

Memorandum

Date : February 17, 2004

To : All California Department of Corrections Employees

Subject: **ZERO TOLERANCE REGARDING THE "CODE OF SILENCE"**

The California Department of Corrections (CDC) is only as strong as the values held by each of its employees, sworn and non-sworn. How we conduct ourselves inside our institutions and in the Central Office is a reflection of those values.

The "Code of Silence" operates to conceal wrongdoing. One employee, operating alone, can foster a Code of Silence. The Code of Silence also arises because of a conspiracy among staff to fail to report violations of policy, or to retaliate against those employees who report wrongdoing. Fostering the Code of Silence includes the failure to act when there is an ethical and professional obligation to do so.

Every time a correctional employee decides not to report wrongdoing, he or she harms our Department and each one of us by violating the public's trust. As members of law enforcement, all Correctional Officers must remain beyond reproach. The public's trust in this Department is also violated by retaliating against, ostracizing, or in anyway undermining those employees who report wrongdoing and/or cooperate during investigations. There is no excuse for fostering a Code of Silence.

Your hard fought efforts to protect the public deserve recognition. Recently, however, the public's trust has been undermined by the operation of a Code of Silence within the CDC. To correct this problem we are taking steps to ensure the Department exemplifies integrity and instills pride. Part of this effort is the immediate implementation of a zero tolerance policy concerning the Code of Silence. We will not tolerate any form of silence as it pertains to misconduct, unethical, or illegal behavior. We also will not tolerate any form of reprisal against employees who report misconduct or unethical behavior, including their stigmatization or isolation.

Each employee is responsible for reporting conduct that violates Department policy. Each supervisor and manager is responsible for creating an environment conducive to these goals. Supervisors are responsible for acquiring information and immediately conveying it to managers. Managers are responsible for taking all appropriate steps upon receipt of such information, including initiating investigations and promptly disciplining all employees who violate departmental policy.

Any employee, regardless of rank, sworn or non-sworn, who fails to report violations of policy or who acts in a manner that fosters the Code of Silence, shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.



RICHARD RIMMER

Director (A)
California Department of Corrections



RODERICK Q. HICKMAN

Agency Secretary
Youth and Adult Correctional Agency