requiring inpatient hospital care. Furthermore, the Department has moved a perimeter fence at Winslow to fully contain an administration building that was previously part of the perimeter. An inmate had escaped by climbing onto the building and crossing its roof.

The Department has made many upgrades to existing facilities.

Escape and assault rates have declined—Escape rates have continued to decline since the mid-1980's, when an Auditor General's performance audit report on institutional security and staffing (Report No. 85-12) pointed out major security problems. The number of escapes from the Department's prisons fell from 56 between January 1984 and May 1985 to 12 in 1990, and then to 0 in 1997 and 6 in 1998. In 1998, only four states had fewer escapes per inmates incarcerated. Similarly, assault rates have declined from 49.1 per 1,000 inmates in 1995-97 to 30.6 in 1998-99. In addition, the consultants reviewing Department operations for the current audit found that the Department had substantially improved security in almost all areas.

Department Continues to Operate Inadequate Facilities

Despite these improvements, some Department facilities are inadequate for the correctional purpose they serve. The inadequacies take several forms. Some inmate living units are configured in ways that restrict surveillance and diminish staff and inmate safety. In other cases, the Department houses many inmates in tents, Quonset huts, and other buildings that make proper inmate surveillance and control nearly impossible. Moreover, some units that were not originally designed as adult prisons, including converted hotels, have unique maintenance and security problems. In addition to the buildings themselves, some sally ports (prison entrances) have design and operations problems that create potential security breaches.

Some structures have unsafe design—Several inmate living units are configured in ways that restrict surveillance and diminish staff and inmate safety. For example:

Some dormitories have unsafe design.

- ■ **H-shaped dormitories with high partitions**—According to Auditor General consultants, dormitories at ASPC-Florence's South Unit remain among the Department's most dangerous housing units due to their design. The South Unit, a level 3, medium-security prison, was singled out in previous Auditor General reports in 1985 and 1991 for poor design features. Each dormitory consists of four wings connected by a single corridor, forming the shape of an H. In some of the dormitories, inmates' beds are separated by partitions 43 and 1/2 inches high, which impair officers' visibility. The Department has lowered similar partitions at some units but has not lowered them in this unit. Further, one officer is assigned to monitor four wings in each dormitory building. According to Auditor General consultants, the "H"-shaped building leaves the housing unit officer dangerously isolated during rounds and inmate counts. Additionally, while outside doors electronically lock, the dormitories' inside doors have only key locks that require manual operation. Although Department officials have attempted to mitigate the unit's problems by assigning less troublesome inmates to these dormitories, Auditor General consultants described South Unit dormitories as among the most dangerous they have ever seen. Department officials recently instructed Regional Operations

Directors to submit a plan for lowering the remaining tall partitions in all units to 36 inches.

Photo 4: Unsafe Dormitories

Inmate beds separated by high partitions at Florence Complex, South Unit.

■ **Mental health units**—Chronically mentally ill inmates at ASPC-Phoenix's Flamenco Unit are housed in two- to six-person rooms along dark hallways that do not lend themselves to direct, continuous surveillance. Staff must make rounds and conduct inmate counts virtually without the backup of officers who can see or hear them. According to Auditor General consultants, this is particularly dangerous with these less stable inmates. Similarly, inmates in the Aspen Unit at ASPC-Phoenix, who because of cognitive or emotional conditions are unable to function in the general prison population, live in dormitories whose layout does not permit staff to observe all inmates from a single location.

■ **Control centers with inadequate sight lines**—Several units' control centers have restricted lines of sight that create blind spots for control room officers. For example, control rooms at the ASPC-Tucson Santa Rita Unit and the Lumley, San Pedro, Santa Maria, and Santa Cruz units at ASPC-Perryville are built so one tier of cells is above the control center level and the other cells are below the control center level. However, according to Auditor General consultants, this design restricts backup surveillance for housing unit officers and potentially allows inmates to engage in prohibited behavior without detection. Although Department officials note that cameras have

17

been installed to assist control room officers in monitoring these blind spots, the basic design problem remains. Furthermore, these control rooms have no sally ports or double doors, increasing the risk that someone could make a forced entry when the single door is opened.

Temporary structures and tents in long-term use—In addition to permanent structures that do not permit adequate surveillance, the Department uses numerous tents, Quonset huts, and other prefabricated buildings that make proper inmate surveillance and control nearly impossible. Approximately 1,000 inmates statewide live in approximately 100 ten-bed canvas tents, located at 5 of the 10 prison complexes. In addition, up to 732 inmates are housed in prefabricated 9- to 11-bed Quonset huts at the East and North Units at ASPC-Florence. Other inmates live in a variety of portable buildings, including several that had been used on the Alaska pipeline.

Photo 5: Temporary Structure

Portable building, formerly used to house Alaska pipeline construction workers, now used to house inmates at Tucson Complex, Echo Unit.

However, none of these temporary structures permit officers to have adequate surveillance and inmate control. Correctional officers can look in only one structure at a time, so most inmates are not under direct observation. Moreover, inmates cannot be locked into their rooms during disturbances because toilets and showers are in separate buildings. In two separate 1999 incidents, female inmates at ASPC-Perryville refused orders to "lock down" (return to and stay in their tents). Since tents have canvas

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

walls and a wooden door, staff had difficulty enforcing the orders.

Photo 6: Tents Used for Housing Inmates

Tents at Tucson Complex, Echo Unit. Each tent houses 10 inmates.

Old hotels require significant maintenance—Units that were not originally designed as adult prisons, including converted hotels, have unique maintenance and security problems. For instance, the Arizona Center for Women at ASPC-Phoenix (ACW) opened in 1954 as the Phoenix International Hotel/Resort.[1] Likewise, the ASPC Douglas Papago Unit was also converted from 1950's-era hotels. These prisons are located on busy city streets, and surrounded by a wall and fencing. Their proximity to civilian traffic increases opportunities for contraband to be thrown over the walls. These old structures were not designed as secure housing for the inmate population and require significant maintenance, such as room renovations, flood abatement, and upgrades to the fire alarm system, fence and razor wire, and visitation area.

Perimeter sally ports potentially vulnerable—In addition to building design issues, sally port design creates potential security breaches at two facilities. Vehicle sally ports, through which vehicles enter a unit or complex, should be tightly controlled because they can become a focal point for escapes and the introduction of contraband. However, the main vehicle sally port

---

[1] ACW is scheduled to close later this year, when its female population is moved to ASPC-Perryville.

at ASPC-Tucson can hold up to four vehicles, which increases the opportunity for an escaping inmate to move from a vehicle that has not been searched to one that has been searched. Additionally, one officer reported that because of traffic volume and the size of some trucks, not every entering vehicle is thoroughly searched, which enhances the likelihood of contraband being smuggled into the prison. Traffic volume is particularly high at this sally port because the warehouse and motor pool are located inside the complex perimeter. Later prison designs, such as ASPC-Lewis, have wisely placed warehouses and motor pool buildings outside the perimeter fences in order to reduce vehicle traffic into the prisons.

The prison at Fort Grant, part of the Safford complex, has a different type of sally port design problem. Numerous vehicles also enter the Fort Grant Unit at ASPC-Safford. However, the size of some trucks requires that both sally port gates be simultaneously open to allow entry to and egress from the unit.

Several Factors Force the Department to Operate Deficient Prisons

Inmate population growth, staffing shortages, and limited resources for new construction all contribute to the Department's facility-related problems. Inmate population growth has outstripped the State's construction of permanent facilities making it necessary to add temporary structures, such as tents, to the Department's housing inventory. Additionally, staff shortages have delayed the opening of new units that would reduce the use of temporary beds. Furthermore, it would not be cost-effective for the Department to correct all facility deficiencies.

