

**OCO Monitoring Visit to Washington Corrections Center for Women
Conducted by Angee Schrader, Assistant Ombuds- Gender Equity and Reentry, Carolina
Landa- Early Resolution Manager and Jessica Means- Early Resolution Ombuds**

Background

- The Office of the Corrections Ombuds (OCO) received numerous concerns regarding the Department of Correction's (DOC) response to COVID-19. Additionally, OCO received several requests to enter DOC facilities and perform monitoring visits. For the above reasons, on May 22nd, 2020, and May 26th, 2020, OCO Assistant Ombuds- Gender Equity & Reentry Specialist Angee Schrader, OCO Early Resolution Manager Carolina Landa, and OCO Early Resolution Ombuds Jessica Means conducted a monitoring visit to Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW). The purpose of the visit was to observe WCCW's response to COVID-19.

Executive Summary/Key Findings

- Throughout the OCO monitoring visit, the monitoring team observed different types of interactions between DOC staff and incarcerated individuals. The monitoring team did witness some DOC staff sharing positive conversations with the population. However, the overall atmosphere among DOC staff and the incarcerated population appeared strained. Multiple incarcerated individuals in all units conveyed stress, frustration, anger, sadness, and tension to the monitoring team. Some incarcerated individuals reported names of individual DOC staff to the monitoring team; they alleged these staff members use inflammatory language and make unsupportive comments.
- Incarcerated individuals and DOC staff were mostly masked and practicing social distancing. OCO observed some DOC staff and incarcerated individuals wearing masks around their neck or pulled off their nose. There was inconsistency reported to the monitoring team from the incarcerated population on how DOC staff is enforcing social distancing and the use of masks. Incarcerated individuals in the minimum custody unit reported to the monitoring team that if an individual is not social distancing or wearing a mask properly in the dayroom, instead of addressing that individual, some DOC staff will shut down the entire dayroom. This punishment causes irritation and resentment for the incarcerated population in the units. Due to the new guidelines at the facility, to social distance, the incarcerated population in minimum custody have limited time out of their cell/halls.
- The incarcerated population told the monitoring team that different DOC staff on various shifts have different interpretations of the new guidelines at the facility. The inconsistency in rules creates stress for the incarcerated population. They are unclear on what the expectations of them are.

- The monitoring team received conflicting information from DOC staff regarding issuing infractions for not wearing a mask and not social distancing. DOC staff informed the monitoring team infractions should not be written, and if they are, the infraction will be dismissed. In the medium custody unit, the monitor team did observe a written warning on the dry erase board that stated infractions would be issued for not wearing a mask.
- The incarcerated population told the monitoring team that they had received two masks each. Minimum custody reported it is a challenge to get a new mask if they need one. Medium custody said they had received new masks when they have asked for them. The incarcerated population told the monitoring team that they were informed by DOC staff not to wash their masks in the sinks because they will not sanitize properly. They use the laundry.
- The facility appeared clean and orderly. The monitoring team observed porters cleaning throughout the facility. Bottles of Hepastat, heavy-duty cleaner, and clean rags were seen widely available throughout the facility. Anti-bacterial soap is given to the population regularly. Bleach was available upon request in J and K units on the minimum campus. The monitoring team was given different information about bleach access in all units. The incarcerated population in medium and close custody said they do not have access upon request. Porters, medical and DOC staff in the medical clinic also said they do not have access to bleach. However, the monitoring team did see bleach and a logbook in the IPU (medical unit) behind the Officer's desk. The incarcerated population reported to the monitoring team that some of the porters are not cleaning correctly, which the monitoring team did observe in one unit during the visit. The incarcerated population is not given an option to volunteer to help clean, and they expressed frustration with that. Flyers were observed throughout the units with directions on how to use the cleaner properly.
- Both DOC staff and the incarcerated population shared with the monitoring team that the J-Pay kiosks are not working correctly for video visits. They are freezing in the middle of visits, and families are having a challenging time receiving refunds from J-Pay. Incarcerated individuals reported this problem in all units.
- While close custody and medium custody are still given the usual amount of time out of their cells, minimum custody is not. They are allowed out of their halls/cells twice a day and must remain with the people in their hall for dayroom/outside time and mainline. The limited outings pose a challenge for the incarcerated population that would like to socialize with other people in their unit. Incarcerated individuals still working reported to the monitoring team they are unable to use the microwaves in the dayroom unless it is their time out, which they often miss. These short outings also negatively impact phone time for the population since every other phone is taped off for social distancing.
- The monitoring team was informed by DOC staff that all strip searches had been temporarily suspended. When incarcerated individuals arrive at the facility, DOC staff

walks the individuals through the body scanner. If the body scanner alerts to contraband, that individual is then taken to segregation and monitored. DOC staff at WCCW are not currently utilizing the dry cells or the dry cell process. The monitoring team did see an incarcerated individual walking through the scanner during the visit. DOC Staff was observed using appropriate PPE.

- Vinyl gloves are being given to the incarcerated population to use to clean with multiple cleaning chemicals. Incarcerated individuals have raised concerns about these gloves with DOC staff. It was reported they rip easily and are causing rashes after cleaning with chemicals for some individuals. Upon review of the box of gloves, the monitoring team was able to confirm the manufacturer does display a warning not to use the gloves as a chemical barrier. The box lists them as medical examination gloves.
- While WCCW has been able to lower its population with early releases, they are still receiving a large number of incarcerated individuals that are Community Custody Violators. This increases the population and utilizes DOC staff resources. When they arrive, they are screened and housed mostly in segregation.

Statutory Authority

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

Observations

Entrance

- Upon walking up to the main entrance of WCCW, the monitoring staff observed a tented walkway to provide cover for the line that forms at the entrance to screen. There was a WA DOC COVID-19 Active Screening Job Aid posted upon entrance to the building. Inside the building, DOC staff read and asked the screening questions. After answering no to all questions, the monitoring team's temperature was taken by DOC staff. The monitoring team observed DOC staff wearing face coverings, and the Officer screening was wearing gloves and standing behind a transparent plastic-like barrier. There is a sticker provided for anyone leaving the facility and coming back to verify the screening process was done and cleared. (Appendix A, Photo A, B, C, and D)

Main Facility

- OCO observed COVID-19 posted DOC memos, health-safety information posters, mask and social distance reminders to staff and incarcerated population throughout the facility in English and Spanish. The monitoring team observed most DOC staff wearing face coverings and additional PPEs throughout the facility, both inside and outside of buildings. The monitoring team also observed porter's cleaning. (Appendix A, Photo E)

J-Unit Minimum Custody

- J unit is a particular unit that houses pregnant incarcerated individuals and incarcerated individuals with their children. The maximum capacity is 95 plus 20 babies. Currently, the population is at 59 plus 3 babies. The monitoring team was told one pregnant woman was recently transferred to the unit. The monitoring team observed hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags available. Soap and water were available in the restrooms. Bleach is available upon request. COVID-19, social distancing flyers, and OCO posters were observed in both English and Spanish. The living units house two people per room. Porters are cleaning the unit hourly. Phones were observed set up socially distanced. No hand sanitizer is available. J-Pay video visits were reported as freezing during visits. No maintenance issues reported. Both DOC staff and the incarcerated population were observed wearing masks. (Appendix A, Photo F, and G)

L- Unit Minimum Custody

- L-Unit is a combined living unit with a Therapeutic Community, which is a substance use disorder program. The maximum capacity is 150. Currently, the population is 94. Staff and the incarcerated population were observed wearing masks. Hepistat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available for use. Soap and water were available in the restrooms. Bleach was not available. The monitoring team observed one of the porters wiping down the phones but not picking the phone up and cleaning the mouthpiece. Incarcerated individuals who were also watching the porter informed DOC staff with their concerns. The porters are cleaning hourly. COVID-19, social distancing flyers, and OCO posters were observed posted in both English and Spanish. Hand sanitizer is not available. J-pay video visits were reported as freezing during visits. No maintenance issues were reported. A large group of incarcerated individuals in this unit requested a meeting with the monitoring team. They expressed frustration with treatment by DOC TC staff and programming expectations during COVID-19. The monitoring team was told that inconsistent rules and punitive punishments could lead to Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative revoke, denial of work release, and denial of the Community Parenting Alternative Program. This creates added stress for these individuals. (Appendix A, Photos H and I)

Medium Custody

- Medium custody has three living units. The OCO monitoring team was able to visit two. The maximum capacity is 263. Currently, the population is at 257. Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available for use. Soap and water were available in the restrooms. Bleach was not available. COVID-19, social distancing flyers, and OCO posters were observed posted in both English and Spanish. Porters are cleaning hourly. No hand sanitizer is available. J-pay video visits were reported as freezing during visits. One shower was reported as having low water pressure, which is being addressed by DOC staff. Phones and dayrooms were socially distanced. Incarcerated individuals reported DOC staff

does not always wear masks. The monitoring staff observed a dry erase board in both units. DOC staff had written on the board that the population would be infraacted with a 103 (Refuse Order) for not wearing a mask. DOC staff and the incarcerated population were seen wearing masks during the visit. Incarcerated individuals did share with the monitoring team that DOC staff does not close down their dayroom if others are not wearing masks as a punishment to the unit. They reported they are out of their cells the average amount of time . (Appendix A, Photos J, K, and L)

Close Custody

- Close custody has two living units. The OCO monitoring team was able to visit one. Maximum Capacity is 146. Currently, the population is at 126. Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available for use. Soap and water were available in the restrooms. Bleach was not available. COVID-19, social distancing flyers and OCO posters were observed in both English and Spanish. Porters are cleaning hourly. No hand sanitizer is available. J-pay video visits were reported as freezing during visits in both pods. Phones and dayrooms were socially distanced. One count light was reported as not working correctly, which is being addressed by DOC staff. Incarcerated individuals said that they do not have access to books. They would like their education and library back. OCO staff were shown the vinyl gloves that have been given to the incarcerated population to clean with and were told they are fragile and rip. These are clear medical examination gloves and different than the purple gloves that were previously used by the incarcerated population and still used by DOC staff. Upon reading the box of directions for the gloves, OCO staff reviewed a warning from the manufacturer to not use as a chemical barrier. (Appendix A, Photos M, N, and O)

Tec Residential

- The Tec unit houses the incarcerated population with mental health needs. There are two pods. Tec Residential, which is a living unit and Tec Acute, which is a unit set up for mostly short term, closely monitored mental health care. The monitoring team was able to visit Tec Residential. The maximum capacity is 40. Currently, the population is at 34. Tec Residential does not have J-Pay access in this unit. They must go to the gym to use J-Pay. Multiple incarcerated individuals expressed frustration with the monitoring team regarding the lack of J-Pay access in their unit. Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available for use. Soap and water are available in the restrooms. Bleach was not available. Hand sanitizer was not available. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in English. Porters are cleaning hourly. OCO posters were not observed; however, the OCO phone number was observed spray-painted on the floor by the phones. (Appendix A, Photos P and Q)

Receiving/Segregation/Isolation Unit

- The receiving unit has two pods. The maximum capacity is 97. Currently, the population is at 48 with two individuals per a cell. Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available for use. Soap and water were available in the cells. Bleach was not available. Hand sanitizer was not available. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in both English and Spanish. Porters are cleaning hourly. OCO flyers were observed. The incarcerated individuals were celled in during the visit.
- The segregation unit has two pods. One pod is being utilized for segregation, and the other pod is being used for isolation. 19 incarcerated individuals were housed in segregation. Currently, WCCW is housing Community Custody violators in segregation and isolation if they are symptomatic or have been exposed to COVID-19. Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaner with clean rags were available in the control room. Soap and water were available in the cells. Bleach was not available. Hand sanitizer was available in the control room. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in English and Spanish in the control room. Porters are cleaning hourly. OCO posters were not observed; however, the OCO phone number was spray-painted on the floor by the phones.
- The isolation unit housed four incarcerated individuals from WCCW and one Community Custody Violator. They had all been tested for COVID-19 with negative results; however, WCCW is now testing a second time as well. The incarcerated individuals reported frustration with still being in isolation after the first test was negative. Medical staff comes into the unit twice a day. Mental health staff was reported as coming into the unit twice a week. The incarcerated individuals on isolation are allowed showers once a week, and linen change once a week. The incarcerated individuals reported to the monitoring team that they do not understand why they are only allowed to shower once a week and this causes discomfort, especially if someone is menstruating. Before you enter the isolation unit, there is a table with PPE and hand sanitizer available. The officers socially distance away from the cuff port when it is opened to communicate and deliver food. Anyone entering the isolation unit is required to wear gloves in the unit then throw the gloves in the garbage in the unit before exiting. Bleach is available to the porters in this unit. Porters are cleaning hourly. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in English and Spanish. OCO posters were not observed; however, the OCO phone number was spray-painted on the floor by the phones. The incarcerated individuals in this unit are allowed to bring their J-Pay players, and there is a video game handheld console available for use. Books are available upon request. All DOC staff and porters were observed wearing masks and gloves. (Appendix A, Photos R, S, and T)

Dining Halls/Kitchen

- The monitoring team observed the large kitchen that serves close custody, medium custody, tec and receiving on both visits. Social distancing is difficult in a small commercial kitchen with many incarcerated individuals and DOC staff working in tight spaces. All DOC staff and incarcerated individuals were observed wearing face coverings and were seen wearing hairnets and gloves. The dining hall had three people seated per table. Each unit is brought in separately. There are social distance stickers in the dining hall to create space between each person in the food line. On the first day, the monitoring team visited the dining hall; hand sanitizer was observed for use. After mainline DOC staff placed it in a locked box. On the second day of monitoring, we were told by the incarcerated population they only had access to the hand sanitizer on the day the monitoring team had seen it and had not had access since. The monitoring team observed it was no longer in the locked box. (Appendix A, Photos U, and V)
- The monitoring team observed the smaller kitchen that serves minimum custody. All DOC staff and incarcerated individuals were seen wearing face coverings and were observed wearing hairnets and gloves. The dining hall had one person seated per table. Social distancing stickers were found in the food line. Hand sanitizer was not available. (Appendix A, Photos X, and W)

Gym

- Hepastat and heavy-duty cleaners were observed in the gym. COVID-19 flyers were posted in English and Spanish. Hand Sanitizer was not available. Porters were observed cleaning. The weight room was unavailable for use, but the other gym equipment was available. It was unclear to the monitoring team why. This issue was also brought up in the Tier Rep meeting notes from earlier this month. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in English and Spanish. OCO flyers were posted. We observed incarcerated individuals making masks and PPE in two of the closed rooms in the gym. They were socially distanced and wearing masks. (Appendix A, Photos Y, Z, and AA)

Yard

- OCO staff walked through the yard and observed multiple flyer reminders for social distancing and utilizing masks. DOC staff and the incarcerated population were observed wearing masks. Incarcerated individuals who live in the same housing unit were observed walking together. (Appendix A, Photo BB)

Medical Clinic

- WCCW has an extensive medical unit. The clinic is divided into two units. One unit is for medical appointments, and the other unit is IPU, where incarcerated

individuals with medical needs are housed. DOC staff at the check-in desk were observed sitting behind a transparent plastic-like barrier. The waiting room chairs were set up socially distanced. All DOC staff and incarcerated individuals were observed wearing masks. The monitoring team verified COVID-19 tests in the lab area. There were roughly 60 tests available for use. The monitoring team did not see bleach in the medical clinic area and when asked if it was available were told by the porters, medical staff and the officer on duty, they do not have access to bleach. Inside the IPU area, the monitoring team did observe bleach behind the Officer's desk. COVID-19 and social distancing flyers were posted in both English and Spanish. Porters are cleaning hourly. No hand sanitizer was available. OCO flyers were posted in the IPU. The monitoring team was told nobody currently in isolation was housed there. (Appendix A, Photos CC, DD, EE, FF, GG)

Tier Rep Meeting (All units, DOC staff)

- OCO staff met with all tier reps from the facility. The meeting started with DOC staff and ended with incarcerated individuals only. Porters were observed cleaning the room before the meeting began and the chairs and tables were set up socially distanced. As the meeting was starting, the monitoring team saw multiple staff members walking into the room with their masks around their necks. One DOC staff member sitting next to the monitoring team continued to take his mask off throughout the meeting to spit chewing tobacco into a cup. One DOC staff member stood up to address the group and took his mask off while talking. Some tension was observed by the monitoring team between DOC staff and the tier reps. After DOC staff left the room, the tier reps shared with the monitoring team multiple frustrations. When asked about the overall atmosphere of each unit, it was reported back to the monitoring team as negative. The incarcerated population reported feeling unsupported by most DOC staff. (Appendix A, Photos HH)

Appendix A



Photo A

Description: Tent set up outside of WCCW main entrance.

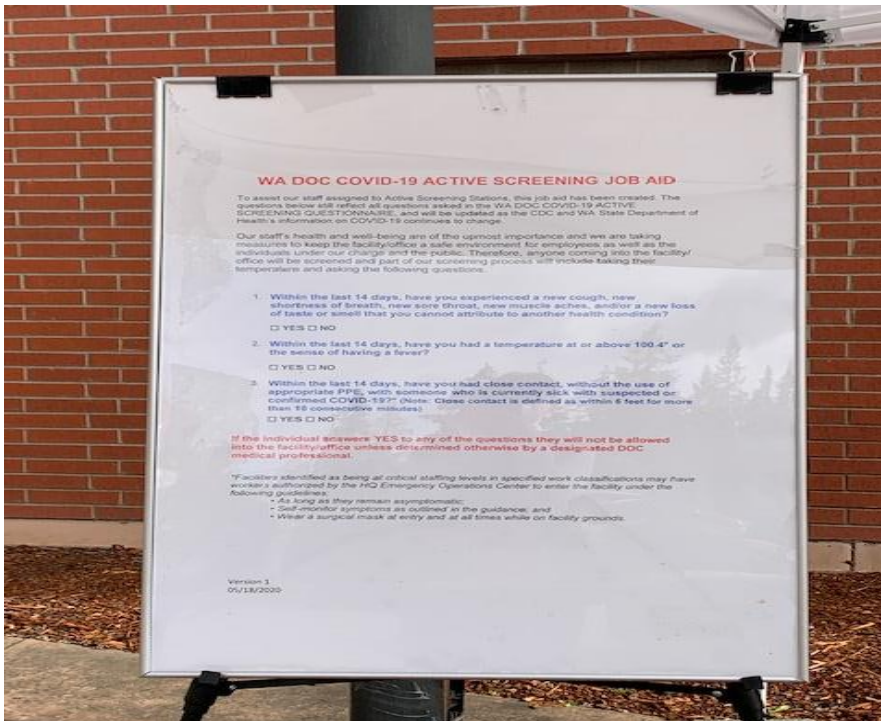


Photo B

Description: COVID-19 screening job aid for staff.



Photo C

Description: Entry, DOC staff with screening questions, standing behind a protective barrier.



Photo D

Description: DOC staff at entry with touchless temperature gun wearing appropriate PPE.



Photo E

Description: Porter observed cleaning in the main entry.



Photo F

Description: Phones set up at a social distance in J unit. A flyer was posted above the phone explaining how to use the cleaning products.

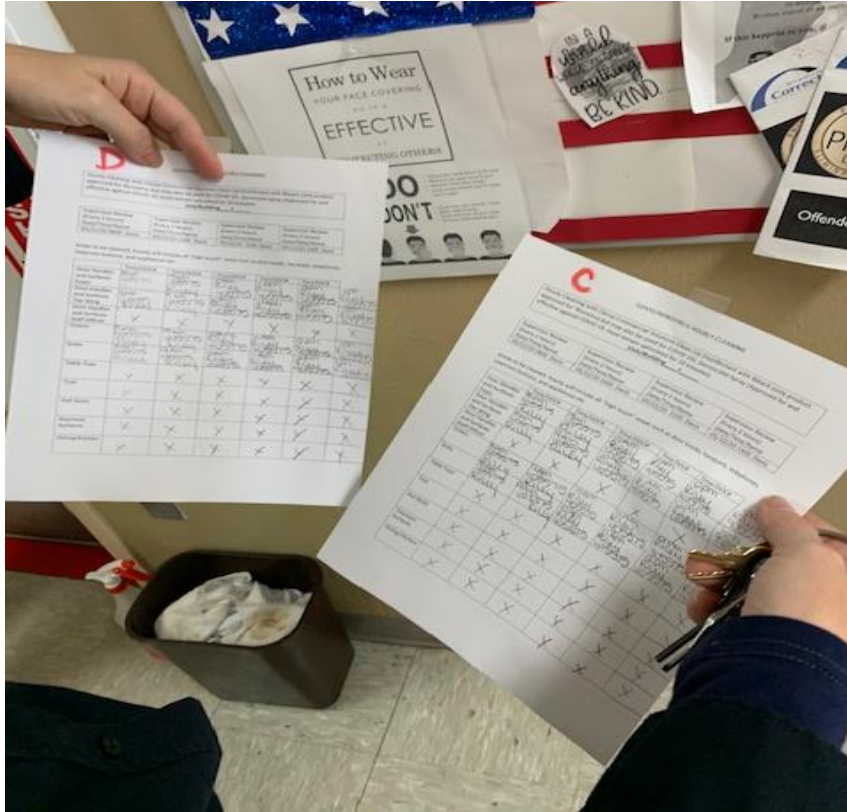


Photo G

Description: Cleaning log for porters. A flyer is posted in the background explaining how to wear a mask in J unit.



Photo H

Description: Cleaning products in L Unit.



Photo I

Description: Porter observed cleaning. OCO phone number is spray-painted on the floor in L unit.



Photo J

Description: Incarcerated individuals in the Medium Unit dayroom. Stools are marked off for social distancing.

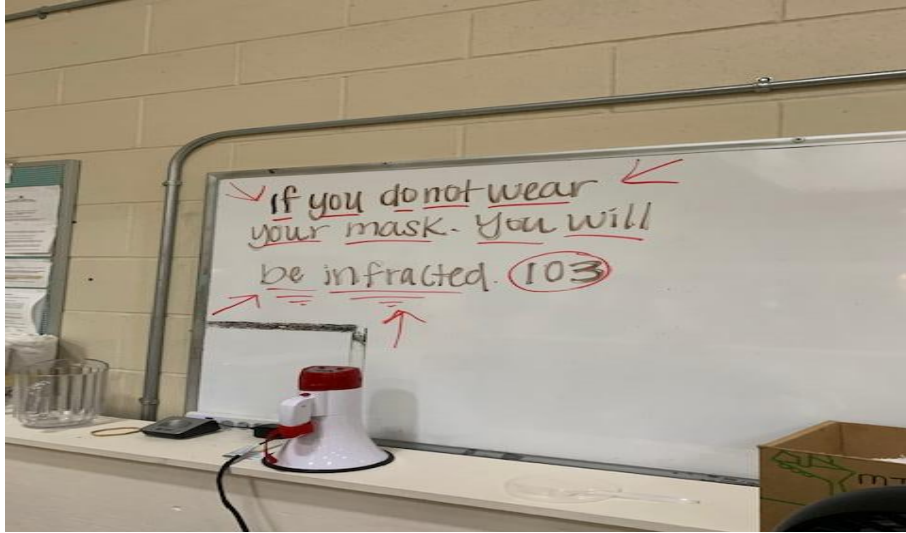


Photo K

Description: Message written on dry erase board in Medium Custody warning of an infraction if a mask is not worn.



Photo L

Description: Phones socially distanced in medium custody.



Photo M

Description: Stools taped off for social distancing in Close Custody.



Photo N

Description: Vinyl gloves that were pointed out by incarcerated individuals as being problematic for cleaning in close custody.



Photo O

Description: Incarcerated individuals in the yard in close custody wearing masks.

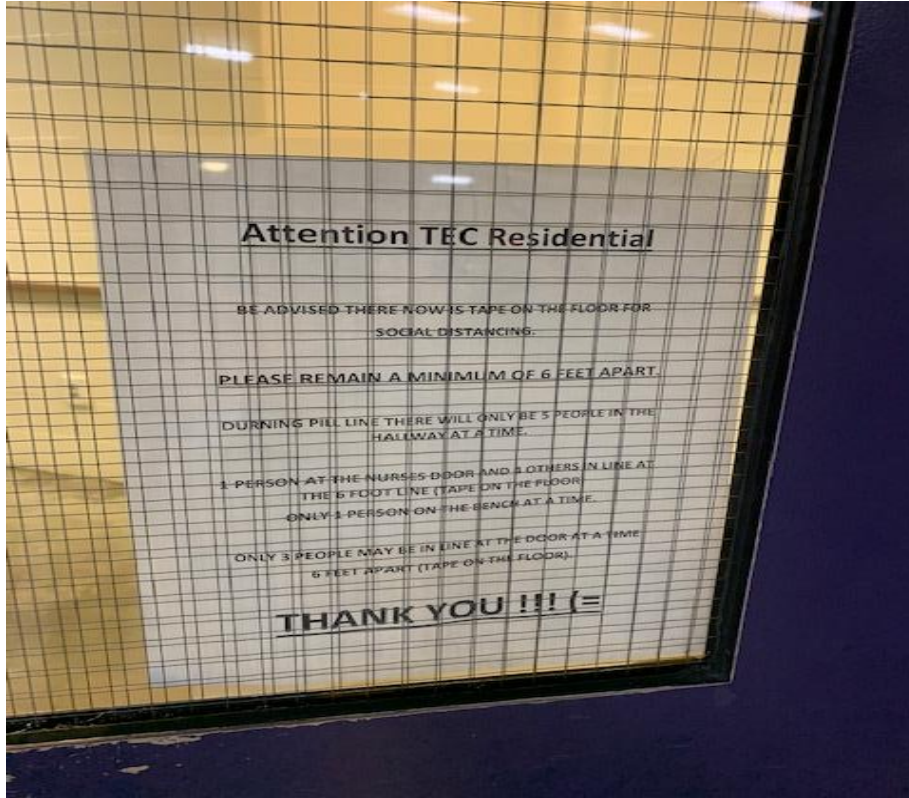


Photo P

Description: Tech Residential posted social distancing reminder.



Photo Q

Description: Porter observed cleaning in Tech Residential.

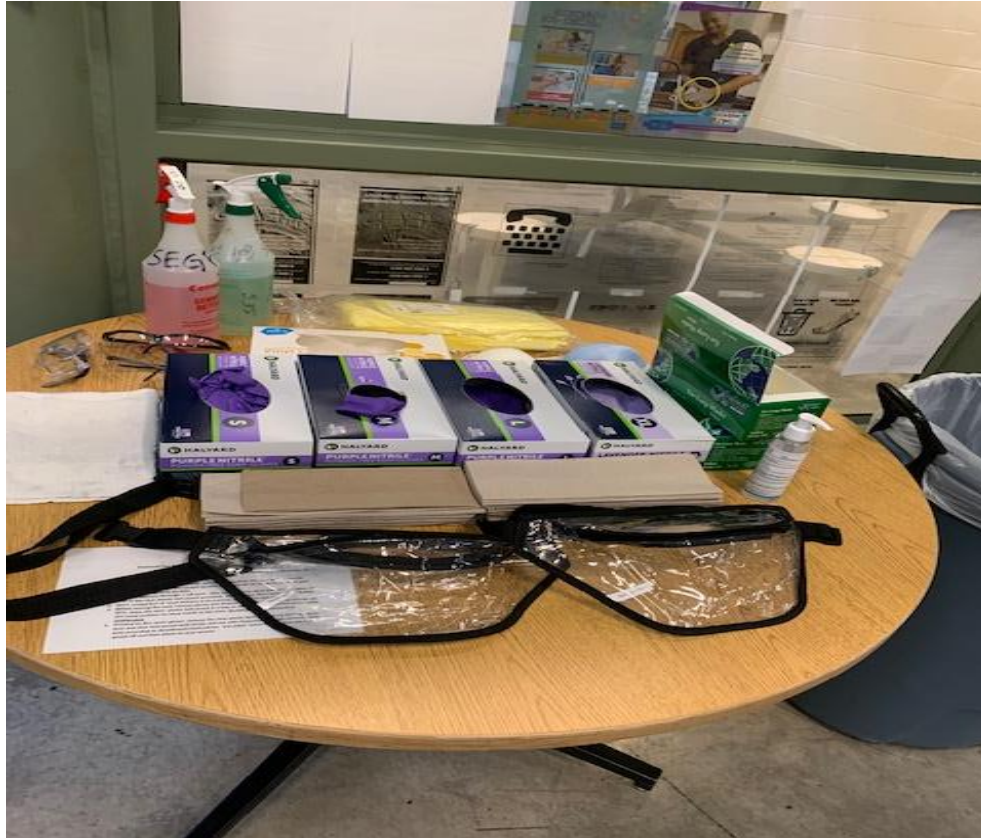


Photo R

Description: PPE table set up outside of the isolation unit.

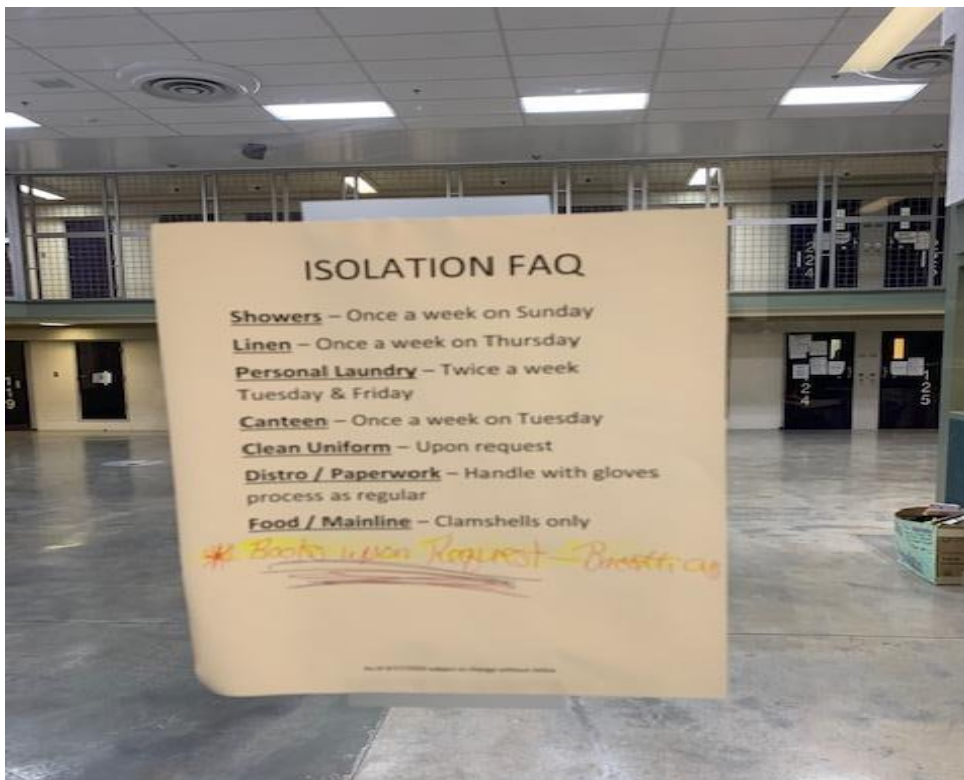


Photo S

Description: Isolation schedule posted on the door.

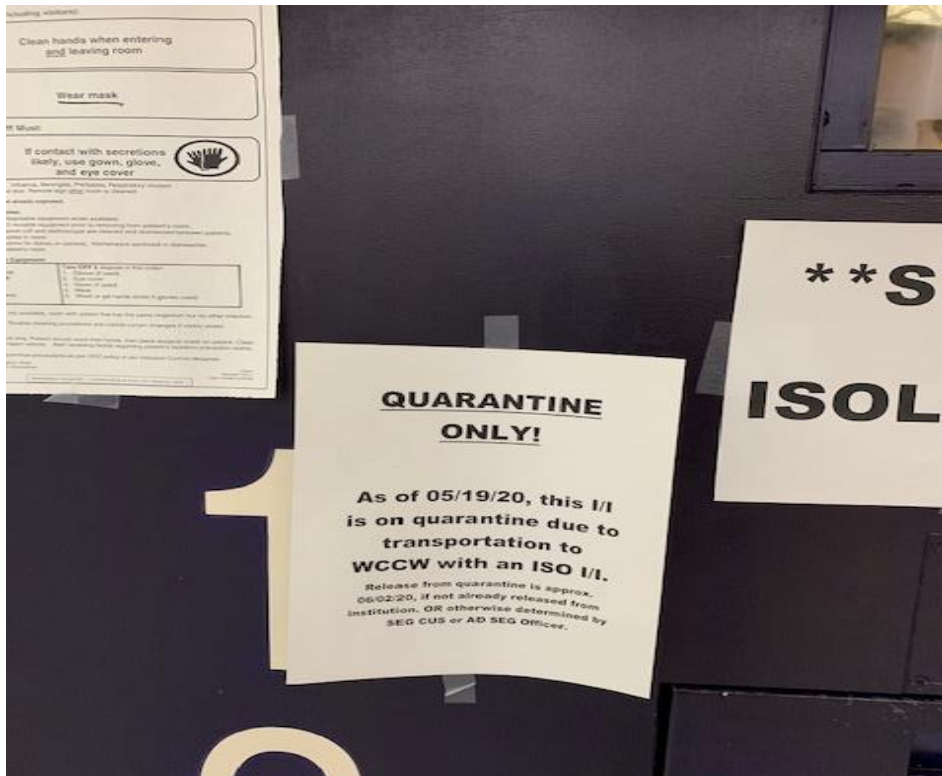


Photo T

Description: Sign posted on the cell door in the isolation unit.



Photo U

Description: CCU at mainline sitting socially distanced.



Photo V

Description: Hand sanitizer available in mainline on May 22nd.



Photo W

Description: Reminder tape to social distance for mainline in minimum custody.



Photo X

Description:
Incarcerated individuals socially distanced in minimum custody mainline.



Photo Y

Description:
Incarcerated individuals making PPE.



Photo Z

Description: Incarcerated individuals making masks.

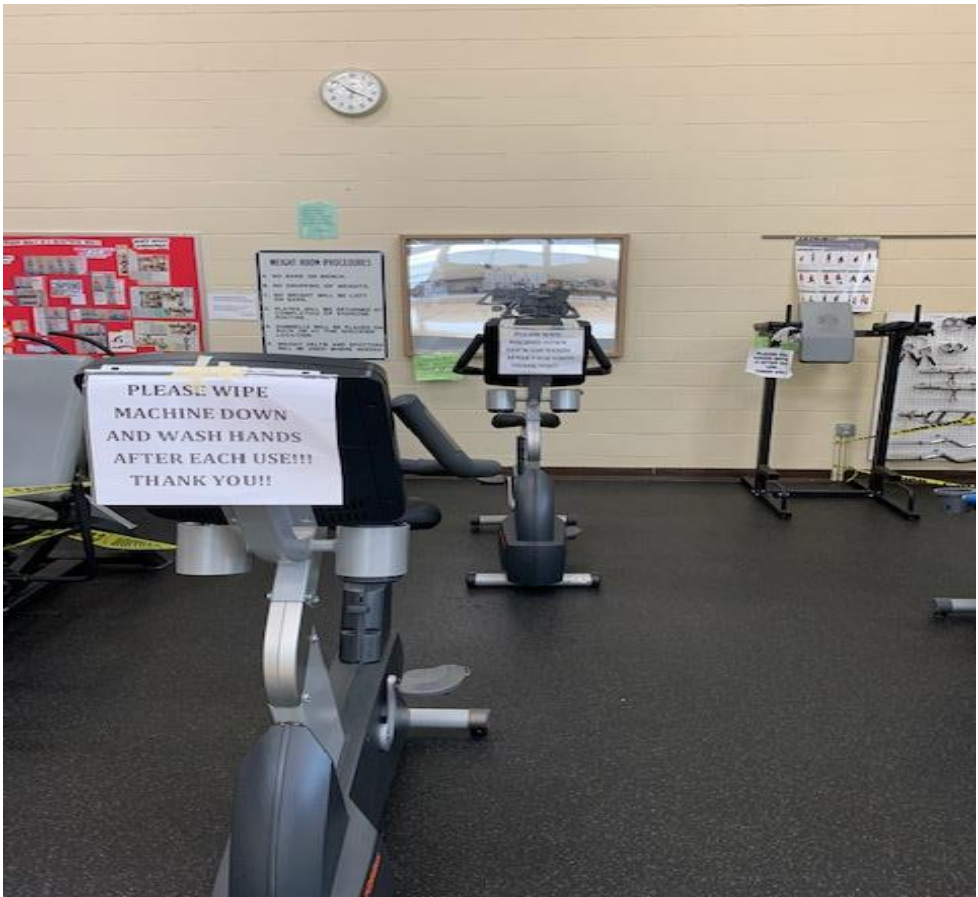


Photo AA

Description: Gym equipment with cleaning reminders.



Photo BB

Description:
DOC staff and incarcerated individuals wearing masks in the yard.



Photo CC

Description:
DOC staff in medical wearing a mask and sitting behind a transparent plastic barrier.



Photo DD

Description:
Waiting room
in the medical
clinic.

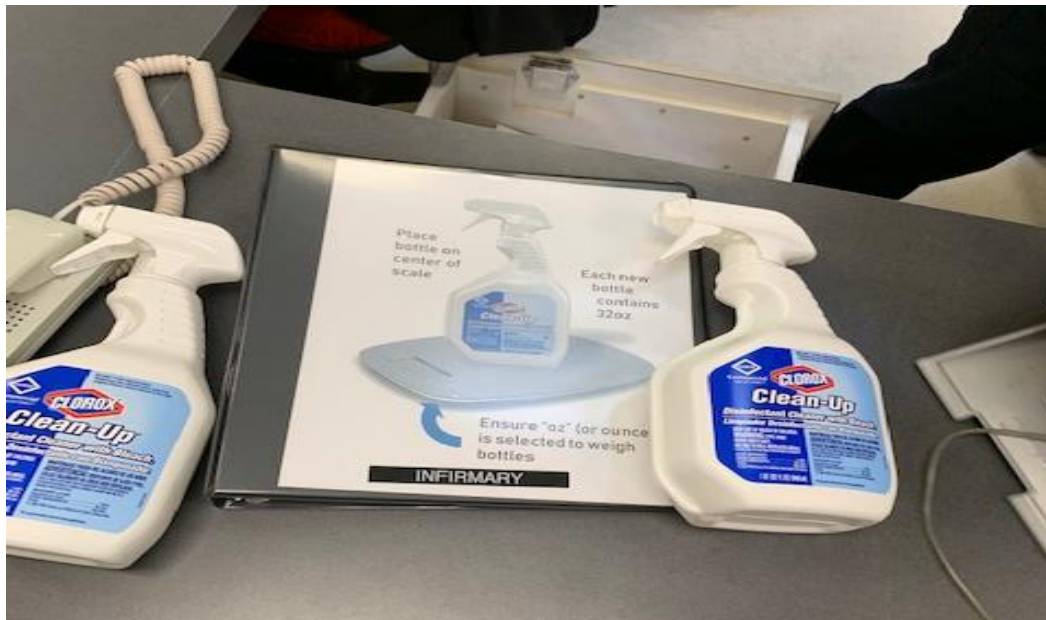


Photo EE

Description:
Bleach in the
IPU unit.



Photo FF

Description:
One unopened
box and one
opened box of
Covid-19 tests.



Photo GG

Description:
Cleaning supplies in
the medical clinic.



Photo HH

Description:
Tier rep
meeting with
DOC staff.



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

June 9, 2020

Joanna Carns
Office of Corrections Ombuds
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW
Olympia, WA 98505

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to review the 'OCO Monitoring Visit to the Washington Corrections Center for Women' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

The Department of Corrections takes the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the Washington correctional facilities very seriously. The agency appreciates the opportunity to have your staff tour the Washington Corrections Center for Women and evaluate the facilities implementation of the protocols and procedures put in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The information provided by the OCO was useful to ensure the Department of Corrections is doing everything it can to protect the incarcerated populations health and safety while incarcerated, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Washington Corrections Center for Women understands the importance of the implementation of the new protocols put into place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Facility leadership is working with staff to ensure that all protocols are being followed and will continue to monitor protocol compliance, which will be addressed by staffing supervisors if noncompliance continues. The noted written warning on the white board in the medium custody unit has been removed as this was not an approved message. Incarcerated individuals will be first verbally reminded, if noncompliance continues, will then be issued a behavior observation evaluation (BOE), and if compliance is still resisted, a minor infraction will be issued.

The facility superintendent distributed a reminder email to all staff, clarifying the proper use and distribution of gloves as personal protection equipment (PPE) to incarcerated individuals. Those gloves that are not to be used with chemicals have been removed from all areas where chemicals are to be used. Germicide and Hepastat 256 are considered low caustic cleaners and do not require chemical grade use gloves. Additionally, the superintendent distributed communication to the incarcerated population about reporting skin irritation to medical staff to be evaluated and if needed, appropriate PPE will be given

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to the incarcerated individual and arrangements will be made to ensure their health and safety.

Facility leadership has ensured that hand sanitizer is available for use during mainline for incarcerated individuals. This direction has been clearly identified for all future mainline occurrences and will continue to be available to the population. Additionally, the facility has allowed gym equipment to continue being used with the direction that each piece of equipment is cleaned after each individual use. The weight room will remain closed during this time. There is cleaning supplies available to clean the gym equipment and a bathroom with soap and water is available to wash hands before and after use of gym equipment.

We appreciate your team's understanding of the unique implementation across facilities and the addition of policies and procedures being put in place to protect our populations. We will continue to proactively implement precautionary measures as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. Moving forward, Washington Department of Corrections will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Corrections Ombuds on any future quality assurance visits.

Sincerely,



Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections