POLICY STATEMENT
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of Corrections

Policy Subject:		Policy Number:
Administration of Specialized Inmate Housing		**7.5.1**
Date of Issue:	**Authority:**	**Effective Date:**
November 16, 2026	**Signature on File** **Dr. Laurel R. Harry**	**November 30, 2026**

I. AUTHORITY

The Authority of the Secretary of Corrections to direct the operation of the Department of Corrections is established by Sections 201, 206, 506, and 901-B of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§61, 66, 186, and 310-1, Act of April 9, 1929, P.L. 177, No. 175, as amended.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all facilities operated under the jurisdiction of, or conducting business with the Department of Corrections, Department employees, volunteers, contract personnel, visitors, and inmates.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to:

A. properly house inmates to aid the secure operation of our facilities while ensuring the safety of the public, facility staff, and inmates; and

B. maintain specialized housing units to manage facility populations by appropriately housing inmates based on their individual needs. Specialized inmate housing is generally a specialized general population housing unit.

IV. PROCEDURES

All applicable procedures are contained in the procedures manual that accompanies this policy document.

V. SUSPENSION DURING AN EMERGENCY

In an emergency or extended disruption of normal facility operation, the Secretary/designee may suspend any provision or section of this policy for a specific period.

VI. RIGHTS UNDER THIS POLICY

This policy does not create rights in any person nor should it be interpreted or applied in such a manner as to abridge the rights of any individual. This policy should be interpreted to have sufficient flexibility to be consistent with law and to permit the accomplishment of the purpose(s) of the policies of the Department of Corrections.

VII. RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

A. Release of Information

1. Policy Statement

   This Policy Statement is public information and may be released upon request.

2. Procedures Manuals, Appendixes, and Attachments (if applicable)

   The related procedures manuals, appendixes, and attachments (elements) for this policy are public information and are releasable upon request unless designated by the Department as confidential. Confidential elements are not public information and shall not be released in entirety or in part, without the prior approval of the Secretary/designee. Procedures manuals or other elements which are not further restricted, may be released to any Department employee on an as needed basis.

B. Distribution of Policy

1. Public and General Distribution

   Department policies that are not designated as confidential or further restricted, shall be made available to the public through the Department's public web site.

2. Distribution to Staff and Other Government Agencies

   All Department policies and related elements, that are not further restricted, shall be available to all Department members. It is the responsibility of those individuals within the Department receiving policies through general distribution, to ensure that each employee expected or required to perform the necessary procedures/duties has access to the policy and procedures. Distribution of confidential policies or elements to other government agencies is subject to the approval of the Secretary/designee.

VIII. SUPERSEDED POLICY AND CROSS REFERENCE

A. Superseded Policy

1. Department Policy

   7.5.1, Administration of Specialized Inmate Housing, issued December 3, 2019 by former Secretary John Wetzel.

2. Facility Policy and Procedures

   This document supersedes all facility policy and procedures on this subject.

B. Cross Reference(s)

1. Administrative Manuals

   a. DC-ADM 007, Access to Provided Legal Services

   b. DC-ADM 009, Media Relations

   c. DC-ADM 801, Inmate Discipline

   d. DC-ADM 802, Administrative Custody Procedures

   e. DC-ADM 812, Inmate Visiting Privileges

   f. DC-ADM 815, Personal Property, State Issued Items, and Commissary/Outside Purchases

   g. DC-ADM 816, Inmate Compensation

   h. DC-ADM 818, Automated Inmate Telephone System

   i. DC-ADM 819, Religious Activities

   j. ***6.3.1, Facility Security***

   k. 6.5.1, Administration of Security Level 5 Housing Units

   l. 6.5.8, Capital Case Administration

   m. 11.5.1, Records Office Operations

   n. 13.8.1, Access to Mental Health Care

2. ACA Standards

   None

PROCEDURES MANUAL
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Procedure Development: All required procedures shall be developed in compliance with the standards set forth in this manual and/or the governing policy. These standards may be exceeded, but in all cases, these standards are the minimum standard that must be achieved. In the event a deviation or variance is required, a written request is to be submitted to the appropriate Executive Deputy Secretary/Regional Deputy Secretary and the Bureau of Standards, Audits, Assessments, and Compliance for review and approval prior to implementation. Absent such approval, all procedures set forth in this manual must be met.

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Section 2 – Capital Case Unit (CCU) Phase I Inmates

A. Housing

1. A male Capital Case inmate shall be housed at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Phoenix or ***Somerset***. Exceptions shall be approved by the Secretary/designee.

2. A female Capital Case inmate shall be housed at SCI Muncy.

3. If a Capital Case inmate is ***approved*** to be ***permanently*** housed at ***a non-Capital Case SCI, the facility shall be provided a copy of this manual and the facility shall ensure that the requirements within this policy are met***.

4. ***Capital Case inmates who are temporarily transferred to another Department facility shall not be placed in a Security Level 5 (SL5) housing unit, unless they meet the criteria for placement under Department policy DC-ADM 801, "Inmate Discipline" or DC-ADM 802, "Administrative Custody Procedures." Capital Case inmates may be temporarily housed in a General Population (GP) or specialized GP housing unit until the inmate is returned to a Capital Case facility.***

B. Inmate Custody Status

1. A Capital Case inmate in Phase I shall be housed in Capital Case (***CAP***) status unless they are placed in Disciplinary Custody (DC) or Administrative Custody (AC) status in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 801 or DC-ADM 802.**

2. Each Capital Case inmate shall be assessed at the time of intake and processing into their housing unit using the **DC-510, *Restrictive Housing and Special Management Housing – Mental Health Care Screening*** and **DC-510A, Restrictive Housing – Health Care Screening** in accordance with Department policy **13.8.1, "Access to Mental Health Care," Section 1, Psychological Services**. A registered nurse or licensed psychologist ***shall complete the assessment***.

3. The Medical/Psychology Department shall determine whether the inmate requires an **Individual Treatment Plan (ITP)** or another form(s) of therapy or intervention.

4. A copy of the **DC-510** and **DC-510A** shall be placed in the inmate's **DC-14, Counselor's File** and in the psychiatric section of the medical record.

C. General Security Procedures

The Capital Case Unit (CCU) shall operate as a specialized general population housing unit that ***exclusively houses inmates sentenced to death***. The unit shall not operate as a ***SL5 h***ousing ***u***nit under Department policy **6.5.1, "Administration of Security Level 5 Housing Units."**

1. ***Inmates housed on the CCU shall wear standard inmate uniforms.***

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2. Inmates confined in the CCU shall not be required to change cells every 90 days unless an individualized determination has been made that the inmate is an escape risk, consistent with Department policy ***6.3.1, "Facility Security."***

3. Cells in the CCU shall not be constantly illuminated during nighttime hours. Staff conducting nighttime rounds may utilize lighting implements to perform required cell checks.

4. ***Cell windows shall be transparent.***

5. Inmates confined in the CCU shall not be subject to strip-searching, wrist restraints, leg restraints, tethering or other physical restraints when exiting their cells or moving about the unit unless such security measures are required by officers responding to an urgent situation or as part of efforts to restore order during a security disturbance.

   a. ***When unique security concerns exist, the Facility Manager may make an individualized determination that a CCU inmate requires one or more of the above security precautions when moving about the unit. The unique security concerns shall be documented.***

   b. ***Individualized determinations to utilize the above security precautions shall be reviewed by the Facility Manager no less than every three months. All rationale for extending these measures shall be documented.***

6. Inmates confined in the CCU shall not be subject to strip-searching, wrist restraints, leg restraints, tethering or other physical restraints when traveling outside the CCU unless an individualized determination has been made by the Facility Manager that a unique security concern necessitates those measures, or such measures are the standard procedure for all inmates in the applicable circumstances (e.g., search of inmate following contact visit or before traveling to outside hospital, etc.). CCU inmates may be escorted when traveling outside the CCU if such escorts would be employed for other general population inmates traveling through that particular area or if other security needs dictate the use of such escorts.

   a. ***The Facility Manager shall document the unique security concerns used to impose any of the above security precautions outside the CCU.***

   b. ***The individualized determinations to impose the above security precautions shall be reviewed by the Facility Manager no less than every three months. All rationale for extending these measures shall be documented.***

D. Work Assignments

Consistent with DC-ADM 816, "Inmate Compensation," CCU Phase I ***inmates are permitted work assignments:***

1. within the housing unit, ***as*** approved by the Unit Management Team;

2. in the areas outside but adjacent to the unit (e.g., grounds keeping, snow removal, grass mowing, kitchen facilities, etc.).

3. ***other locations within the facility that have been approved by the Facility Manager.***

E. Visiting

1. ***CCU Phase I inmates shall be afforded general population visiting privileges, consistent with DC-ADM 812, "Inmate Visiting Privileges," including all forms of visitation, duration of visits, and scheduling options available to the general population.***

2. ***The Facility Manager may limit a CCU Phase I inmate to non-contact and/or video visitation when the Facility Manager makes an individualized determination that contact visits for the inmate present a serious security threat.***

   a. ***Individualized determinations to limit contact visits under this provision shall be reviewed no less than every three months;***

   b. ***Extension of restrictions shall be granted for no more than three months before subsequent review;***

   c. ***All decisions to impose and rationale to continue restriction of contact visits shall be documented.***

3. ***Individuals on a CCU Phase I inmate's visiting list are subject to the same screening and security measures as visitors of general population inmates. Any restriction or termination of visiting privileges shall conform to the requirements of DC-ADM 812.***

4. ***Suspensions or limitations of visiting privileges imposed by the Hearing Examiner for violations of Department policy DC-ADM 801, "Inmate Discipline," shall conform to suspension procedures in DC-ADM 812.***

F. Telephone Privileges

Each inmate shall be permitted to use the inmate telephone system daily for no less than 15 minutes per usage and in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 818, "Automated Inmate Telephone System."** The number of authorized calls shall be in accordance with the facility regulations related to telephone usage.

G. Tablets, Television, Radio, and Outside Vendor Purchases

CCU Phase I inmates shall be permitted access to tablets, personal televisions, radio/tape/compact disk players, and all other approved items available to general population inmates, including outside purchases in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 815, "Personal Property, State Issued Items, and Commissary/Outside Purchases."**

H. Exercise and Activity

A ***CCU*** Phase I inmate shall be offered at least 42.5 ***total*** out-of-cell (OOC) hours per week. ***No less than*** four hours of OOC activities/exercise shall be offered ***on any*** day, seven days a week. OOC activities and exercise shall be offered during normal waking hours (7:00am to 9:00pm).

1. OOC offerings shall be scheduled during evenings and on weekends to achieve the minimum required ***daily and*** weekly offering.

2. OOC offerings shall maximize congregate socialization opportunities ***and may include participation in activities with general population inmates***.

3. OOC offerings shall be logged and recorded on a tracking form for each inmate.

4. OOC offerings may include:

    a. yard/outdoor exercise;

    b. block-out time/indoor recreation;

    c. law library;

    d. congregate meals;

    e. treatment or counseling team meetings, to include meetings with counselors, psychology, mental health or medical treatment staff, etc.;

    f. meetings with religious service staff, including congregate religious worship.

    g. work assignments; and/or

    h. organized educational, treatment, or recreational programs or activities.

5. The required weekly offering of OOC time shall not include activities such as showers, medical appointments, attorney meetings, classification or disciplinary hearings, or court appearances.

6. All inmates in the CCU shall be offered ***a minimum of*** two hours of outdoor exercise per day***,*** weather permitting. Inmates shall have access to water during outdoor yard time. The facility shall permit inmates to take water to the yard or the facility shall provide water.

7. Indoor block time shall be offered when weather does not permit outdoor exercise.

8. All inmates in the CCU shall be permitted to shower and shave daily.

I. Personal Property, Commissary, Outside Purchases and Cell Content

CCU Phase I inmates shall be afforded state-issued clothing, personal property allowances, commissary orders, outside purchases, and gift pack programs, and their property shall be handled in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 815** as applicable to general population inmates. Extra storage boxes for legal materials for active cases may be requested in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 815**.

J. Facility Programming

Inmates confined in a CCU shall have access to educational programming ***and approved activities occurring on or off the unit.***

1. Educational Programming

   The Corrections School Principal shall ensure that:

   a. all ***CCU*** Phase I inmates are made aware of available educational opportunities and the procedures for requesting participation;

   b. educational materials shall be available and provided as needed. The Principal shall ensure that tutoring is provided as needed and tutors shall be admitted to the CCU to perform tutoring work with CCU inmates;

   c. appropriate level materials shall be used for each inmate;

   d. available educational programs include:

      (1) ABE;

      (2) GED; and

      (3) individual/self-study programs.

   e. the ***above*** programs shall be at no cost to the inmate; and

   f. post-secondary opportunities may be made available at the inmate's expense.

2. Leisure Activities

   The Activities Manager shall ensure that:

   a. ***CCU*** Phase I inmates are made aware of recreational opportunities and the procedures for requesting participation; and

   b. only selected and approved arts and crafts materials that have been authorized by the Facility Manager/designee are used ***for on-unit activities***.

K. Religious Activities

Religious activities shall be permitted in accordance with this policy and Department policy **DC-ADM 819, "Religious Activities."** with the following ***considerations***:

1. CCU ***Phase I*** inmates may participate in congregate religious worship. ***Congregate worship with other CCU inmates may occur on the CCU as noted in Subsection K.2 below or in conjunction with general population inmates outside the CCU.***

2. A representative of each faith group, if available, shall visit the CCU ***weekly to provide*** congregate religious activity or worship opportunity. Permitted religious worship shall occur during existing dayroom or "block out" periods or during a separate dedicated time***,*** if time and space permits;

3. an inmate may request religious audiotapes weekly; and

4. an inmate may not retain more than two religious audiotapes at any time.

L. Access to Legal Materials

1. Each ***CCU*** shall ***operate*** a mini law library in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 007, "Access to Provided Legal Services."**

2. Each mini law library shall provide adequate lighting, seating for no fewer than two people, desk space adequate for a work area, and shelving that is secure.

3. ***CCU Phase I inmates*** shall be given written instructions containing a current list of materials available in the mini law library, the procedures to request use of the mini law library, and the hours the mini law library is available to be used.

4. ***CCUs*** shall ensure that a typewriter, computer, or word processor is kept in the mini law library for inmate use. An associated printer shall be included with a word processor or computer. Any attached printer shall not be located in the personal office of any staff member.

5. The mini law library shall be ***open and*** made available to ***CCU Phase I*** inmates during daily OOC time for a minimum of six hours per day, seven days a week.

6. The Officer-in-Charge of the housing unit shall schedule use of the mini law library.

7. ***CCU Phase I*** inmate***s*** may request two-hour blocks of time to work in the mini law library. If no one is scheduled to use the mini law library after the two-hour block of time, the inmate shall be permitted to continue using the mini law library until such time as another inmate is scheduled to use the mini law library.

8. Two or more ***CCU*** Phase I inmates may work together in the mini law library, provided that they agree to work together and that there is no security concern or facility space limitations.

9. A Capital Case inmate may request to be put on an "on call" list to use the mini law library if no one is scheduled to use it during ***daily OOC periods.***

10. A logbook shall be maintained recording inmate use of the mini law library including each inmate's name and number, date of use, length of time used, and whether the inmate worked with another inmate.

11. At least once a week, or more often if necessary, the facility law librarian/designee shall deliver requested legal materials from the facility's general population law library and pick up requests for legal materials from the CCU.

12. The facility Librarian shall be responsible for conducting an inventory of the mini law library to ensure that all legal materials required by ***DC-ADM 007*** are available ***in the CCU law library***. If any materials are destroyed or go missing, the Librarian shall be immediately notified by unit staff. Alternatively, ***an inmate may notify the Libarian*** by submitting a **DC-135, Inmate Request to Staff Member form**, and to initiate the replacement process. A record of the inventory shall be maintained.

13. If an inmate does not have representation by an attorney and is illiterate or non-English speaking, they may be permitted to exchange legal information with ***another CCU inmate, when they have obtained*** the approval of the Facility Manager/designee. Inmates assisting one another with legal work shall be permitted to exchange legal materials directly, and custody staff shall not pass legal materials from one inmate to another.

14. Upon exiting the mini law library, materials in the inmate's possession shall be searched to ensure that no pages were torn from the books and removed from the library.

15. ***CCU Phase I inmates*** shall be permitted to exchange legal materials from their cell with legal materials being held in storage once every 30 days. The Unit Management Team may authorize more frequent exchanges based upon demonstrated need.

16. ***CCU facilities may permit CCU Phase I inmates access to the facility's main law library.***

M. Access to Reading Materials

1. CCU ***Phase I inmates*** shall have access to the same non-legal reading materials as the inmates in standard general population units. ***CCU inmates may be provided access to these materials through participation in general population library sessions and/or other established local procedures.***

2. A Capital Case inmate shall be ***permitted*** to retain non-legal reading materials in accordance with the same policies governing retention of non-legal reading materials for standard general population units.

3. Newspapers shall be permitted on a one-for-one exchange basis.

N. Transfer of Phase I Inmates

If a ***CCU*** Phase I inmate participating in a facility program is transferred, progress records and the materials being used shall be transferred with the inmate to ensure continuity ***of*** participation at the next facility.

O. Placement in Disciplinary Custody (DC) or Administrative Custody (AC) Status

1. Inmates ***housed on*** the CCU shall be subject to the same disciplinary rules and procedures as inmates housed in standard general population units in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 801**.

2. A CCU inmate who is Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) shall be subject to the same disciplinary rules and procedures as other SMI inmates housed in the standard general population, including a required contact with psychology staff after issuance of the misconduct and ***placement in*** the Diversionary Treatment Unit, ***when*** necessary.

3. When a ***CCU*** Phase I inmate is placed in AC or DC status, the inmate shall be suspended from program participation and transferred into a Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) or other appropriate housing unit in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 801** or **DC-ADM 802.** After the expiration of the sanction term, inmate shall be returned to the CCU.

P. Psychiatric Treatment of a Capital Case Inmate

Psychiatric care of inmates housed on the CCU shall be rendered in accordance with Department policy **13.8.1, "Access to Mental Health Care,"** the frequency and acuity of which shall be determined by the inmate's roster status.

1. Inmates in CCU exhibiting signs of decompensation

   a. Anytime a staff member observes a***n*** inmate showing signs of mental decompensation where the inmate ***potentially*** poses a risk to ***themselves*** or others, the observing staff shall immediately:

      (1) notify the Facility Manager/designee, the Deputy Superintendent for ***Centralized Services (DSCS)***, and the Medical and Psychology Departments to arrange for the inmate to be evaluated for emergency mental health treatment and a suicide indicator checklist screening; and

(2) the Medical or Psychology staff shall assess the inmate with the **DC-510** and **DC-510A**. The staff member conducting the **DC-510** and **DC-510A** shall assist the Medical/Psychiatric Departments in evaluating the inmate.

b. After the facility's Medical/Psychiatric Department has evaluated the inmate, the Medical/Psychiatric Department shall consult with the Chief of Psychiatry ***and/or*** Medical Director at the Bureau of Health Care Services (BHCS). An ITP shall be prepared, if indicated. Inmates housed on the CCU shall have access to all Department ***mental*** health and health care units (including those at other DOC facilities), if their treatment needs require such housing.

c. Any restrictions of state issued or personal property, and/or the need for staff observation of the inmate shall be in accordance with the inmate's ITP or by psychiatric orders.

2. Transfer of CCU inmate to a Mental Health Unit (MHU) or Forensic Treatment Center (FTC)

a. If it is determined that a ***CCU*** inmate requires transfer to an MHU or FTC, the facility's Medical/Psychiatric Department shall coordinate the transfer of the inmate to the treatment center with the following:

(1) Office of the Secretary/designee;

(2) BHCS Chief of Psychiatry/Medical Director;

(3) ***Bureau of Facility Security and Special Operations (BFSSO)***;

(4) ***Psychology Office;***

(5) ***Bureau*** of Population Management ***(BPM)***; and

(6) Office of Chief Counsel.

b. The Office of Chief Counsel shall notify the following that the Capital Case inmate is ***being*** moved to an MHU or FTC:

(1) Governor's Office; and

(2) General Counsel's Office.

c. The MHU and/or the FTC staff shall work in conjunction with the facility's Security Office and the ***BFSSO*** to ensure that proper and adequate security measures are in place to allow the inmate to fully participate in their individual or group treatment.

d. When MHU or FTC staff determine that the Capital Case inmate is stable and ready to be released, staff shall ***notify*** the ***following*** to arrange the return of the Capital Case inmate to their home facility:

(1) Office of the Secretary/designee;

(2) BHCS Chief of Psychiatry/Medical Director;

(3) ***Psychology Office;***

(4) ***BFSSO***;

(5) ***Office of Chief Counsel***; and

(6) ***Bureau*** of Population Management.

e. After the Capital Case inmate has been transported back to their home facility, the Office of Chief Counsel shall notify the following:

(1) Governor's Office; and

(2) General Counsel's Office.

3. Re-socialization Assistance

a. For CCU inmates on the active mental health roster, psychology staff and the treatment team shall ensure that each inmate's ITP includes elements designed to aid the inmate in re-socialization and transition from a segregated setting to a general population setting.

b. For any CCU inmate on the active mental health roster whose participation in OOC opportunities falls below 25 hours in two weeks of any four-week period, that inmate's treatment team shall engage the inmate in a confidential setting to encourage the inmate to accept more OOC opportunities and modify the ITP as needed to promote that goal. Treatment teams shall be responsible for creating a written action plan for achieving that goal.

c. For inmates not on the active mental health roster, if any inmate's acceptance of OOC opportunities falls below 25 hours in two weeks of any four-week period, the individual responsible for tracking OOC time and creating OOC logs for the unit shall initiate a **DC-97, Mental Health Referral Form** to psychology staff. Psychology staff shall respond to the referral by meeting with the inmate to ascertain the reason for non-participation in OOC activities and develop an individualized written recovery plan to encourage greater participation, if clinically indicated.

4. Audit of group programming

   CCU inmates may access group programming in general population settings. When a program is facilitated on a CCU, exclusively for CCU inmates, the Licensed Psychologist Manager ***(LPM) or Regional LPM, in the absence of an LPM,*** shall conduct an audit of the group programming no less frequently than every 90 days, to analyze participation rates, continued appropriateness of the group or program subject matter, and other issues associated with the continued offering of a particular group or program. The audit shall be written and provided to the Office of Chief Counsel.

Q. News Media

1. Requests for interviews with a ***CCU*** Phase I inmate shall be handled in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 009, "Media Relations."**

2. All statutes, regulations, and policies that govern visits and telephone calls between a ***CCU Phase I*** inmate and the general public shall be used when responding to news media requests for interviews with a specific Capital Case inmate.

R. Modification of Sentence and Transfer to Standard General Population

1. If ***Department*** staff receive an order modifying the sentence of a Capital Case inmate to life imprisonment ***or another indeterminate sentence,*** because of a re-sentencing proceeding held as the result of an appeal or Post Conviction Relief Act, or as the result of a commutation, the facility Records Supervisor shall determine the validity of the order in accordance with Department policy **11.5.1, "Records Office Operations."** If the order is valid and effective, then the inmate may be moved from the ***CCU***.

2. ***The Department shall provide reintegration assistance to inmates whose sentences have been modified to life imprisonment or another indeterminate sentence, as these inmates transition to standardized general population housing.***

3. Questions concerning ***the movement of*** a ***former*** Capital Case inmate from a Capital Case unit shall be referred to the Executive Deputy Secretary for Institutional Operations (EDSI) ***or*** Regional Deputy Secretary.

S. Conversion to Phase II

When an Execution Warrant is signed by the Governor, or a Notice of Execution is issued by the Secretary, the inmate shall be converted to Phase II status ***and managed*** in accordance with Department policy **6.5.8, "Capital Case Administration."**