Arizona's inmate population has grown by almost 76% since 1991.

Prison growth contributes to the Department's use of temporary structures—Rapid prison growth has required the Department to use temporary structures and continue to use unsatisfactory permanent structures. Between 1985 and 1991, Arizona's inmate population grew by 66 percent, and since 1991, the population has grown almost 76 percent. This growth, from about 8,000 inmates in 1985 to over 26,000 inmates in 2000, has not permitted the Department to permanently remove unsatisfactory beds from service. In 1991, the Auditor General reported

that the Department had discontinued the use of tents (Auditor General Report No. 91-4), but growth has made it necessary to reintroduce them. Inmate population growth has also contributed to the use of other temporary structures, double occupancy in detention cells and mental health units, and the continued use of older, poorly designed facilities.

Limited resources have resulted in temporary beds for inmates— Tents and other temporary structures can be added to the system in less time and at a fraction of permanent prison construction cost. For instance, in 1998, the Department added 800 level 4 double-bunk cell beds and 800 level 3 dormitory beds to its inventory at a total cost of approximately $60.7 million. The average cost for each of these permanent beds was $37,958. That same year, 400 tent beds were constructed at ASPC-Florence for $2,450,000. The cost per bed was $6,125. Although tents have many deficiencies, they have provided an economical, stopgap solution to a quickly expanding prison population. Furthermore, while a new prison may take two years or more to construct, tents and modular buildings can be erected to meet immediate needs.

Staffing shortages prevent opening some permanent beds— Like other law enforcement and correctional agencies, the Department experiences difficulty recruiting and retaining security staff. For example, during fiscal year 2000, the loss rate for correctional officers averaged about 25 percent. One effect has been that some facilities that would provide better security have been unable to open. The Lewis complex's 51.5 percent staff vacancy rate has prevented the Department from activating two units.[1] In November 2000, there were two unoccupied units at ASPC-Lewis with 1,150 total beds, and unopened beds in other units brought the total to 1,550 beds not opened due to staff vacancies.

Chronic staffing shortages exacerbate the effects of using some of the Department's least appropriate facilities. For example, one high-security unit at ASPC-Florence consistently operates with fewer staff than it needs at the most restricted level, according to

---

[1] The Department has high vacancy rates throughout the system, although none so high as ASPC-Lewis. A forthcoming audit of the Department's Human Resources program, to be issued in 2001, will examine this matter in more detail.

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

the Department's own policy. These inadequate staffing levels create numerous security issues. Further, although additional officers could increase surveillance of inmates in tents and other units that have limited supervision, it would be cost-prohibitive to hire the number of officers needed for proper supervision. For tents, Quonset huts, and some dormitories, direct surveillance would require at least one officer for each structure—a far too expensive approach. The Department has acknowledged these deficiencies and generally assigns its lowest custody inmates to these inadequate structures.

Replacement of some facilities is not cost-effective—Construction of new, modern facilities to correct all the facility-related deficiencies in Department prisons would not be cost-effective. While construction of new facilities would eliminate some problems, it is doubtful that it would improve the success or security of some institutions. For example, although the converted hotel rooms at ASPC-Douglas Papago Unit are unsatisfactory for several reasons, there have been no escapes and few significant incidents in the past year. According to Auditor General consultants, replacing the Papago Unit with a new prison would cost tens of millions of dollars, but, considering its effectiveness, public, staff, and inmate safety could not improve significantly. Furthermore, according to Auditor General consultants, Department managers maintain and make productive use of facilities that would be unusable in most states' correctional systems. For example, the consultants stated that correctional officers are unable to provide ongoing surveillance of inmates housed in the Quonset huts at the East Unit at ASPC-Florence. However, when the consultants toured them, the Quonset huts were well-maintained, clean, and appeared to be at least marginally adequate for inmates with low institutional risk scores.

Good management allows the use of some facilities that would be unusable in other states' correctional systems.

Department Facilities Can Be Improved

Although replacement of some old facilities is not cost-effective, the Department should improve some inmate housing to adequately provide a safer environment for staff and inmates. First, it should continue its efforts to add new beds to its inventory by opening the remaining units at ASPC-Lewis as soon as it has the

staff to do so. Additionally, the Department should eliminate the use of tents. Finally, it should develop plans to replace and modify buildings and structures where appropriate and feasible.

The Department should continue its efforts to open all units at ASPC-Lewis—The Department should continue its efforts to add new beds to its inventory by opening the remaining units at ASPC-Lewis as soon as it has the staff to do so. The Department is making efforts, such as providing wage stipends and van pools, to staff units at ASPC-Lewis, where approximately 1,550 beds remain vacant.

The Department should eliminate the use of tents—As permanent beds become available, the Department should move inmates living in tents into secure living units. The Department has taken steps toward this end. Recently, the Department reduced its tent bed inventory at Perryville by moving female inmates to permanent structures formerly occupied by male inmates. However, 400 tent beds at ASPC-Florence were designated by the Legislature in 1995 as permanent beds. While this designation allows the Department to obtain authorization for staff to oversee inmates in these tents, tent beds should not be included in the Department's permanent bed inventory, and the Department should develop a plan to eliminate all tent beds.

Eventually, the Department should replace and modify buildings and structures that hamper security—The Department should develop plans to eventually replace and modify some buildings and other facilities.

- The Department should develop a plan to replace the mental health units in the Flamenco and Aspen Units at ASPC-Phoenix that have design problems that inhibit direct inmate surveillance.

- The Department should take immediate steps to lower Florence's South Unit dormitory partitions to enhance visibility. If temporary housing was available to inmates housed in these dormitories, the cinderblock partitions could be lowered at a minimal cost with inmate labor. Additionally, according to Auditor General consultants, one correctional officer should be added to each dormitory building. Absent the

*The Department should lower the partitions in some dormitories.*

ability to provide additional staffing, these dormitories should be replaced.

■ While less critical, the Department should develop a plan for the eventual replacement of its Quonset huts. Likewise, the Department should begin planning for the future replacement of the modular housing units at ASPC-Tucson's Echo Unit. Although these structures are marginally adequate for their current populations, they pose security risks and maintenance requirements that argue for their replacement.

Additionally, the Department should identify options to reconfigure vehicle sally ports at ASPC-Safford and ASPC-Tucson and explore options to improve sight lines for control rooms at ASPC-Tucson and ASPC-Perryville. According to Auditor General consultants, installing a barrier to restrict vehicles from exiting the sally port until they are properly inspected by officers would increase security, as would permitting only one vehicle at a time to enter the sally port. Additionally, they recommend relocating the complex warehouse outside the vehicle entrance so that the high amount of vehicle traffic would not need to enter the sally port. Finally, the Department should explore methods to improve the control room sight lines at ASPC-Tucson and ASPC-Perryville. For example, the Department could consider modifications to the control rooms to allow more unobstructed inmate monitoring.

Recommendations

The Department should:

1. Open the remaining units at ASPC-Lewis as soon as staff is available to do so.

2. Cease using tents at all complexes as soon as the inmate population can be transferred to other housing units. Because some of the tents have been designated as part of the Department's permanent bed inventory, the Department should develop a plan (which would require legislative approval) to eliminate them.

3. Develop plans for closing the Alhambra/Flamenco and Aspen Units at ASPC-Phoenix and replace those units.

4. Take immediate steps to lower the partitions in Florence's South Unit dormitories to enhance visibility.

5. Add one correctional officer to each ASPC-Florence South Unit dormitory building. Absent the ability to provide additional staffing, these dormitories should be replaced.

6. Develop a plan for the future replacement of Quonset huts and modular housing units.

7. Relocate the ASPC-Tucson warehouse outside the vehicle entrance and allow only one vehicle at a time to enter the sally port, and correct the sally port design problem at ASPC-Safford's Fort Grant unit that currently requires both gates to be open simultaneously for trucks to enter or exit the unit.

8. Explore options to modify sight lines at control rooms at ASPC-Tucson and ASPC-Perryville to enhance inmate surveillance.

(This Page Intentionally Left Blank)

FINDING II

THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE INMATE MANAGEMENT

The Department should continue to improve some practices it uses to manage inmates. Effective inmate management policies and practices allow staff to monitor inmates' location and control their behavior, and are essential for preventing incidents involving assaults, contraband, and escape. The Department has already developed many effective policies and procedures designed to effectively manage inmates. However, improvements can be made in three areas: following existing practices more consistently and thoroughly, developing management policies for controlled movement of inmates and for activity passes, and assigning an appropriate number of staff to some critical areas within prison units.

The Department Has Implemented Many Effective Inmate Management Policies and Practices

Arizona's Department of Corrections, similar to other departments across the country, has implemented a variety of policies and practices designed to effectively manage inmates. Some policies address how inmates are to be monitored and tracked, while others are intended to reduce the introduction of contraband. Moreover, the Department has developed specialized inmate housing units to promote safety.

Some practices monitor and track inmates—The Department has developed several policies and practices that monitor inmates' location and movement:

- ■ **Counts**—Required by Department policy, correctional officers conduct several counts of inmates throughout each day

to ensure that inmates are at an allowable location. During a count, inmate movement throughout the unit is usually not permitted and, with the exception of work crew inmates, all other inmates remain in their housing unit until the count is determined to be correct.

■ **Activity passes and surveillance**—Correctional officers track lower-custody inmates' locations by issuing inmates activity passes, scheduling inmate activities on a master pass form, and by using visual and radio surveillance. For example, officers use visual surveillance to monitor inmates as they move from one location to another. Additionally, officers issue inmates a color-coded activity pass specifying a location they are allowed to visit, such as the inmate store. Further, officers use radio communication to notify other officers that an inmate is moving to, or has arrived at, a location within the unit. Moreover, inmates in the highest custody levels must be escorted by at least one correctional officer when moving to areas within a unit.

■ **New program to monitor inmates**—The Department is piloting its Inmate Program Plan at five prison units. This new program is designed to monitor inmate movement with electronic bracelets worn by inmates at the Cook Unit at ASPC-Eyman. In addition, this program schedules each inmate's day according to four time-blocks (morning, afternoon, evening, and night), and tracks his or her location throughout the day. According to Department management, in addition to tracking inmate movement, the program is intended to provide each inmate with appropriate programs, such as substance abuse and religious programs, and education programs, such as literacy classes. The program also assigns each inmate to work programs that correspond to his or her vocational skills.

■ **Controlled movement**—Recently, the Department further restricted inmate movement in most of its medium-security (level three and four) units by implementing "controlled movement" procedures. Instead of allowing all inmates living in a dormitory or cellblock to disperse on their own to attend activities and programs, controlled movement procedures require inmates to move in small groups to and from activities such as meals, recreation, and religious ser-

vices during specified intervals. According to Department management, controlled movement helps ensure the safety of staff as well as inmates because it limits the number of inmates in one place. In addition, according to one Regional Operations Director, if an assault is committed, officers often find it easier to determine an assailant's identity because fewer inmates are at a particular location.

Some practices intended to prevent introduction of contraband—The Department has implemented several policies and practices designed to prevent inmates from introducing contraband into the prisons:

- **Rules for visits with family and friends**—The Department's policies and procedures regarding inmates' visits with family and friends in person and on the telephone are intended to reduce the introduction of contraband. Inmates are allowed to receive visits from no more than ten persons who must first be approved by Department staff through a screening process. Inmates in maximum-security units are not allowed to have any physical contact with their visitors and are limited to communicating with them through a glass barrier, while many lower-custody inmates may sit at a table with their visitors and kiss them at the beginning and end of the visit. In addition, the Department monitors inmates' telephone calls with recording equipment to identify potential security risks, such as discussions of escape plans or drug smuggling.

- **Searches of inmates and their living areas**—The Department has developed policies and procedures for searching inmates and their living areas. According to Department policy, searches are intended to reduce incidents involving contraband, including drugs and weapons. For example, officers conduct strip-searches of inmates before they return to the prison from attending a work crew and after visiting with a family member or friend. Additionally, correctional officers conduct quarterly searches of all inmates' living areas.

- **New policy to reduce property**—In an attempt to further reduce contraband items at the prisons, the Department enacted Department Order 909 in October 1999. This policy re-

stricts the property inmates are allowed to possess. It pro-hibits inmates from receiving incoming packages through the mail. In addition, it requires inmates to purchase all property, such as radios and televisions, through the inmate store. In the past, inmates received contraband through packages sent by mail.

Specialized units developed to promote safety—To promote safety, the Department has segregated certain groups of in-mates from the general population and houses them together to prevent security problems such as assaults. For example, the Department has designated four prison units (Cook, Meadows, Rynning, and South Units at ASPC-Eyman and Florence) to house only sex offenders to protect them from general popula-tion inmates who often prey on these inmates. Moreover, the Department has placed inmates requiring protection from other inmates into its protective segregation program. In addition, the Department developed a new policy to collect and document information on Security Threat Groups (prison gangs) that of-ten disrupt the prisons' orderly operations. If the Department collects enough intelligence information to demonstrate that an inmate belongs to a Security Threat Group, the inmate is segre-gated from the general population and moved to the restrictive maximum-security Special Management Unit II at ASPC-Eyman. For additional information relating to the Department's Security Threat Group policies, see Other Pertinent Informa-tion, pages 45 through 50.

The Department houses certain types of inmates together.

Finally, the Department is in the process of transferring all fe-male inmates to ASPC-Perryville. Prior to this move, minimum- and medium-security-level female inmates were housed at the Manzanita Unit and the Southern Arizona Correctional Release Center at ASPC-Tucson and the Arizona Center for Women at ASPC-Phoenix, while female inmates of every security level were housed at the Santa Maria Unit at ASPC-Perryville. The decision to move these inmates to ASPC-Perryville is intended to improve safety and security by reducing inmate movement between prison complexes.

Analysis of Prison Incidents Points to Need for Continuous Improvement

Although the Department has implemented many policies and practices to effectively manage inmates, many incidents involving assaults, contraband, and disturbances occur. The Department documents prison incidents through a variety of reports, depending on an incident's severity and the level of response required to manage it. For example, officers compile an information report when they find contraband while searching an inmate's cell or locate a security device, such as a hand-held radio, that is not working properly. They document more serious incidents, such as fights, in an incident management system report. These reports show that while the majority of the incidents involve routine matters, such as broken light fixtures, other incidents are more serious and involve assaults, disturbances, and contraband:

- **Assaults and disturbances**—Inmates often commit assaults and occasionally create disturbances that can cause significant security problems. For example, monthly reports the Department compiled reveal that inmates caused 7 major and 30 minor disturbances from July through December 1999.[1] Disturbances create security problems and are costly to the Department. For example, during a recent major disturbance at the Ft. Grant Unit in Safford, inmates took over the unit's yard office and destroyed the building by setting it on fire.

- **Drugs and other contraband items**—While conducting searches of inmates and their living areas, officers often find drugs and other contraband that can compromise security. For example, according to the Department's monthly statis-

---

[1] Arizona Department of Corrections policy defines a major disturbance as any collective action by three or more inmates that constitutes an attempt to gain control of the prison or any part of that prison and requires prison complex level, rather than unit level, or external, response. Major disturbances can include incidents of damages greater than $1,000, serious injuries, or staff being assaulted and forced to flee or being taken hostage. A minor disturbance is defined as an inmate grouping, altercation, or disruptive incident involving three or more inmates that is contained by the unit's on-duty staff, with damages less than $1,000 and no medical emergencies resulting.

31

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

tical report for fiscal year 2000, there were 686 inmates who tested positive for drugs during October, November, and December 1999, indicating that the inmates had used these substances while in prison. In addition, auditors' analysis of information reports indicated that drug-related contraband was found primarily at lower-level custody units, suggesting that given their greater freedom of movement, and lower levels of supervision, lower-custody inmates are able to obtain contraband more easily.

Information Reports also document other types of contraband found during searches. For example, one Information Report from the Papago Unit at Douglas documents the objects an officer confiscated from an inmate's living area, including pliers, drill bits, razor blades, hacksaw blades, wire, and other dangerous contraband.

Improvements to Inmate Management Practices Can Be Made in Several Areas

The consultants and Auditor General staff identified several areas in which inmate management practices can be improved. They include following existing procedures more consistently and thoroughly, developing policies for controlled movement procedures and activity passes, and ensuring that enough staff are in place to fill critical posts.

Greater consistency and thoroughness needed in following Department policies—Officers sometimes fail to consistently apply procedures to supervise inmates, which can compromise security. According to two Department officials, assaults in high-security units can occur because officers fail to follow rules, such as prohibiting inmates to have access to each other. For example, two serious incidents, a murder and an assault, have occurred under such circumstances at Special Management Unit II since it opened in 1996. In addition, a 1999 internal audit of ASPC-Douglas reported that two units' staff did not conduct strip searches of inmates properly. These searches are particularly important because contraband is often smuggled into the units by inmates returning from work sites.

Officers do not always follow Department procedures.

Officers also sometimes fail to thoroughly monitor inmates' locations. For example, the lack of appropriate tracking procedures at the ASPC-Perryville's Santa Maria unit contributed to an escape in October 1999. In that incident, a high-security female inmate had received an activity pass to visit the resource library, but when she did not appear at the library, staff did not immediately follow up to locate her. In addition to increasing the risk of escape, failure to monitor inmate locations can give inmates opportunities to commit assaults or engage in other prohibited activities, and can also create confusion when officers conduct counts. According to four officers interviewed during the audit, count sheets sometimes contain incorrect information, such as showing an inmate as part of a work crew when he is actually in his cell due to illness.

Some clarification to existing policies may be needed to ensure they do not allow inmates to engage in activities that may compromise security objectives. At two units, Auditor General consultants observed inappropriate duties assigned to inmates that increase the potential for inmates to engage in activities prohibited by Department policy. First, inmates at ASPC-Florence were observed delivering inmate store items to other inmates. However, theft, introduction of contraband, and other prohibited actions could be more likely when inmates are used to deliver store items. Moreover, at ASPC-Tucson, an inmate was observed in a tool room helping conduct an inventory of returned tools. According to the consultants, inmates should never help conduct an inventory of tools.

The Department should ensure that all policies and procedures are carried out consistently at the prisons. According to Department management, it has improved consistency across all prison complexes by creating the Northern and Southern Regional Operations Director positions. These positions directly supervise five prison wardens each, and are intended to facilitate consistencies in following procedures.

Department lacks policies in two areas—Although the Department has developed many effective inmate management policies, it lacks policies governing two inmate management practices. First, the Department lacks a policy to guide controlled movement procedures systemwide. According to one Department official, officers use the policies written specifically

33

to address inmate movement procedures in the Lumley Unit at ASPC-Perryville. These policies were developed and implemented in response to the 1997 murder of an officer assigned to that unit. However, interviews with staff indicate that instead of using these policies to guide inmate movement at their units, officers rely primarily on post orders (requirements for each type of post) that have been established for their unit.

Second, the Department lacks consistent policies for its activity pass system, which tracks the movement of medium-custody inmates. The Department uses activity passes to track inmates attending education programs or going to the inmate store. At some units, such as the Santa Maria Unit at ASPC-Perryville, officers issue inmates an activity pass. Other officers monitoring the unit ensure that the inmate moves to the assigned activity. At other units, such as the Cimarron Unit at ASPC-Tucson and the Kaibab Unit at ASPC-Winslow, officers use a master pass list, which contains a listing of all inmates pre-approved to attend an activity.

The Department lacks policies for controlled movement and activity passes.

The Department should develop policies to carry out controlled movement and activity passes. According to Department management, these policies are being drafted. However, the Department should consider development of these policies a key priority and ensure they are developed by the end of 2000.

Too few staff in certain areas—The Department has too few staff in certain areas where inmate monitoring is important. In many units, a single correctional officer is often responsible for supervising multiple housing areas. For example, while the Graham Unit at ASPC-Safford houses 715 low-custody inmates, only 5 correctional officers operate the unit at a "restricted level of operations." In addition, the Echo Unit at ASPC-Tucson has only 4 officers during the graveyard shift supervising 456 inmates and providing the unit with a minimal level of services. According to management from this unit, another correctional officer is needed to adequately supervise the inmates living in this unit's trailers and tents. According to Auditor General consultants, some critical areas are understaffed. For example, just 1 officer is responsible for monitoring an inmate dormitory and 7 Quonset huts in the South and East Units, respectively, at ASPC-Florence.

In addition to having too few staff in particular areas, the Department also has too few staff to adequately search inmates' cells and living areas. According to Department policy, searches of inmates' living areas are supposed to be part of the prisons' daily operations. Additionally, according to our consultants, the Department should conduct frequent and random cell searches in addition to the quarterly searches conducted by the prisons' Tactical Support Units and by other correctional officers. However, most officers interviewed by the consultants claimed that although they conducted some random and targeted cell searches, they were not able to search as many cells as they felt would be desirable. The consultants also entered four randomly selected cells at the Central Unit at ASPC-Florence and found nuisance contraband in plain sight in all four cells. According to the consultants, the number of searches appeared to be insufficient. According to one Department official, the Department does not have enough staff to adequately conduct cell searches. The Auditor General will address staffing issues in greater depth in a future audit of the Department's Human Resources Management, to be issued in 2001.

Although the Department evaluated its need for posts in 1996, it has not recently reassessed the number of posts needed in some critical areas. The Department should regularly reassess its staffing needs for critical areas by conducting a zero-based staffing analysis. This analysis should be comprehensive enough to identify the number of officers needed to thoroughly monitor the number of inmates housed at particular units.

Recommendations

1. The Department should develop and implement policies for controlled movement and activity pass systems.

2. The Department should continue to ensure that staff at all prisons consistently follow inmate management practices.

3. The Department should analyze and determine the appropriate number of staff needed to adequately monitor inmate movement and activity.

4. Once this analysis is complete, the Department should assign staff appropriately to critical posts and, if necessary, request authorization to increase its complement of FTEs.

FINDING III

MOST OTHER SECURITY PRACTICES ARE SOUND, BUT SOME CAN BE IMPROVED

In addition to security practices related to inmate management, the Department should continue to improve some of its other security practices. The Department has made considerable strides in improving these other practices, which cover such areas as inspecting facilities and controlling access to potentially dangerous tools. Prior audits had found serious procedural difficulties, which the Department has largely corrected. However, the Department needs to develop or improve policies in such areas as dispensing prescription drugs, conducting certain security tests, and controlling tools.

Other Policies and Procedures Enhance Security

In addition to secure facilities and appropriate inmate management practices, prisons require other effective security practices in order to protect the public, staff, and inmates. Such practices include inspecting fences and security devices, controlling access to keys and potentially dangerous tools, examining mailed items for drugs and other contraband, and maintaining written instructions for every security post. Corrections departments gain further assurance of safe prison operation by conducting regular internal audits of each prison's adherence to policies. Without sound security practices, a prison can develop a violent atmosphere that is unsafe for inmates as well as staff and the public.

Department Has Made Substantial Improvements Since Previous Audits

While prior audits revealed many serious deficiencies, the Department has improved its policies and procedures and ad-

dressed those deficiencies. Inspection policies, post orders, and key and tool control have all improved, as have policies regarding weapons, transportation, and mail and property.

Prior audits found several procedural deficiencies—Both the Auditor General's 1985 and 1991 reports noted numerous procedural deficiencies at Department prisons. For example, the 1991 audit noted that staff did not adhere to security inspection policies. Security inspections were not being carried out in a consistent, complete, well-defined manner at most Department facilities. Additionally, the nature and quality of post orders, which are procedures specific to individual positions or "posts" to which officers are assigned, varied from institution to institution. Furthermore, few facilities had established comprehensive key control systems and tool control was an ongoing problem at many prisons. Finally, the Department was not issuing body alarms, which are designed to alert the control center when an officer is in trouble.

Current audit found Department follows many excellent practices—The Department has improved its policies and procedures and addressed most of the deficiencies identified in prior audits. It has developed uniform standards, many modeled after those in use at the Federal Bureau of Prisons, for prison complexes throughout the system to follow. According to Auditor General consultants, the Department's policies are equal to or exceed accepted standards, and could serve as models for other states to follow. In addition, the consultants found that, to a great extent, the policies had been effectively implemented throughout the six prison complexes they reviewed. Annual security audits of each prison complex help ensure consistent implementation of these policies.

The Department's policies equal or exceed accepted standards.

Auditor General consultants reviewed security practices at six prison complexes and commended the Department on their policies and practices in the following areas:

■ **Inspections**—Officers make regular checks of outdoor fencing, gates, locks, wire, and other security hardware. Broken or deficient items are quickly repaired. In addition, the Department has implemented the practice of painting retaining

wires and brackets red or bright yellow where they attach to the fencing so that officers can immediately spot any tampering.

■ **Post orders**—Each security post has complete, relevant post orders. Correctional officers assigned to a post review and sign these orders to indicate their understanding of the post's responsibilities and emergency procedures. The consultants considered many of the Department's post orders to be among the best they had encountered.

■ **Key control**—The Department maintains good key accountability. In contrast to the 1991 audit, consultants found the Department has secure key centers, keeps keys in locked cabinets, marks both keys and key locations for identification, and keeps a record of all keys issued.

■ **Tool control**—The Department also has good procedures for controlling tools, including kitchen implements, yard work tools, and cleaning chemicals, to ensure inmates cannot steal them to use as weapons. Each tool storage area has shadow boards for quick identification of absent items, and all potentially dangerous tools remain in secure storage areas except when signed out for use.[1] Staff maintain accurate inventory records and make frequent checks to ensure inmates who have been assigned tools have them in their possession.

---

[1]   Shadow boards are boards, usually peg-board, with hooks on which tools, utensils, and other implements are hung. Each item's silhouette is outlined on the board for easy identification of items in use or not in their assigned location on the board.

Photo 7: Tool Storage

Tools stored on a shadow board for quick identification of absent items.

■ **Weapons**—Each prison complex maintains a secure armory containing safe, reliable weapons for use in perimeter patrol, transportation, or when an incident requires an armed response. Officers carry weapons qualifications cards and, when questioned by the consultants, could articulate weapon and use-of-force policies.

■ **Inmate transportation**—To reduce risks incurred when transferring inmates between prison complexes, the Department has developed a system to shorten time spent in transit, and follow other well-designed practices during transport. For example, inmates travel in restraints and bright orange clothing, and transportation officers carry information about each inmate to more quickly apprehend them in case of escape.

■ **Mail and property**—The Department follows sound procedures for inspecting incoming items to prevent introduction of drugs and other contraband. Additionally, it has recently implemented a new policy to reduce opportunities for bringing inappropriate items into the prisons and cut the time officers must spend inspecting inmate property. This new policy prohibits inmates from receiving any packages, and instead requires them to purchase standardized televisions, snack

foods, personal care items, and other property through the inmate store.

The Department enforces its policies and procedures through annual audits conducted by teams comprised of a team leader from the Department's Inspections Bureau and members from various Department divisions. Every prison complex is inspected each year to determine its compliance level with critical Department standards set forth in Department Orders and other policies. These audits promote standard implementation of policies throughout the prison system. The Department's audit practices are among the Arizona correctional system's greatest strengths.

Department Could Make Some Further Improvements

Although the Department has excellent policies in a number of areas and generally follows them consistently, it should develop some additional policies and address a tool control deficiency found at one prison complex. These new policies would enhance security and reduce certain risks. The Department is currently exploring one of these new policies, which had been recommended in the 1991 audit but not implemented due to technology limitations at the time. Chronic staff shortages and financial constraints may have discouraged the Department from adopting the remaining policies; nevertheless, the Department should exercise its best efforts to develop and follow them. Specifically, the Department lacks appropriate policies regarding the following:

■ **Simulated emergency key runs**—The Department does not have a policy requiring staff to attempt to move throughout the prison complexes using only keys. In an emergency when power is interrupted, such as during a fire or a riot, officers would need to access every area of a prison without delay. An officer's inability to obtain and use emergency keys when a power failure disables electronic locks could result in additional property damage, injury, or death. However, when consultants asked officers at three complexes to conduct a simulated emergency key run, the officers could not carry out the exercise quickly, and had difficulty finding the correct

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

keys and opening doors. Further, some units did not use a color-coded system to match keys with doors. Routine exercises of this type are necessary to ensure staff can use keys in an emergency situation.

■ **Security challenges**—Another practice not consistently conducted by all prison complexes is security challenges. Security challenges, which are conducted at some complexes, periodically test their security practices by having a person attempt to enter a facility without proper identification or bring unauthorized items through a security post. Security challenges increase staff vigilance and identify potential weaknesses that could lead to contraband entering a prison or inmates escaping.

■ **Prescription dispensing**—While the control of needles and other dangerous instruments in medical areas is excellent, some of the Department's inconsistent drug-dispensing practices increase the possibility of inmates hoarding and selling narcotic or psychotropic drugs. The liquid-form use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs varies between complexes. For instance, ASPC-Eyman maintains some of these medications only in liquid form, while liquid narcotics and psychotropic drugs are used at ASPC-Phoenix only if ordered by a physician. However, no liquid psychotropic drugs are available at ASPC-Florence or ASPC-Lewis. Furthermore, seven-day supplies of certain psychotropic medications are issued at ASPC-Lewis. This practice is even more problematic because staff reported that they could not effectively watch inmates ingest their medications (a "watch/swallow" regimen), thus increasing the chance that an inmate could hide the pill for later use or sale. The Department should develop and implement uniform policies requiring medical staff to use a liquid form of narcotics and psychotropic drugs whenever possible, as well as dispense unit doses and apply a "watch/swallow" regimen in connection with all such medications.

■ **Body alarms**—The Department does not issue body alarms to all its correctional officers, although it is currently testing such alarms at one complex. Body alarms range in sophistication from a tone-alert model that emits a loud sound to alert nearby staff, to those with limited voice capability linking

them to the control center. Some body alarms are activated by pressing a shielded button, while others have a "man-down" feature that triggers an alarm after the device is in a non-vertical position for a set period of time. The quality and cost of these systems vary widely. While the cost of a transmitter carried by an employee is generally under $200, the installed equipment ranges from about $70,000 to more than $500,000. Correctional officers carry hand-held radios for communication, but body alarms could more quickly alert other staff of any emergency. Such alarms are particularly important at facilities where officers cannot maintain visual contact with each other, a common problem in many of the Department's units. The Auditor General's 1991 report recommended that the Department provide body alarms for certain correctional officers.

In addition to these policy deficiencies, Auditor General consultants observed some poor tool control activities at the Tucson prison complex. At this unit, tool room doors were unlocked and an inmate was inside helping to conduct an inventory.

Recently, after reviewing the Auditor General consultants' report, the Department began requiring simulated emergency key runs and evaluating its policies in the other three areas. The Department had not previously made this a priority. In addition, problems with false alarms using older body alarm technology discouraged the Department from widely adopting such alarms in the past; but, as noted above, the Department is currently evaluating body alarms for possible use throughout its prisons.

Recommendations

1. The Department should adopt a policy requiring every unit and complex to conduct simulated emergency key runs involving all staff to enable management to ascertain if keys will function for each of them and they can achieve timely access to all areas of the facility.

2. The Department should adopt a policy requiring every unit and complex to conduct security challenges, such as having someone use another employee's identification card to gain entrance to a facility.

3. The Department should develop and implement uniform policies requiring medical staff to use a liquid form of narcotics and psychotropic drugs whenever possible, as well as dispense unit doses and apply a "watch/swallow" regimen in connection with all such medications.

4. The Department should cease the practice of permitting inmates to enter any tool room except to perform housekeeping duties under direct staff supervision. Furthermore, inmates should never be allowed to help conduct tool inventories. The Department should monitor this through its internal audits.

5. The Department should continue its pilot program of body alarms at ASPC-Eyman and, if successfully implemented there and determined to be cost-effective, adopt their use for all appropriate security staff.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

During the audit, auditors developed information about the Department's policies for managing prison gangs, or Security Threat Groups (STGs). STGs have become more common and dangerous in the nation's prisons, where they introduce drugs and weapons, and where they use or threaten violence to gain power. In addition to operating within the prisons, STGs also recruit members and conduct their activities on the streets. State prison systems have attempted to address gang problems in different ways. Some states have implemented policies to manage prison gangs, while other states try to appease gangs or work with them. In contrast to both of these approaches, the Arizona Department of Corrections' approach isolates gang members and restricts their privileges to deter gang activity.

The Department's policy was implemented in September 1997. According to the Department, the policy's purpose is "to minimize the threat that inmate gang or gang like activity poses to the safe, secure and efficient operation of institutions..." The Department believes that isolating gang members and restricting their privileges effectively deters gang activity. The Department's policy involves:

- Identifying possible STGs and determining if they should be formally identified (certified) as an STG;

- Identifying individual inmates who are gang members; and

- Placing them into facilities that are separate from other inmates.

## Gangs Formally Identified Through Certification Process

The Department's STG management process begins with correctional officers making observations and gathering enough information to demonstrate whether a particular group should

be certified as an STG. The group's threat to the Department's operations must be proven through documented reports and other information, and the group must have displayed or threatened violence within the prison. If the Department gathers sufficient evidence to ascertain that the group is a gang, the Department's STG Validation Committee makes a recommendation to the Director, who then decides whether to certify the group as an STG.

As of August 2000, the Department had certified seven STGs (see Figure 2). The Department is currently gathering evidence to determine whether other groups should be certified. There are other gangs represented by inmates, but the Department is

Figure 2

**Arizona Department of Corrections—
Security Operations
Security Threat Group Validation Statistics[1]
As of August 2000**

---
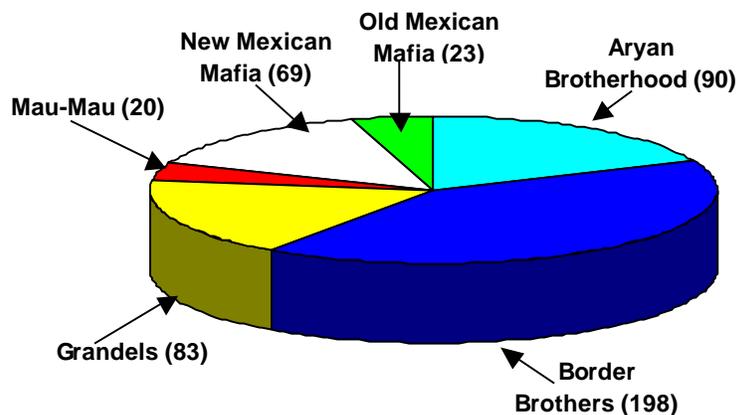
[1]   The Department has certified Surenos as its seventh Security Threat Group; however, no individual members of this group have been validated.

Source: Auditor General staff summary of statistics provided by the Arizona Department of Corrections report, *Security Threat Group Activity Reflective of Department Order #806 (Effective 9/2/97) Current Validation and Appeal Activity by STG as of 8/4/00.*

primarily interested in certifying those groups who display gang-like activity within the Department and a propensity for violence.

Gang Members, Once Identified, Are Housed Separately

The rest of the Department's process involves screening inmates, identifying and validating those who are members of STGs, and housing them in separate units.

The Department identifies inmates who may be members of a gang.

Identification process—Inmates are screened to determine if they are members of an STG, both upon reception to the prison system and throughout their prison sentence. Characteristics that flag incoming inmates as potential STG members include having gang-related tattoos, gang-related literature, and information from other criminal justice agencies. Once in prison, evidence of possible STG affiliation comes from phone conversations, letters, and prison staff's observations. Although prison staff monitor inmates' activities and telephone calls, their ability to monitor inmates' incoming mail is hampered by a court decision that does not allow staff to read any incoming mail.

If an inmate is suspected of being an STG member, a staff member conducts a formal investigation. If the staff member finds sufficient evidence to believe the inmate is an STG member, he or she develops a validation packet containing all information about the inmate and his/her gang relations. All validation packets include a point sheet that helps the Department determine whether suspected STG members will be validated. The point system was created to lend objectivity to the validation process and assigns points to inmates for gang-related tattoos, court testimony, documents relating to gang affiliation, pictures taken with known gang members, and any other evidence of gang affiliation. An inmate must receive 10 points out of at least 2 of the 14 criteria to receive further consideration as an STG member.

The Department's STG Hearing Committee reviews validation packets, holds validation hearings, and then renders decisions on an inmate's STG status. The Committee is composed of three

Deputy Wardens and Associate Deputy Wardens. At a hearing, the accused inmate will be present and the Committee may call staff or other inmates as witnesses. The Committee may also accept written questions for witnesses from the inmate. After the hearing the Committee decides if the inmate should be validated as an STG member or if the evidence does not support validation.

Department has appeal process—Inmates validated by the STG Hearing Committee as gang members may appeal this decision within five days. As of August 4, 2000, according to Department statistics, about 5 percent of appeals (9 of 197) have been upheld by the Validation Committee. The STG Validation Committee hears the appeal and makes a decision. All decisions made by this committee are final and no further appeals may be made.

STG members housed in special units—The Department has dedicated specific units at the Eyman Prison to house validated gang members. Validated STG members are sent to the Special

Photo 8: Inmate Cell at Special Management Unit II

Inmate cell at Eyman Complex, Special Management Unit II. Validated gang members are restricted to such cells 24 hours a day.

Management Unit II (SMU II) at ASPC-Eyman to serve the remainder of their sentences. Inmates validated as gang members and housed at SMU II face severe reductions in their privileges. For example, all validated inmates are considered maximum-security inmates and are restricted to their single-bunk cells 24

48

hours a day, with only 3 hours of exercise each week. Additionally, these inmates have fewer inmate store privileges, cannot earn more than 20 cents per hour from working, and cannot earn time credits that would lead to an earlier release date.

High-profile gang members and leaders may be sent to other states to finish their prison sentences. Department management believes that this strategy reduces communication among gang members and weakens the gang. Moreover, Arizona accepts some inmates from other states.

Inmates can renounce gang affiliation—Inmates who wish to leave SMU II and have their STG status changed may do so only if they successfully renounce their gang affiliation and debrief (inform) the Department about any gang activity they are aware of. This information may include gang structure, plans, or membership. According to Department statistics, as of August 2000, 58 inmates have successfully renounced their gang membership. For an inmate to successfully renounce gang membership, the Department must be convinced that the inmate is serious about severing all gang affiliations and is not simply trying to leave the restrictive SMU II. Also, the Department must be convinced that the inmate has provided sufficient and credible information. If an inmate renounces but does not successfully debrief, he or she will not be allowed to leave SMU II and will retain validation status.

Inmates may leave the restrictive environment if they successfully renounce their gang affiliation.

Although debriefing is difficult, inmates have several incentives to do so. First, inmates who successfully debrief are moved to the Special Management I Unit at the Eyman complex or to the Stiner and Morey Units at the Lewis Prison, and are usually housed in double-bunk rather than single-bunk cells. Additionally, these inmates may have their classification score lowered, which will allow them more benefits, such as increased telephone privileges. Further, the inmates can earn good-time credits, which may allow for an earlier release. In addition, the inmates receive increased recreation time. Finally, the inmates will receive increased inmate store privileges.

Department and University Studying STG Policy Effectiveness

The Department, along with faculty from Arizona State University, is studying the Department's STG policies to measure their effectiveness. The National Institute of Justice provided a grant of about $183,000 to the Department and the professor to study the effectiveness of ADC's practices regarding prison gangs. For example, the research will determine if assaults have decreased due to the new policies. The study is important because the researchers are not aware of any conclusive study done on the subject. The report will offer recommendations to improve the program and is expected to be released in late 2001.

(This Page Intentionally Left Blank)

November 28, 2000

Debra Davenport, CPA
Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
2910 North 44th Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Re: AUDITOR GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE AUDIT
       SECURITY OPERATIONS FINAL REPORT RESPONSE

Dear Ms. Davenport:

The mission of the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) is to serve and protect the citizens of Arizona by imprisoning offenders legally committed to ADC and by providing community based supervision for those conditionally released.   Security Operations plays a key role in carrying out this mission. We believe we operate one of the most efficient and secure prison systems in the United States. However, the additional perspectives provided by members of your staff and the security consultants have enhanced our ability to strengthen the operations of the Arizona Department of Corrections.

Of primary concern, both from an audit and an operational standpoint, are the security staffing patterns of our institutions. The Department is constrained by authorized and appropriated resources, as well as the inability to attract corrections officers during this booming economy given the salary levels currently authorized for corrections officers.   Additionally, neither the Auditor General staff nor the security consultants were prepared to articulate the necessary level of staffing without having first accomplished a zero-based staffing study. As a result, the Department is currently preparing a Request for Proposal for a contractor to conduct a zero-based staffing analysis to better enable us to identify issues, better allocate existing positions, and support requests for additional staffing.

We have reviewed your November 20, 2000, report for your performance audit of the ADC's Security Operations. Below please find our written response which also identifies any issues or concerns we have with the audit findings.

FINDING I

> **Recommendation 1:**
> Open the remaining units at ASPC-Lewis as soon as staff is available to do so.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in t his finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: At the time that ASPC-Lewis was being sited by the Legislature, the Department recommended against the location because we recognized the difficulty that the Buckeye location would have in attracting staff. Unfortunately, the Department's advice was disregarded and as a result, today we face the consequence. Since opening Lewis, the Department has requested and received authority to pay a 10% stipend in addition to the normal salary for corrections officers. We have developed and implemented van pools to assist in the commute to the Buckeye site. We have worked with developers to develop housing in the Buckeye area and we have now proposed a hiring bonus for corrections officers who agree to work at ASPC-Lewis for a period of two years. In spite of these incentives, we still have been unable to attract the necessary staff to fully staff ASPC-Lewis..

    Since August 14, 1998, 1,422 job offers have been made for the Lewis Complex. Unfortunately, during the last 12-month period, the resignation rate has been 23.4%, and the loss rate has been 31.6%. This percentage is considerably higher than the statewide goal and average of 25.5%. It is believed that the pending proposal regarding signing bonuses will positively affect these figures, both in terms of job offers and retention rates.

> **Recommendation 2:**
> Cease using tents at all complexes as soon as the inmate population can be transferred to other housing units. Because some of the tents have been designated as part of the Department's permanent bed inventory, the Department should develop a plan (which would request legislative approval) to eliminate them.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

Comment: The Department concurs that the utilization of tents presents security and operational concerns. However, the impact of the elimination of tent beds would have the below indicated impact in the Southern Region:

Complex	Unit	Number of Tents	Number of Beds
Douglas	Maricopa	10	100
Safford	Graham	10	100
Safford	Tonto	10	100
Tucson	Echo	20	200
Tucson	Manzanita	4	40
Tucson	Santa Rita	10	100
Yuma	Cocopah	5	50
TOTAL			690

The security concerns raised by the tents are obviously of greater concern at the higher level units, therefore, it is proposed that if the tents are reduced in number the Department begin with the Level 3 units first.

Please be advised that the legislature approved funding for the 400 North Unit beds, thus the elimination of these beds is highly unlikely. The 400 tent beds located in the North Unit at ASPC-Florence were sited and appropriated by the Legislature. As a result, the Department will need to seek statutory authority and funding to eliminate these tents. Since other recommendations in this audit also recommend the elimination of modular and Quonset units, the recommended plan to eliminate the 400 tent beds will be integrated into the overall plan.

Recommendation 3:
Develop plans for closing the Alhambra/Flamenco and Aspen Units at ASPC-Phoenix and replace those units.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

   Comment: The Department has already requested the State Legislature to consider funding for a new Reception/ Diagnostic and mental health facility. Timing for the replacement of the Reception/Diagnostic Center is contingent on a final decision by the Executive and Legislature regarding the speed with which the proposed Tucson II complex will be built. A final recommendation from the Department with regard to building out Tucson II will be driven by actual and estimated inmate growth.

Recommendation 4:
Take immediate steps to lower the partitions in Florence's South Unit dormitories to enhance visibility.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

   Comment: Several years ago, the Department of Corrections identified the officer safety hazard present in privacy partitions in previously constructed dormitories. During the last several years the Department has not only modified design of future prisons, but we have systematically retrofitted prison units with high partitions. It has been our intent to modify all partitions which create a visibility hazard, irrespective of their material of construction, i.e., masonry, wood or metal. However, the Department has only been able to devote limited resources to the modification of partitions. Consequently, petitions remain which need to be modified. The South Unit is one such example.

   The Department is currently developing a plan to lower the partitions in the ASPC-Florence South Unit dormitory. The projected completion date is March 1, 2001. The Department is reviewing partitions in all units to determine if others need to be modified.

Recommendation 5:

Add one correctional officer to each South Unit dormitory building. Absent the ability to provide additional staffing, these dormitories should be replaced.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and a different method of dealing with the finding will be implemented.*

    Comment: As stated previously, the Department is currently preparing a Request for Purchase to contract with an outside consultant to conduct a complete Prison Operations staffing study and post analysis to determine if existing staff resources can be feasibly reallocated to address this recommendation. If we find that a reallocation is not possible and an additional appropriation not forthcoming then we will recommend replacement of the dormitories as part of the Department's bed plan.

Recommendation 6:

Develop a plan for the future replacement of Quonset huts and modular housing units.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: While the use of Quonset huts and modular buildings presents an array of challenges ranging from officer safety to issues of maintenance, livability and sanitation, the Department has been able to meet these challenges without incurring the significant additional capital cost to replace them. Nevertheless, the Department recognizes the wisdom for developing a plan to request appropriations from the Legislature to replace these units. While we are somewhat pessimistic that such recommendations will be approved, we will in fact develop a plan for the replacement of these units. The plan will be integrated into our capital replacement budget and bed plan.

    This recommendation is somewhat difficult for the Department. If funding were available in the magnitude necessary to replace 1,134 beds, those resources may be more effectively utilized in providing pay benefits to corrections officers rather than replacing beds which are only marginal but functional at this time.

Complex	Unit	Type of Housing	Number of Buildings	Number of Beds
Douglas	Gila	Modular	9	662
Douglas	Maricopa	Modular	1	14
Safford	Graham	Quonset Huts	10	202
Tucson	Echo	Modular	4	256
TOTAL			20	1134

Recommendation 7:
Relocate the ASPC-Tucson warehouse outside the vehicle entrance and allow only one vehicle at a time to enter the sally port, and correct the sally port design problem at ASPC-Safford's Fort Grant Unit that currently requires both gates to be open simultaneously for trucks to enter or exit the unit.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and a different method of dealing with the finding will be implemented.*

   Comment: The proposed solution to this problem can be approached in several different ways, dependent upon some issues that are outside the purview of the Department of Corrections. The design of the Tucson II Complex included a plan to have the warehouse capability for the existing complex to be handled by the new facility. This places all warehouse activity outside the secure perimeter. However, in the event the construction of Tucson II is delayed or eliminated altogether, Warden Parin at ASPC-Tucson will submit a proposal to redesign the perimeter of the complex including deactivating the main sally port and securing the CDU sally port during business hours, placing the warehouses outside the perimeter. This will also eliminate the medium security crews working in the warehouses. The necessity of allowing more than one vehicle in the sally port will be diminished due to the reduction in traffic.

   At ASPC-Safford's Fort Grant Unit, plans have been developed and funded to relocate the control room area an construct an adjacent new sally port that will eliminate this problem.

Recommendation 8:
Explore options to modify sight lines at control rooms at ASPC-Tucson and ASPC-Perryville to enhance inmate surveillance.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: Although this recommendation affects ASPC-Tucson to a much smaller degree than the Perryville Complex, the recommendations to explore options to modify sight lines cannot be argued. It may be possible to use technology such as remotely operated cameras to improve site lines from the control room. If this option is not feasible, a modification of the control room to locate it either within the kitchen area or on top of the kitchen area to provide observation would be a consideration. This modification should only be undertaken with architectural, security and financial considerations in mind.

FINDING II

Recommendation 1:
The Department should develop and implement policies for controlled movement and activity pass systems.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: Controlled movement and an activity pass system are part of the new Inmate Program Plan (IPP) process currently being phased in within Prison Operations.

Recommendation 2:
The Department should continue to ensure that staff at all prisons consistently follow inmate management practices.

RESPONSE:

2. *The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: For more than a decade the Department has utilized an internal inspections program to determine whether or not the operating units consistently follow all policies related to operational readiness. This program will continue. However, a greater emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the units consistently follow inmate management practices. We will continue to expand and improve our current internal audit process to ensure consistent, sound and safe correctional management practices are in place.

Recommendation 3:
The Department should analyze and determine, and assign an appropriate number of staff needed to adequately fill critical posts that monitor inmate movement and activity.

RESPONSE:

1. *The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: As previously stated, the Department is preparing a Request for Proposal for a contractor to conduct a zero-based staffing analysis to better enable us to identify issues, allocate existing positions, and support requests for additional staffing. The Department will continually assess resource allocation and assignments.

Recommendation 4:
Once this analysis is complete, the Department should assign staff appropriately to critical posts and, if necessary, request authorization to increase its complement of FTE's.

RESPONSE:

1. *The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: The Department will utilize the results of the consultant's zero-based analysis to allocate existing resources and request additional FTE's where appropriate once it is completed.

FINDING III

> **Recommendation 1:**
> The Department should adopt a policy requiring every unit and complex to conduct simulated emergency key runs involving all staff to enable management to ascertain if keys will function for each of them and they can achieve timely access to all areas of the facility.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and a different method of dealing with the finding will be implemented*

    Comment: A standardized procedure will be developed to address emergency key systems and their testing.

> **Recommendation 2:**
> The Department should adopt a policy requiring every unit and complex to conduct security challenges, such as having someone use another employee's identification card to gain entrance to a facility.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: These types of challenges have fallen out of favor in recent years due to inappropriate utilization and ill-conceived scenarios. A menu of possible challenges which do not compromise safety will be developed for utilization at all locations, and will be monitored through the audit process.

> **Recommendation 3:**
> The Department should develop and implement uniform policies requiring medical staff to use a liquid form of narcotics and psychotropic drugs whenever possible, as well as dispense unit doses and apply a "watch/swallow" regimen in connection with all such medication.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: In the interest of security, Prison Operations does not oppose tighter controls on psychotropic drugs on the yards, but defers to medical staff as to the recommendation's viability from a treatment perspective. Medical staff does supply liquid forms of controlled substances to inmates, on a case-by-case basis. It is noted that not all medications, controlled substances and/or psychotropic drugs are available in liquid form. Liquid forms of medications can present problems in the area of quality control, with no guarantee that liquid forms are dispensed any more appropriately.

> **Recommendation 4:**
> The Department should cease the practice of permitting inmates to enter any tool room except to perform housekeeping duties under direct staff supervision. Furthermore, inmates should never be allowed to help conduct tool inventories. The Department should monitor this through its internal audits.

RESPONSE:

1. *The Department concurs in this finding and the audit recommendation will be implemented.*

    Comment: A policy change will be submitted to implement this recommendation.

> **Recommendation 5:**
> The Department should continue its pilot program of body alarms at ASPC-Eyman and, if successfully implemented and determined to be cost-effective, adopt their use for all appropriate security staff.

RESPONSE:

2. *The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and a different method of dealing with*

the finding will be implemented.

> **Comment:** The Eyman pilot has proven not to be successful. Test results indicated, and the vendor subsequently admitted that 40% of the wristband devices were replaced due to malfunctioning an false alarms. Thus, the vendor did not deliver a product that was cost effective or reliable. Conceptually, this is a technology which is believed will serve the field of corrections in the futures. The Department will continue to pursue this technology in the interest of staff safety.

On behalf of the Arizona Department of Corrections and its staff, I take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the benefit of the observations made with regard to security in this Department. It was a pleasure interacting with them and we are certain that their efforts will result in an improved corrections operation for the State of Arizona and the public safety of its citizens. We also appreciate their emphasis and that of the security consultants on officer and employee safety.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Stewart
Director

TLS/CLR

cc: Charles L. Ryan, Deputy Director, Prison Operations
        George Herman, Northern Region Operations Director
        Meg Savage, Southern Region Operations Director

Other Performance Audit Reports Issued Within the Last 12 Months

Future Performance Audit Reports

Department of Public Safety—Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program

Department of Economic Security—Division of Child Support Enforcement

Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery