

**Virginia Department of Corrections
Lawrenceville Correctional Center
Security Operations Review**

FINAL REPORT for

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As prepared by
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Executive Summary

LAWRENCEVILLE CORRECTIONAL CENTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virginia Department of Corrections, with the agreement and support of GEO, Inc, contracted with MGT of America, Inc. to conduct an independent review of the security operations of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center.

The project objectives as established by the agreement between MGT of America and the Virginia Department of Corrections focus primarily on the security operations systems of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center, and more specifically on the security systems designed to eliminate, detect, and control contraband within the institution. The specific objectives as outlined in the May 3, 2007 proposal letter to the Virginia Department of Corrections (VaDOC) include the following:

- 1) MGT will review all operations, security procedures, and the level of compliance of operations security procedures.
- 2) The MGT review will include an on-site review that will focus on, at a minimum, the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee/visitor shakedowns upon entering the institution's security perimeter; the effectiveness of the institutions drug testing procedures; and the effectiveness of the random and routine shakedowns of inmates and inmate cells.
- 3) MGT will assess the overall effectiveness of the institutions policies, procedures, and practices as it relates to the searches for and control of contraband within the institution.
- 4) MGT will review the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution's hiring practices as it relates to correctional officers. This review will include a verification that the correctional officers are meeting all of the Virginia Department of Corrections training requirements within scheduled timeframes (i.e. initial training and 40 hour update).
- 5) MGT will review the terms and conditions of the VaDOC and GEO contract in regards to security procedures, security staffing and the hiring of correctional officers and their training. MGT will review and report to the VaDOC on the contractor's compliance with the contract terms and conditions.

Approach

The MGT project team was on-site at the facility on May 10, 11 and 12, 2007. A preliminary briefing with Director Gene Johnson, Deputy Director John Jabe, Regional Director Dave Robinson, Regional Manager Marvin Dodson, Warden Edward Wright, and Assistant Warden Ken DuBose was conducted in Richmond on Wednesday May 9, 2007. During the briefing the project staff was provided documents, policies, and procedures related to the objectives of the project. While on-site at the facility, the project team's approach was to conduct a tour of the facility and observe its operations; interview key staff in order to fully understand the operations of the facility and its strengths and weaknesses; and verify the status of the operations through review of data and records made available to the project staff.

Action Taken by GEO and VaDOC

Both GEO and the VaDOC have taken initiatives in the past few months in response to the problems related to the presence of contraband within the institution. They have acknowledged that the high percentage of positives among the drug tests administered to inmates at Lawrenceville, combined with the high number of incidents involving cell phones found in the institution, indicated that steps needed to be taken to improve the security systems of the institution. The consultant team was provided with information and documentation outlining these initiatives. These initiatives were reviewed by the consultant team in order to fully understand the status of the security systems of the institution and also to prevent a repetition of actions that have already been initiated by either GEO or VaDOC staff. A detailed list of these initiatives are contained in this report.

Key Recommendations

As a result of its review MGT identified fifty specific recommendations for the consideration and review of both GEO and VaDOC. MGT believes that adoption and action on these recommendations will result in a significant reduction in the type and amount of contraband available within the Lawrenceville Correctional Center.

Although the MGT project team believes that all fifty recommendations are essential to addressing the concerns relative to the presence of contraband within the facility, the following key recommendations are considered critical to correcting the concerns that have been identified.

- **The VaDOC should standardize procedures for the selection of the random drug test by generating a listing from central office of those inmates to be drug tested each month. This would eliminate any potential for a selection process that shows favoritism of any kind and also would generate a true random selection process that would permit a more accurate comparison of data from institution to institution.**
- **The institution and VaDOC should establish procedures that insure the selection of those to be randomly tested is decided outside the institution in order to insure impartiality and also insure the pool is a true random selection.**
- **The VaDOC and the Contract Liaison should insure that the facility randomly tests the required five percent as required by departmental policy.**
- **Lawrenceville Correctional Center should initiate some actions steps that could compensate for the present staff composition and the problems that arise from a combination of the policy and the high percentage of female security staff. This would include creating special gender specific posts that would have primary responsibility for conducting random pat searches of inmates throughout the compound on each shift.**
- **GEO should accelerate its efforts to fill the existing staff vacancies and eliminate the fluctuations from full-staffing to periods of high vacancy numbers in order to ensure that an adequate security work force is consistently maintain.**

- **Conduct periodic process and system checks of current policies utilized at the main entrance area. Such system checks would involve testing the effectiveness of the search procedures and should be used as an educational tool to improve the existing security plan.**
- **Conduct regular refresher training to all security staff on proper entry procedures and search policies and requirements.**
- **Initiate a requirement that a certain percentage of randomly selected staff entering the facility shall be subject to enhanced searches that should include a thorough pat search, removal of shoes and all outer clothing, check by a hand held metal detector, etc. These searches should be documented in a log book for review by supervisory staff.**
- **The VaDOC should consider eliminating the prohibition of cross gender searches of males by female officers.**
- **Increase the number of pat-searches during mass movements and conduct the searches at both entry and exit points of major common areas including dining room, recreational areas, and educational classroom.**
- **Install additional Pan-Tilt-Zoom camera(s) in the visiting room. The second camera could replace the four small stationary cameras which have limited image quality. These cameras should also be linked to a digital recorder that would permit constant recording of all the cameras in the area. A digital recording system would also permit long term storage of the recordings. This would not only be beneficial for investigative purposes but also permit the supervisory staff to review after the fact the operations of the visiting room on a regular basis to detect potential problems and security breakdowns.**
- **GEO should maintain and expand the presence of drug dogs within the institution.**
- **Given the level of turnover at the facility it is recommended that the facility identify, train, and maintain a cadre of at least 12 Field Training Officers.**
- **GEO should pursue the acquisition of a package x-ray machine to permit ongoing inspection for contraband of packages, parcels, etc.**

Summary

This project focused on the security operations systems of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center, and more specifically on the security systems designed to eliminate, detect, and control contraband within the institution. The project team, in cooperation with the VaDOC and the GEO staff assigned to Lawrenceville, reviewed the operations, security procedures, and the level of compliance with both the VaDOC and GEO operations security procedures. The review also included an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee/visitor shakedowns upon entering the institution's security perimeter; the effectiveness of the institutions drug testing procedures; and the effectiveness of the random and routine shakedowns of inmates and inmate cells. Finally, MGT assessed the overall effectiveness of the institutions policies, procedures, and practices as it relates to the searches for and control of contraband within the institution.

At the conclusion of this assessment the MGT project team formally presented its findings and recommendations to the VaDOC and representatives of GEO and the Lawrenceville Correctional Center. As documented in this report MGT found the institution to be a safe and secure facility that has a low incidence of violence. Staff were found to be professional and committed to operating a facility that is in compliance with contemporary correctional standards and specifically the standards and requirements of the VaDOC.

As has been documented in reports provided by both GEO and the VaDOC there has been a high incidence of contraband in the institution since 2005. What is important from our perspective is that both the leadership of the VaDOC and administrators of Lawrenceville have recognized that a problem exists and have taken aggressive action, including initiating this independent review, to identify the possible contributing factors to the situation, and to implement appropriate corrective action. Many of the problems reported in this final report have been previously identified through reviews and assessments initiated by the VaDOC in the later part of 2006 and early in 2007. As can be seen from the drug testing results for 2007, these actions are already impacting the presence of drugs within the institution.

The situation we found at Lawrenceville is certainly not unique. Institutions that are well run, staffed appropriately, operating based on sound and comprehensive policy and procedures, can experience situations where the inconsistent application and enforcement of the security requirements result in serious breaches of the security envelope of the institution. In this case those breaches resulted in the high incidence of drugs and cell phones being introduced into the institution.

It was clear, however, that the systems, procedures, and policies are in place at Lawrenceville that will, and has to large degree, permitted this situation to be corrected through a strong response by both GEO and the VaDOC. This was further reinforced to us by the willingness of both parties to immediately respond aggressively to our recommendations and suggestions as they were being presented to them. It is our belief that the problems we observed and documented are easily correctable and will result in significant reductions in the incidence of contraband within the institution.

Security Operations Review

LAWRENCEVILLE CORRECTIONAL CENTER SECURITY OPERATIONS REVIEW

A. Background

The Virginia Department of Corrections, with the agreement and support of GEO, Inc, contracted with MGT of America, Inc. to conduct an independent review of the security operations of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center.

The Lawrenceville Correctional Center (LCC) is a Level III (medium custody) facility with a rated capacity of 1,576 adult male inmates. The facility has been operated by GEO since March 23, 2003 under a contractual agreement from the Virginia Department of Corrections (VaDOC). During the last several months concern has risen from within the VaDOC and from external observers over a significant increase in incidents involving contraband. The following factors have influenced the concern over the security operations of the institution:

- Unusually high level of positive drug tests among the inmate population;
- The discovery of an unusually high number of cell phones within the institution; and
- Allegations and confirmation of serious misconduct among staff involving contraband, which has resulted in a number of criminal investigations and prosecutions.

As is the case with VaDOC and GEO administrators, these types of situations certainly would raise concern about possible breeches and breakdowns within the security systems of the institution. The intent of this review is to determine where there are potential security breakdowns and, if identified, what corrective action can be initiated by both GEO and the VaDOC.

B. Objectives

The project objectives as established by the agreement between MGT of America and the Virginia Department of Corrections focus primarily on the security operations systems of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center, and more specifically on the security systems designed to eliminate, detect and control contraband within the institution. The specific objectives as outlined in the May 3, 2007 proposal letter to the Virginia Department of Corrections include the following:

- 1) MGT will review all operations, security procedures, and the level of compliance of security procedures.
- 2) The MGT review will include an on-site review that will focus on, at a minimum, the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee/visitor shakedowns upon entering the institution's security perimeter; the effectiveness of the institutions drug testing procedures; and the effectiveness of the random and routine shakedowns of inmates and inmate cells.
- 3) MGT will assess the overall effectiveness of the institutions policies, procedures, and practices as it relates to the searches for and control of contraband within the institution.

- 4) MGT will review the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution's hiring practices as it relates to correctional officers. This review will include a verification that the correctional officers are meeting all of the Virginia Department of Corrections training requirements within scheduled timeframes (i.e. – initial training and 40 hour update).
- 5) MGT will review the terms and conditions of the VaDOC and GEO contract in regards to security procedures, security staffing and hiring of correctional officers and training of correctional officers and report to the VaDOC on the contractor's compliance with the contract terms and conditions.

C. MGT Project Approach

The MGT project team was on-site at the facility on May 10, 11 and 12, 2007. A preliminary briefing with Director Gene Johnson, Deputy Director John Jabe, Regional Director Dave Robinson, Regional Manager Marvin Dodson, Warden Edward Wright, and Assistant Warden Ken DuBose was conducted in Richmond on Wednesday May 9, 2007. During the briefing the project staff was provided documents, policies, and procedures related to the objectives of the project. While on-site at the facility, the project team's approach was to conduct a tour of the facility and observe its operations; interview key staff in order to fully understand the operations of the facility and its strengths and weaknesses; and verify the status of the operations through review of data and records made available to the project staff.

Review Tasks: The following tasks were conducted in order to complete the review of the security operations of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center.

- A review of recent critical incidents and reports filed by institutional staff that were related to the discovery of contraband drugs and /or cell phones;
- Any available investigative reports related to the above contraband;
- The institution's overall security procedures and practices;
- Staffing practices including post assignment and relief practices as they relate to the maintenance of security and the control of contraband;
- Recent daily staffing rosters for the period of time in which the visiting room was open;
- Security inspection reports and processes;
- Reviewed the operation of the main entrance point to the institution;
- Inmate movement policies and practices;
- Classification and housing practices;
- Perimeter security practices and procedures;
- Operation of the Sally Port;
- Procedures related to the assignment to housing, work and programs;
- Search and control of contraband procedures;
- Laundry procedures;

- Mail room and personal property operations, including intake;
- Security post descriptions;
- Operation of video cameras;
- Organizational structure, including supervisory staff;
- Human resource practices including the hiring and filling of vacancies;
- Staff turnover;
- Staff training curriculum and training procedures;
- Tour and inspection of the key areas of the institution and its security operation; and
- Observation of the operation of the institution with emphasis on practices that are related to the control of contraband.

Personnel Interviewed

During the course of this review the following personnel were interviewed by the MGT project team:

Director Gene Johnson
Deputy Director John Jabe
Regional Director, Eastern Region, Dave Robinson
Regional Manager, Division of Operations, Marvin Dodson
Warden Edward Wright
Asst. Warden Programs, Marilyn Shaw
Asst. Warden Operations, Ken DuBose
VaDOC Contract Liaison, Ronald Coker
Chief of Security, Alton Hines
Asst. Chief of Security, Herbert Walker
Asst. Maintenance Supervisor, J. Bowersock
Maintenance Clerk, Ms. Bell
Human Resource Director, Virgie DeBerry
Female work Crew Supervisor, Correctional Officer Hicks
Investigations, Richard Gosney
Investigations, Jim Bartos
Disciplinary Hearing Officer, Kelly Vaughan
Sally Port Officer, Sergeant Brooks
Inspector General, Special Agent, George Brown
Inspector General, Supervisor, Tom Quigley
Shift Commander – 3rd shift, Lieutenant May
Training Manager, Barry Blowe
Mail Room Supervisor S. Walls
Therapeutic Community Program Director, E. Fant
Unit Managers Austin, Whitfield, Font, Kellett
Sergeant S. Smith
Warehouse/Intake Manager Allen
Property/Intake Employees Davis and Hicks

D. Action taken by GEO and VaDOC

Both GEO and the VaDOC have taken initiatives in the past few months in response to the problems related to the presence of contraband within the institution. They have acknowledged that the high percentage of positives among the drug tests administered to inmates at Lawrenceville, combined with the high number of incidents involving cell phones found in the institution, indicated that steps needed to be taken to improve the security systems of the institution. The consultant team was provided with information and documentation outlining these initiatives. These initiatives were reviewed by the consultant team in order to fully understand the status of the security systems of the institution and also to prevent a repetition of actions that have already been initiated by either GEO or VaDOC staff.

The following briefly outlines some of the significant steps taken by the parties:

1. Regional Director Robinson initiated meetings with the Warden of Lawrenceville and his staff in late 2006 to discuss the growing issue of the discovery of high levels of contraband within the institution including drugs, cell phones, and money. During these discussions the Regional Director offered the Warden the expanded use of VaDOC drug dogs and other assistance designed to improve the security of the institution. Regional Director Robinson subsequently directed an operational review of the Lawrenceville on March 6 and 7, 2007. The operational review team included two majors from other VaDOC facilities, a regional manager, and the VaDOC Liaison officers assigned to Lawrenceville. As a result of the observations and findings of the review team, fifteen specific actions were agreed to and acted upon by GEO and VaDOC staff. Among these actions are the following initiatives that are directly related to the control of contraband within the institution:
 - Modifying the inmate recount procedures in instances of miscounts in order to fully comply with VaDOC regulations and requirements;
 - Modification of the front gate interlock system;
 - Modification of search procedures at the Sally Port that will require two officers to search incoming vehicles;
 - Modification of the handling of the movement of trash trucks in the facility during counts. ;
 - Installed an additional walk-thru gate at the Sally Port to control pedestrian movement into the Sally Port;
 - Modification of the handling of the movement of supplies and equipment into the institution received by delivery trucks;
 - Repair of the Sally Port locking systems;
 - Modification of the personal property search procedures that are received at the institution; and
 - Purchased an Ion-Scan to assist in the detection of drugs.

The agreement to implement these initiatives and the other action steps were documented through a memorandum dated April 3, 2007 from Regional Director Robinson to Warden Wright.

2. GEO has taken steps to acquire a trained drug dog that will be assigned full-time to the facility and will greatly assist staff in the search for contraband. At the time of this review the dog was completing its formal training and was scheduled to report to the institution the week of May 14, 2007. The dog will be used to assist in the search of inmates, visitors and staff. It also will assist in the general search of the facility including cells and property. It was further reported that GEO was in the process of acquiring two additional drug dogs that would be brought into service at a later date. The consultant team believes this initiative will serve as a deterrent to the introduction of contraband and also greatly assist in the enforcement activities of the institutional staff.
3. Last year GEO replaced its drug testing equipment and protocol through the purchase of a Dade-Behring drug analyzer. This permitted Lawrenceville to eliminate the drug cups and instant test strips as the primary drug testing protocol. These items are not only expensive, but they are often cumbersome and unreliable. The new equipment has streamlined the drug testing procedures for the institutional staff and provided accurate and efficient results to samples obtained from the inmate population.
4. As a result of the previously mentioned March 2007 operational review, GEO completed some modification of the design of the reception area and walled off an area for employee breaks in order to create a more distinct separation for visitor and employee searches.
5. Although not necessarily directly related to this situation, last year the VaDOC appointed a new regional director for this area. The regional director has taken an aggressive approach to monitoring the operation of the LCC. Among his initiatives has been the previously mentioned operational review.
6. Finally, the VaDOC with the support of GEO has initiated this independent review of the security operations of the institution.

E. Observations, Findings and Recommendations

Drug Testing Protocols and Results

The consultant team interviewed the assistant investigator who was assigned primarily responsibility to implement and monitor the inmate drug testing programs at the facility. He is a former employee of the VaDOC and has a thorough knowledge of contemporary security procedures and the benefits of drug testing. He provided a summary of the testing processes and also provided detailed information on the tests results at the facility from January 2005 to the present. These results are summarized in the following table.

**Inmate Drug Testing
Lawrenceville January 2005 – April 2007**

Month	2005			2006			2007		
	# Tested	# Positive	% Positive	# Tested	# Positive	% Positive	# Tested	# Positive	% Positive
January	66	11	17%	56	7	12.5%	67	16	23.8%
February	79	17	22%	19	3	15.8%	285	29	10.1%
March	45	22	49%	37	10	27.0%	173	7	4.0%
April	41	19	46%	15	2	13.3%	168	11	6.5%
May	101	12	12%	51	9	17.6%			
June	37	2	5.4%	98	28	28.6%			
July	57	14	24.5%	43	5	11.6%			
August	13	4	30.7%	77	5	6.5%			
September	6	5	83.3%	3	2	66.6%			
October	76	4	5.3%	0	0	0.0%			
November	0	0	0.0%	78	24	30.7%			
December	276	9	3.3%	56	7	12.5%			
Average	797	119	14.9%	533	102	19.1%	693	63	9%

*Source: Lawrenceville Investigations Unit (January-May 05)
VADOC Key Indicator Report Provided Data for the Remainder of the Table.*

The assistant investigator reported that inmates can be selected for drug testing in one of four ways:

- Placement in segregation;
- Mandatory testing after failing or refusing a previous drug test;
- Random selection; or
- Targeted selection, based on reasonable suspicion.

As the process was explained and discussed with institutional staff there appeared to be inconsistencies in the selection process. It was reported by housing unit staff, including unit managers, that in the past the selection of inmates for the random tests was done by individual housing unit managers. These staff members reported that they would normally select those inmates who they suspected of drug use. This practice eliminates the intent of the policy that the inmates tested be selected through random selection and results in the tests being targeted tests. This practice would skew the results if compared to other institutions that were using the intended random selection process. On March 1, 2007 the Lawrenceville Correctional Center changed their drug testing policy from having the unit managers and command staff select the inmates to be drug tested each month to having an internal investigator select at random the inmates to be tested. It was acknowledged that even this process on occasion mixed the random with those who are being targets for reasonable suspicion. Additionally, the selection of random test by the housing unit personnel has the potential to permit staff to avoid testing certain inmates who are their favorites, who have compromised the staff member, or who the parties want to avoid the testing situation.

Since the change in the selection process took place in *March 2007* the average number of tests conducted at Lawrenceville per month rose from 51.67 in 2006 to 170.75 to date in 2007. Also since the change in the selection process took place an average of 5.25 percent of inmate test results have been positive. This reflects a decrease of 13.85 percent from 2006. The department-wide average for positive test results during calendar year 2006 was 2.2 percent.

Most systems have remedied this situation by selecting random inmates at a central location either in the regional office or in central office.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) **The VaDOC should standardize procedures for the selection of the random drug test by generating a listing from central office of those inmates to be drug tested each month. This would eliminate any potential for a selection process that shows favoritism of any kind and also would generate a true random selection process that would permit a more accurate comparison of data from institution to institution.**

Department policy requires a minimum of five percent of the inmate population be tested per month. The table on the previous page reports that during 2005 the average number of drug tests conducted was 66.41 per month. An average of 14.9 percent of the inmates tested positive. During 2006 the average number of drug tests conducted per month was 44 percent and the average number of inmates testing positive was 19.1 percent. Clearly these numbers indicate that the facility was not complying with the Department policy to randomly test five percent of the population. The chart also indicates that there were months when no tests were administered or a very small number were administered.

The table below entitled **Comparative Sample** also demonstrates the degree that the facility was in non-compliance in comparison to other facilities in the geographic area. The Lawrenceville Correctional Center averaged 19.1 percent positive test results during 2006. The facility only tested an average of 2.9 percent of the inmate population per month during this time period. Data provided that is reported in the chart indicate that comparable facilities tested between 4.6 percent and 26.5 percent of their inmate population.

**Inmate Drug Testing
Comparative Sample, 2006**

Location	Population	5% Threshold	# Tested	% Tested	# Positive	% Positive
Nottaway	1150	690	1724	12.5	72	4.2%
Mecklenburg	740	444	756	8.5	9	1.2%
Brunswick	663	398	1215	15.3	4	0.3%
Greenville	3007	1804	9546	26.5	314	3.3%
Baskerville	487	292	267	4.6	15	5.6%
Indian Creek	929	557	2721	24.4	55	2.0%
Lawrenceville	1536	922	533	2.9	102	19.1%

"% tested" refers to the average percentage of inmates drug tested per month at the institution during 2006.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) **The VaDOC and the Contract Liaison should insure that the facility randomly tests the required five percent as required by departmental policy.**

Human Resource Data

The Lawrenceville Correctional Center has a total of 341 full-time authorized staff positions. At the time of the project team's visit there were 310 active staff assigned to the facility. All but four of the vacancies were in security positions. In reviewing the profile of security personnel as provided by human resource staff at Lawrenceville the following critical issues are cited:

- 66 percent of all security staff is female. Most female security staff are correctional officers.
- VaDOC policy prohibits female security personnel from performing pat-down searches on males.
- There was a 15 percent vacancy in security staff. At the time of this review there were 27 correctional officer vacancies with an additional ten officers in training and unavailable for duty.
- 29 percent of all Lawrenceville security personnel have less than one year of correctional experience.
- A total of 112 separations took place during calendar year 2006.
- In 2006, 32 percent of the 112 staff who separated from employment with Lawrenceville were terminated or resigned in lieu of termination. Of the 36 individuals, 24 were terminated for job abandonment, while 12 were terminated for specific policy violations.

These facts are indicators of potential situations that may have an impact on the overall security plan of the facility.

The prohibition of female staff conducting pat searches of males, combined with the fact that 66 percent of the security at Lawrenceville is female, have negatively impacted the overall effectiveness of the security operations of facility. This policy applies to any member of the opposite sex, including inmates, official guests, and visitors. In view of the fact Lawrenceville houses adult males the ability to consistently conduct pat-down searches and complete effective and thorough inmate searches is restricted in part by the number of male personnel assigned to the shift. When taking into consideration scheduled days off, multiple shifts, and management personnel who do not routinely fill an officer post, there is oftentimes very few male security staff available to conduct pat-down searches and inmate shakedowns at the facility. This situation was evident during the consultant team observation of the operations of the facility, especially the housing units. Lawrenceville Correctional Center has six major living units, one segregation unit and one medical unit. Current staffing compliments and scheduling does not allow for one male correctional officer to be assigned to each living unit on all three shifts. As a result, preventive measures including conducting inmate, staff and visitor searches are limited. Because of the staffing situation inmates are free to move about certain areas of the institution without the fear or expectation that they will be thoroughly searched. Female staff do utilize detection wands that will alert the staff member to potential metal objects on the offender, but these tools are totally ineffective in discovering drugs or some cell phones.

Although the consultant team is unsure of the history and rationale of this particular prohibition, it should be noted that although it is not rare to have such a policy it is uncommon. Several jurisdictions were contacted and most reported that they had no prohibition on the cross gender pat searches. Many retained a prohibition against males searching females. Systems such as the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Correctional Institution Division, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Michigan Department of Corrections, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and the Colorado Department of Corrections, all permitted female staff to conduct pat searches of male inmates and staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Lawrenceville Correctional Center should initiate some actions steps that could compensate for the present staff composition and the problems that arise from a combination of the policy and the high percentage of female security staff. This would include creating special gender specific posts that would have primary responsibility for conducting random pat searches of inmates throughout the compound on each shift.**
- 2. Additionally, the facility should expand the use of random searches by male supervisory staff. Although instances of supervisory staff conducting random searches was observed and documented, it was felt given the complement of staff in these positions, the number of searches should be expanded given the problems of contraband within the facility.**
- 3. The VaDOC should assess the feasibility and impact of eliminating the restriction on female officers conducting pat searches of males.**

Given the present problems of contraband within the institution, the present number of vacancies with the security staff complement only complicates an already difficult situation. The vacancy level limits the staffing flexibility of the shift supervisors and institutional administrators and limits their ability to implement creative and unpredictable inmate and staff search practices and policies. The vacancy rate in our opinion contributes to the present security problems at the institution, especially when combined with the high percentage of female security staff on duty.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. GEO should initiate steps to accelerate the hiring of correctional officers for the facility with the goal of reducing the vacancy rate of correctional officers to five to seven percent.**

An additional concern presented in the data is the number of staff that are terminated or resign in lieu of termination. Out of the 112 staff that separated from employment in 2006, 32 percent or 36 staff, were terminated or resigned in lieu of termination. The largest percentage was the result of job abandonment, but 12 terminations were for policy violations. On average during 2006, there was one security staff member terminated each month. The result was a staff complement that was predominately inexperienced. This inexperience directly impacts the effectiveness of the security systems within the institution.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. GEO should conduct a formal recruitment and retention study to determine the specific reasons for the high level of turnover at Lawrenceville and to identify the measures that could be initiated to stabilize the work force.**

Staff Turnover/Vacancy

The Lawrenceville Correctional Center is operated by the GEO Group, Inc. and as a result of a contract with the Virginia Department of Corrections has an authorized headcount of 341 staff. The authorized number is an agreed number that can not change without an amendment to the contract. There are 213 authorized security staff positions and 128 authorized non-security staff positions. On the date of the project team’s site visit there was an active staffing compliment of 310. The table below identifies the authorized and active staffing compliment for three time periods during the past nine months.

**Staffing Patterns
Lawrenceville Correctional Center**

Staff	July 11, 2006	December 11, 2006	May 10, 2007
Total Authorized Full-Time Staff	341	341	341
- Total Vacancies	3	7	31
Actual Staff	338	334	310
Total Authorized Security Staff	213	213	213
- Security Vacancies	1	3	27

Staffing data for July and December 2006 were taken from a census worksheet and May 2007 data was provided by Human Resources.

As reflected above, the primary change over the past nine months is in the number of security staff available at the facility. There were 27 vacant security positions reported by staff during the site visit.

Staff turnover and extended vacancies is a concern that can definitely impact the overall security plan of the facility. The current number of vacancies makes it difficult to fill mandatory posts without relying on overtime and non-mandatory posts are frequently left vacant. The non-mandatory posts are often used to assist in security inspections and conduct searches. In view of the fact that 29 percent of the security staff have less than one year of experience, staff vacancies becomes more critical to the overall operation of the facility. In an effort to stabilize the workforce, remediate the vacancy issues, and reduce turnover, in April 2007 GEO authorized a \$1 per hour pay increase for all security staff at the facility.

During calendar year 2006, 126 staff were hired and 112 staff terminated their employment at the Lawrenceville Correctional Center. The three most common reasons cited for separation were:

1. Secure other employment;
2. Job abandonment; and
3. Personal reasons.

Exit interviews are conducted by human resource staff on all available staff terminating their employment. Human resource staff indicated secondary reasons frequently cited for separation are: pay rate, medical costs, benefits, and a saturated labor pool. Eleven former staff members secured employment with the Virginia Department of Corrections during 2006.

In addition to voluntary separation, there has been a number of staff terminated under less than favorable conditions. During 2006, 36 staff were terminated as a result of policy violations, job abandonment, pending investigation and in lieu of termination. The majority of these were for job abandonment. This represents a high percentage of total separations.

Of the 112 who left employment at Lawrenceville in 2006, 57 or 50.9 percent of those staff were hired in 2006. Staff retention appears to be a significant debilitating factor for the facility. Excessive staff turnover is not only extremely expensive it also impacts the ability to successfully conduct all the necessary functions required to operate the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The VaDOC should review the existing contract to determine if the required staffing levels are being appropriately maintained and if the sanctions established when staffing levels are not met are adequate to insure compliance by the vendor.**
- 2. GEO should accelerate its efforts to fill the existing staff vacancies and eliminate the fluctuations from full-staffing to periods of high vacancy numbers in order to ensure that an adequate security work force is consistently maintain.**
- 3. GEO should establish a semi-annual retention plan that will identify adjustments to the current hiring process that will result in a reduction in the existing staff turnover rate.**

Operation of Main Entrance

The initial point of entry into the Lawrenceville Correctional Center for all staff, volunteers, and visitors is through a double gate built into the perimeter fence. The double gates are electronically controlled by staff assigned to the Master Control Center. Upon clearance through the double gates, individuals can proceed to the main entrance of the building where the entrance door is electronically controlled by staff assigned to Master Control. Once inside the main building, individuals are met by staff in Master Control and/or staff assigned to the Public Entry Post, depending upon the time of day.

Master Control is a secure enclosed area surrounded by security glass that can directly view the main entrance and contact visiting areas. Master Control is a seven day mandatory post that is staffed with two Correctional Officers on each shift. Primary responsibilities of this post include access control through all security gates and doors, monitoring surveillance cameras, and alerting staff to alarms activated in the fence detection system. Additional collateral responsibilities include remote observation into the visiting room, waiting and processing area and assisting in the processing of individuals entering the facility during the 3:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. shifts.

The Public Entry post is a seven day mandatory post on the 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. shift, a seven day non-mandatory post on the 3:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. shift, and is not staffed on the 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. shift. This post controls and supervisors all pedestrian traffic into and out of the facility. Mandatory posts are posts that are required to be filled on the shift at all times and non-mandatory posts are posts that are filled when staff are available after all mandatory post have been staffed. Non-mandatory posts are not required to be filled at all times.

Although the post is not staffed on the 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. shift, supervisory staff reported that correctional officers assigned to the dining hall posts on the day shift are scheduled to work from 5:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. shift and are used to assist in the processing of staff and visitors in the main entrance area from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.

On the days of the project team's visit, additional staff were available to assist in the processing of staff and visitors into the facility. During the course of staff interviews conducted by the review team, several employees indicated that the entry process the visiting team experienced and observed during the period the review team was at the institution was not representative of the normal process. These staff members indicated that very rarely were there more than one staff member present at the entry post. Although it is difficult to verify these observations, they would be consistent with the roster provided to the consultant team that reflected one staff person assigned to the area on a regular basis. Supervisory staff indicated that there is additional staff detailed to assist the entry officer during periods of peak activity. However, our observations indicated this practice is inconsistent at best.

The staff member assigned to the Public Entry post, primary responsibilities include the following:

- Securing staff and visitor identification;
- Ensuring visitors sign-in;
- Inspecting personal property;
- Controlling internal movement;
- Phone management;
- Monitoring the walk-thru metal detector;
- Application of the hand-held metal detector, when required; and
- Completing pat down searches of same gender staff and visitors when required.

Staff working the Public Entry post appeared to be hard working professionals that were familiar with their post responsibilities and proper search procedures. Representatives of the project team entered the facility on no less than ten occasions during the three day review and returned to the main entrance area to observe the entry process on two separate occasions in addition to their initial entry into the building. What was consistent in our observations was that staff were extremely professional in their mannerisms despite being very busy. However, the process and procedures utilized by staff were found to be inconsistent in actual practice. These procedures and practices included:

- Sign-in policy;
- Requesting identification;
- Inspection of all personal property;
- Removal of shoes;
- Staff deployment;
- Removal of jacket or sweater; and
- Pat-down search by staff after walk-thru metal detector alarm was activated.

The lack of consistency was not isolated to one incident or one individual but reflects observations over the three day review. As staff assigned to the Public Entry post got busier, complete areas of responsibilities were omitted, including verification of identification, sign-in, the removal of jackets and other outer clothing, personal property inspection and the pat-down search after walk-thru metal detector was alarmed. This deficiency was most evident when observing the process immediately before the start of a shift. As the number of people required to be processed increased the compliance and quality levels decreased. The amount of work required to be completed appeared to exceed the number of staff assigned to the responsibility. Simply put, there was too much work for one person to complete while maintaining the integrity of the facility.

The physical layout of the main entrance area currently prohibits casual access to the secure or "sterile" section of the main entrance area without proceeding through the walk through metal detector. Physical barriers including cabinetry, desks and a secure swing gate have been strategically located in the main entrance area to prevent access to the "sterile" section of the main entrance. An improved movement control system was recently put in place as a result of a security system analysis conducted by regional staff from the Department of Corrections. The barriers are not floor to ceiling barriers but appear appropriate and consistent with national practice for a medium security facility.

The current efforts in preventing contraband from being introduced into the Lawrenceville Correctional Center by staff and official visitors at the main entrance are generally limited to an inspection of displayed personal property, use of clear containers for personal items, clearance through a walk thru metal detector and an occasional pat-down search when the metal detector is alarmed. Additional preventive measures are initiated when staff suspects the presence of contraband.

All staff and official visitors are required to present personal property to assigned staff prior to entry. Staff members assigned to the Public Entry post are responsible for inspecting any personal property prior to allowing it's admission into the secure section of the main entrance area. The facility requires female staff to carry a clear purse for personal items which provides a clear view of the contents.

During the site visit there was observed inconsistent application of ensuring all personal property was presented to assigned staff. Only personal property presented by the individual requesting clearance was displayed. Non-metallic items in pockets or on the person were not consistently inspected. Since staff are not allowed to perform a pat-down search on a member of the opposite sex, and representatives of both genders are not always present, there appeared to be no assurance or observed practice in place to ensure all personal property is adequately inspected.

All staff and visitors entering the secure section of the main entrance area are required to pass through the walk thru metal detector. During the site visit the walk thru metal detector appeared to be operating effectively. Both lights and an audio alarm were activated when metal was detected. Some staff appeared to "shuffle" or "slide" through the metal detector to prevent the alarming of the metal detector. Due to the location of the sensors on the metal detector and the presence of metal in certain types of shoes, staff appeared to "shuffle" or "slide" through the metal detector to ensure the shoe is not raised toward the sensors to activate the alarm. The practice appeared to be condoned by assigned staff and both staff and visitors were allowed to "shuffle" or "slide" through the metal detector to avoid detection and further inspection.

Requiring the removal of shoes did not appear to be a policy at the facility. In addition to the "shuffle," staff were observed placing their hand over their chest on top of their badge and one hand over their belt buckle to prevent the metal detector from activating an alarm. The practice of avoiding detection appeared to be condoned by assigned staff.

The project team also observed that under most situations when the walk thru metal detector was alarmed a pat-down search was conducted by a staff person of the same gender when staff were available. This was not a consistent practice but a practice that appeared to be in place and complied with on a regular basis. Under no occasion did the consultant team observe the hand-held metal detector being used on anyone, including staff or visitors who had not cleared the walk thru metal detector. This would normally be done in order to determine the specific content that was activating the alarm. A number of individuals who activated the walk thru alarm were allowed to enter the "sterile" section of the main entrance area without further inspection to determine the metallic item(s).

Based on observation and staff interviews, pat-down searches are generally performed on staff and visitors who do not clear the walk thru metal detector and activate an alarm. Correctional officers are allowed to perform a pat-down search on only members of the same gender. When same gender personnel are not present, no pat-down search is performed.

Effective measures in controlling movement in the main entrance area have been made, but the current measures do not adequately address the detection aspect of contraband. To address this issue staff have reported that a drug detecting K-9 has been purchased and is expected to be available in the near future. It was further reported that an additional two dogs were to be acquired for the facility in the near future. This management tool when properly used can be a great benefit to detecting and impacting the amount of drugs entering the facility. In addition to the use of K-9, the facility has immediate plans to activate an ION mobility spectrometer system that will detect the presence of drugs on personal property. Both measures when effectively applied will require additional staff and a strategic plan that includes consistent monitoring.

Currently, however, there appeared to a lack of consistency in the application of preventive measures in place at the main entrance to detect drugs and/or cell phones being introduced into the facility by staff, volunteers or official visitors. The following recommendations are submitted for consideration:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Ensure a supervising employee of the rank of lieutenant or higher is present in the main entrance area at least thirty minutes prior to the start of every shift to provide supervision and support to staff assigned to the area, ensure compliance of all existing policies, and to improve the consistency of practices and operations of the area. Such supervisory employees should include, Warden, Assistant Wardens, the Chief of Security, Assistant Chief of Security, unit managers, captains or lieutenants. This supervision should be direct in nature and not fulfilled through remote monitoring from the Master Control.**
- 2. Conduct periodic process and system checks of current policies utilized at the main entrance area. Such system checks would involve testing the effectiveness of the search procedures and should be used as an educational tool to improve the existing security plan.**

3. Provide additional mandatory staff to the main entrance thirty minutes prior to the start of every shift to enforce existing policies regarding entry into the institution.
4. Enforce all existing written policies that outline the requirements to gain entrance into the facility.
5. Place a surveillance camera in the main entrance area to provide remote observation and review by supervisory staff of all processing activities. The surveillance system should include recording capabilities so both GEO and VaDOC monitoring staff can review the operation of the area.
6. Conduct regular refresher training to all security staff on proper entry procedures and search policies and requirements.
7. Review the effectiveness and enforcement of shoe removal policy.
8. Eliminate allowance of metal detector “shuffle” or “slide” practice.
9. Review national airport security procedures regarding proper entry, inspections and metal detector walk thru procedures.
10. Prevent staff from remaining in the “sterile” section of the main entrance area until they comply with all entry policies including clearance through the walk thru metal detector.
11. Require staff and official visitors that do not clear the walk thru metal detector to be pat-down searched and screened by the hand held metal detector to identify the location of the metal content. Current inconsistent practice is to conduct a pat-down search only and not to determine or explore the cause of the alarm activation.
12. Initiate a requirement that a certain percentage of randomly selected staff entering the facility shall be subject to enhanced searches that should include a thorough pat search, removal of shoes and all outer clothing, check by a hand held metal detector, etc. These searches should be documented in a log book for review by supervisory staff.

Inmate and Housing Unit Searches

Searches, in their various types, at the Lawrenceville Correctional Center are governed by the institution policy entitled, *Control of Contraband, #08.009*. In brief, this document is designed to “...clarify methods approved for the use within the Lawrenceville Correctional Center to search staff, inmates, inmate’s quarters and other areas of the...Center and to...reduce contraband, detect hazards to the health and safety of all individuals within the...Center.” This policy is authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of Corrections Operating Procedures 443 and 856 and follows American Correctional Association Standards 4-4192, 4-4193, and 4-4194.

The policy defines in sufficient detail pat, strip, and cavity searches so that correctional staff can understand the rules governing these searches and how to perform them. Policy #08-009 also details housing unit searches and the process for documenting these searches. Lawrenceville Correctional Center Post Order #09 for Housing Officers provides additional guidance on housing unit searches not contained in the policy.

Process Observations

The project team toured all of the inmate housing units on the facility and interviewed many of the unit managers, sergeants, and correctional officers assigned to them. During these tours, which took place over a two day period, many of the cells were visually inspected.

As required under Post Order #09, the 1st and 2nd shifts generally performed the required minimum of three cell searches per housing area per shift. Third shift officers are responsible for searches of common areas, i.e., dayrooms, showers, closets, microwave and sink areas, fire exits, barbershops, and pod offices. Through this process, each cell and common area in a housing unit is to be searched by the end of a month. It is the current practice at the facility to assign cell searches by designating odd-numbered cells to the 1st shift and even-numbered cells to the 2nd shift. It was explained the implementation this process was designed to reduce confusion for the officers who were required to randomly select cells for searches.

Before performing random cell searches, the housing officer reviews the shakedown report log maintained in the housing unit control center and ascertains which cells have not been previously searched. Unless directed otherwise, the officer has the discretion as to the cells that will be searched. A review of the reports indicated that occasionally officers selected cells in a sequence such as cells 2, 4, and 6 or 1, 3, and 5 thereby further diluting the intended randomness of the process.

In reviewing the Monthly Shakedown Reports, the project team noted that there were occasions when the requisite numbers of searches were not performed. Unit managers stated this occurred when there were staff shortages but went on to state that the number of searches was made up later within the same week. This statement was borne out by documentation in the Monthly Shakedown Reports.

During the walk through of the housing units, the project team observed many of the cells in a disorderly condition having quantities of items stored outside the provided containers, homemade cardboard shelves, pictures affixed to cell walls, blankets and sheets used as floor or table coverings, paper or cardboard placed in the front or back of windows, and electrical cords stretched across portions of the cells. This clutter appears indicative of lax enforcement of property rules and cell search procedures. While a good practice, Section III.A. (2) of policy #08.009 obligates the searching officer to leave the cell "as it was found" and "leave the room as close as possible to its original condition." However, with the large number of items cluttering each cell, it does not seem likely an officer could effectively search a cell and comply with the policy. In fact, the most frequent item noted on the shakedown log is simply, "trash."

The above being said, it was also noted that the common areas of the housing units were clean, free from trash and neat in appearance. The overall sanitation practices of the housing units were excellent.

The project team also observed pat searches during periods of mass movement and the feeding of the meals. On one side of the facility two officers were seen conducting pat-searches as the inmates exited the inmate dining room. On the opposite side of the facility, the meal had been in progress some time before officers were in place to perform the pat-searches. It did not appear that any inmates were searched prior to entering the dining room. As a whole, a small number of inmates were subjected to a pat-search during the period of observation.

The pat-searches monitored by the project team did not appear to be conducted in accordance with policy #08.009, section II.B. Specifically, the officers routinely did not require the inmate being pat-searched to remove his head gear or cap, generally the collar was not examined, and pants cuffs, shoe tops, soles, and socks were almost never inspected.

During the feeding of the noon meal the project team was able to view the dispensing of medication at the facility's two pill windows. Neither window had an officer stationed nearby to observe the inmates receive their medications and to watch that it is swallowed. When asked about this practice, the project team was given two conflicting answers. One answer was that the employee inside the pill window area watched the inmates swallow their medications however, their view is limited and the inmate often moved away from the window or turned their backs to it before appearing to take their medication. The second answer was that an officer performing pat-searches some ten to twenty feet away was the one watching the process.

We previously reported on the limited number of male staff available on a shift in the staffing section. Since males are the only ones who can conduct a pat-down or strip search on an inmate and there are often less than eight male line staff assigned to work a shift, it is extremely difficult to routinely perform searches of inmates moving about the facility. There are six major Living Units, segregation and medical, resulting in a total of eight living units not to mention the common areas such as dining rooms, classrooms, recreation areas, etc.

When you include dining, recreation yard, education, front end with the Living Units they simply do not have sufficient male staff to perform adequate preventive measures to manage the trafficking of contraband. Even though the facility major living areas are split in half, there is still a tremendous amount of movement and mixing of populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Revise the practice of having 1st shift search odd-numbered cells and 2nd shift search even-numbered cells to improve unpredictability.**
- 2. Consider additional supervisory oversight to ensure proper pat and strip-search techniques are being used.**
- 3. Increase the number of pat-searches during mass movements and conduct the searches at both entry and exit points of major common areas including dining room, recreational areas, and educational classroom.**
- 4. Consider placing an officer to monitor inmates at the pill windows to ensure medications are ingested and not smuggled back into the housing areas.**

Visiting – Searches, Visitor Process and Operation

Visitation for inmates at the Lawrenceville Correctional Center is conducted on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Tuesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. As a rule, general population inmates are allowed a one hour contact visit with up to four individuals either on a Saturday or Sunday each week. Visitors of Special Management, Segregation, and Special Custody inmates may have a non-contact visit each Tuesday for no more than two hours.

All visits occur in a large room having 35 tables for contact visits and a separate enclosed area for non-contact visits. The room also contains numerous vending machines where visitors, not inmates, may purchase snack items for consumption during the visit. Inmates are prohibited from removing snack items from the visiting room.

Limitations are made on the items visitors are allowed to bring into the institution, attire worn, and the amount of money (\$15.00 in coins per person) in an effort to ensure safe and orderly visits.

Other than at reserved spaces, visitors arriving at the facility are allowed to park their vehicle wherever they may choose in the large parking lot.

Staff Posts and Duties

Facility management reports indicate that staff are specifically assigned to visitation duties, to include the sergeant, and are rotated out of the post infrequently. It was further reported to the project team that while the selected officers were given visitation assignments based on their strengths, some became complacent or “burnt out,” thus necessitating reassignment. The practice of leaving a core group of officers in place permits officers the opportunity to become proficient in their duties and to learn visitors and their actions.

However, one drawback to this system of staffing is that it also allows visitors to quickly learn the tendencies of the officers and how well they perform their various tasks. In addition, since the inmates and their visitors know who will have visitation duty on a routine basis, these officers can be targeted to allow or assist in smuggling contraband into the facility.

At the time of the project team’s visit, the following employees were observed to be directly involved in visitor and inmate processing along with supervision of the visitation room.

Supervisor	Sergeant	1
Visitor Entry	Correctional Officer	2 (one male and one female)
Visiting Room Desk	Correctional Officer	1
Inmate Search	Correctional Officer	1 (male)
Total		5

Additionally, the officer posted at the metal detector in the public entry area, while not counted officially as part of the visitation contingent, performs two vital contraband control functions. First, this officer is responsible for screening all visitors through the metal detector and second, the officer is to verify that the money carried in by the visitors does not exceed the dollar amount authorized.

The sergeant assigned to visitation was observed to perform the following functions:

- Assign duties to officers and conduct briefing;
- Monitor visiting room activity; and
- Determine when visits were to be concluded.

Throughout the day, the sergeant conducted himself professionally and maintained a high level of visibility in the areas where his officers were assigned. He appeared to take his responsibilities seriously and, according to a facility administrator, was often strict in enforcing the visiting rules.

Visitor Entry correctional officers have responsibility for carrying out the below.

- Receive *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form and identification from visitor;
- Verify eligibility of inmate for the visit using a alphabetical roster of all assigned inmates;
- Recording housing location of eligible inmate on the *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form and returning form to visitor;
- Send the visitor(s) to designated area to await pat-search;
- Pat-searching visitors which requires an officer of each sex; and
- Receiving *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form back from visitor upon completion of the visit and returning the visitor's identification.

The officer assigned to the Visiting Room Desk carried out these duties at the time of the assessment:

- Received the *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form from the visitor and annotated the visitor's arrival time on the form;
- Assigned the visitor(s) to a table;
- Contacted the appropriate housing area to request the inmate be sent to the visiting room;
- Directed inmates to the proper table for the visit along with noting the inmate's arrival time on *Registration* form;
- Observed the video monitor which provides four camera views within the visiting room;
- Tracked the amount of time allotted for the visit and advised when visits were to be concluded; and
- Returned the *Registration* form to the departing visitor after noting on it the time that the visit ended.

The officer stationed in the inmate search room performed pat-searches on arriving inmates and strip-searches on those departing the visitation room. Prior to conducting a search on the arriving inmate, the officer also noted the inmate's entrance time and the type, color, etc. of the inmate's footwear. The soles of each shoe were marked with a colored marker to deter the swapping of shoes with visitors. In order to prevent mimicking of the mark, the officer changed the color of the marker each day. Preceding the inmate's entry to visiting room, the officer took possession of the inmate's identification card. The card was returned to the inmate at the end of the visit and after the completion of the strip-search.

Process Observations

When a visitor arrives at the facility they go in through the main entrance as all other persons entering the institution. They are also required to divest themselves of all metallic items prior to going through the metal detector. At the time of the project team's observations it was noted that, unlike official visitors and employees, the inmates' visitors were not allowed to proceed past the metal detector if it alarmed. On numerous occasions the visitor was sent through the detector two or more times, removing jewelry, shoes, belts, or other items until the detector no longer alarmed.

Once the visitor clears the detector they proceed into the waiting area to complete an *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form. Some visitors would bring a completed form with them and would immediately present it to the officers who verified the inmate's eligibility for a visit. Due to the physical configuration of the entry way, this process was hampered by the fact that visitors passing through the metal detector compete for the same space as visitors checking in *and* out from visitation.

As a result of the current process and room layout, it is possible for a visitor to pass through the metal detector, complete the *Registration* form, and present it to the check-in officer before being informed that the inmate is ineligible for a visit.

After being cleared for a visit, the visitor is required to wait for an officer of the same sex to perform a pat-search. These searches are conducted in a small room off the waiting area to ensure privacy.

After the pat search is completed, the visitor returns to the waiting area and can mingle with other visitors who have not been searched thereby negating the effectiveness of the procedure. A facility administrator advised the project team a decision had been made to purchase retractable belt barriers frequently used in airports as a method of separating visitors.

During the 11:00 a.m. count inmates are not allowed to enter the visiting room thus creating a backlog of visitors in the waiting area. This backlog is exacerbated by two factors. First, visitors are continually processed through the metal detector into the waiting area even though they are unable to proceed past that point. Second, one of the officers will take a break at this time slowing down in-processing and the pat-searches. It is at this point searched and unsearched visitors are most likely to commingle.

Once in the visiting room, visitors are directed to a numbered table selected by the supervising correctional officer. All visitors are instructed to sit at the table facing the visiting room desk. In turn, inmates are required to sit at the table with his back to the officer directly opposite the visitor.

Each visitation table has round top and solid legs forming an "X" underneath the tabletop. This solid top-to-floor design makes it more difficult for items to be passed unnoticed beneath the table.

The Visiting Room Desk officer appeared to know many of the visitors and most of the inmates arriving in the visiting room. While knowledgeable of individuals and visitation procedures, the officer, for the most part, stayed at the desk and did not move about the visiting room for closer monitoring of activities.

Inmates were not allowed to go to the vending machines with their visitor(s) but could go with them to have a photograph taken from an inmate worker.

Observations of the search procedures of inmates entering and exiting the visitation room showed that clothing was not thoroughly searched on a consistent basis. Generally, the search of clothing merely consisted of running the hands over the outside of the garment without looking inside or checking the seams. During the search of an inmate worker entering the visiting room, the worker took off a jacket containing two small bundles or packages in the pockets. The searching officer did not remove the items to inspect them and allowed the worker to proceed into the visiting room with the jacket and items.

On another occasion, two inmates arrived at the search room carrying large wooden craft items. These items were given a cursory external examination before being allowed into the visiting room even though one was encased in a plastic bag. As these items did not have the proper paperwork authorizing the inmates to take them into the visiting room, a supervisor had the inmates bring the items back and leave them in the search room. Again, the items were not subjected to inspection and the inmates were allowed to continue with their visits.

The Main Control Room has the capability of monitoring activities in the visiting room either by direct observation through a large darkened window or via a Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) camera mounted on the visiting room ceiling. While there are two officers assigned to the control room, their seating position, the room's layout, and the darkness of the window's tinting preclude detailed observation of the visiting room. One officer does keep the PTZ camera view up on a small monitor.

This camera has very good image quality but is hampered by its location at one end of the room away from the majority of tables. If the officer wished to record an incident occurring in the visiting room, the camera view would have to be transferred to another larger monitor linked to a VCR. At the time of the inspection the VCR was not operable and had been in that condition for an unspecified length of time.

Facility supervisory staff often use the Main Control Room as a post to observe inmates from their housing area. Generally, they will sit near the large tinted window and watch the activities in the room. This practice puts another set of eyes in the visiting room but usually occurs only when the supervisor wishes to focus on his or her inmates.

Inmate Workers

During the hours of visitation, two to three inmates are assigned to perform various duties in the visiting room. These duties generally include moving chairs, cleaning spills and tabletops, handing out table games to visitors, and taking photographs. As a general rule, these workers are seated in a corner in the direct line of sight from the officer stationed at the desk. However, due to their duties, these inmates are in repeated contact with visitors with no direct supervision. This contact is frequently with children as the children accompanying the visitors are often the ones wanting the table games.

These inmate workers are pat-searched like all other inmates entering the visiting room. They are only searched again at the conclusion of the day prior to returning to the interior of the facility.

On occasion, an inmate worker will receive a visit while he is on duty. When that occurs, the inmate goes to the table assigned to his visitor(s) and begins his visit. At the conclusion of the visit, the inmate worker simply returns to his seat in the corner with the other workers without being subjected to any type of search.

The inmate workers were not allowed to empty the trash receptacles as this task was performed by correctional staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Encourage visitors to complete *On-site Visitor Registration and Background Investigation Authorization* form prior to arriving at the institution to facilitate process flow.
2. Reorganize visitor processing flow to allow presentation of *Registration* form prior to entrance to the metal detector so that inmate visit eligibility could be immediately verified.
3. Erect some type of barrier to deter commingling of searched and unsearched visitors in the waiting room.
4. As visitation table assignments are currently made in a random manner, consideration could be given to initially disperse the visitors as widely as possible in the room to facilitate visibility.
5. Restrict inmate worker access to the visiting room to only those times when clean up is necessary.
6. Strip-search inmate workers immediately upon conclusion of their visit instead of waiting until the end of the visitation period.
7. Consider strip-searching all inmates entering the visiting room not just when exiting.
8. Spread contact visiting tables further apart to allow officers and cameras greater visibility.
9. Have staff walk through the visiting room on a more frequent basis.
10. Install a computer in public entry area to automate visitor check in process.
11. Designate one area in parking lot for visitor parking during visitation periods and require employees to park in other areas. This would restrict the area to be searched after the visitors leave but can also reduce unobserved contact between employees and their vehicles with the visitors and their vehicles.
12. Immediately repair the VCR in Main Control Room to allow recording of incidents that occur in visitation room.
13. Install additional Pan-Tilt-Zoom camera(s) in the visiting room. The second camera could replace the four small stationary cameras which have limited image quality. These cameras should also be linked to a digital recorder that would permit constant recording of all the cameras in the area. A digital recording system would also permit long term storage of the recordings. This would not only be beneficial for investigative purposes but also permit the supervisory staff to review after the fact the operations of the visiting room on a regular basis to detect potential problems and security breakdowns.
14. Install signage in visiting room to alert visitors and inmates to the fact they may be recorded.

Operation of the Sally Port

The Lawrenceville Correctional Center has one vehicle Sally Port located in the rear of the facility. All vehicle traffic entering and leaving the facility enter through the Sally Port. The Sally Port post is considered a five day mandatory post on the 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. shift and a non-mandatory post on the 3:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. shift. There is routinely no staff assigned to the Sally Port on the 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. shift. On the day of the post visit a correctional sergeant and correctional officer were working at the Sally Port.

The Sally Port is a secure area with an electronic double gate and a pedestrian walk thru gate. Inmates arriving and being transferred from the facility, maintenance personnel, authorized vendors and contractors with vehicles all enter through the Sally Port. Staff explained current shakedown and access procedures and were familiar with inspection procedures and the importance of verification of identification.

Recent changes in the Sally Port include the addition of an internal walk thru gate to control pedestrian movement into the Sally Port area. The Sally Port appeared to be designed effectively and appropriate for a medium security environment.

Overall the appropriate security procedures are in place and staff displayed knowledge of proper protocol. Whether this area becomes vulnerable to contraband entering the facility will be dependent on the personnel assigned to the post and their consistent application of established policies. Appropriate procedures, equipment and design are currently in place.

RECOMMENDATION:

None

Maintenance Crew Movement and Searches

The maintenance building at the Lawrenceville Correctional Center is located outside the secure perimeter behind the institution. It is part of a building that also contains the warehouse and commissary. Representatives of the review team visited the maintenance area and interviewed available staff. The Assistant Chief of Maintenance and Maintenance Clerk were extremely helpful in discussing the security procedures of the maintenance department. The maintenance area appeared organized and well maintained including separate tool cribs that were both secure and contained perpetual inventories.

The maintenance area is supervised by the Chief of Maintenance. He has seven staff reporting to him whose responsibilities are divided into specific areas of the facility. These areas include:

- North section of the facility;
- South section of the facility;
- B-Building;
- Inside grounds; and
- Outside grounds.

An Assistant Chief and clerk provide administrative support to the maintenance department.

There are a total of three maintenance technicians and each maintenance technician is assigned to one section of the facility. These sections include, North, South and B-Building. Staff members assigned to these areas have a work crew of 4-5 inmates selected from the Lawrenceville population that assist the technician in providing maintenance support. Inmates are screened and interviewed by the supervisor prior to assignment. All inmates assigned to the maintenance department receive an hourly wage for their services and no inmate from Lawrenceville is allowed to work outside the secure perimeter fence.

In addition to the three building areas within the facility one inmate work crew is assigned to the inside perimeter whose main responsibilities include cutting grass and general maintenance. This work crew is supervised by a staff member assigned to maintenance.

Maintenance staff reported that inmates assigned to the work crews are shook down at the end of the day and are constantly under the supervision of the staff member in charge of the work crew. Staff indicated they were familiar with the established security procedures and reflected consistent compliance in this area. Observations during the site visit reflected secure tool carts, direct supervision being provided to the inmate work crews and established procedures were being followed. There was no indication that inmates were unescorted or free to move throughout the facility. In view of the amount of movement throughout the facility effective screening and follow-up monitoring of inmate assignments is encouraged.

RECOMMENDATION:

None

Supervision and Movement of the Brunswick Female Work Crew

There are two work crews that are provided by inmates assigned to the Brunswick Work Camp. All inmates assigned to the Brunswick Work Camp are female. Each work crew is under the supervision of staff assigned to Lawrenceville.

The first work crew consists of six inmates assigned to the outside grounds detail. Under the supervision of Lawrenceville staff, these inmates maintain the outer perimeter area including cutting grass, debris removal, and digging ditches. At no time are inmates left alone or permitted access to inside the facility. Staff reported that over the last few years the only inmate fired was the result of being lazy and they were not aware of any inmate ever being fired for trafficking in contraband or being involved with an inmate assigned to Lawrenceville. Staff reported that all inmates are shook down prior to their assignment and upon completion of the work day. Appropriate procedures and preventive measures appeared to be in place.

The second work crew consists of two inmates from the Brunswick Work Camp who are responsible for providing janitorial services in the administrative and main entrance of the facility. These two inmates are restricted to the administrative area including the main entrance. The job assignment requires them to work Monday through Friday on the day shift. Garbage is emptied through the front door and inmate workers are under the supervision of staff at all times. There was no indication from staff that inmates assigned to the administration area had been involved in trafficking during recent years.

RECOMMENDATION:

None

Impact of the Therapeutic Community

Lawrenceville houses a large therapeutic community program in 50 Building. Documents indicate that the program capacity is 160. During the time of our review of the facility it was reported that 133 inmates were participating in the various phases of the program. A review of this program and its operation was considered appropriate given the fact that this increases the percentage of offenders in the facility with documented histories of substance abuse problems. Speculation was presented that indicated that this was one of the contributing causes of the unusually high percentage of positive drug tests within the population of the facility as a whole.

The program director maintained detailed and specific records on the monthly activities within the unit including drug testing results. This was very helpful in determining the relative impact of the presence of the program on the presence of contraband within the facility as a whole. Her records indicate that the program presence is not skewing the institution's drug testing results.

Month	TC Program		Institution	
	Tested	% Positive	Tested	% Positive
May 06	25	12%	51	17%
June 06	2	0%	98	29%
July 06	28	3.5%	103	16%
Aug 06	14	7%	112	9%
Sept 06	1	0%	3	66%
Oct 06	0	0%	9	33%
Nov 06	11	27%	78	30%
Dec 06	1	0%	56	12%
Jan 07	1	0%	93	14%
Feb 07	28	32%	285	9%
Mar 07	16	0%	173	4%
April 07	21	0%	168	6%
Average	12.3	6.7%	102.4	20.4%

Source: Lawrenceville Investigations Unit and Therapeutic Comm.

What is interesting about the numbers is the fact that for most of the last 12 months it appears that the institution was not testing a representative group from the TC program as compared to rest of the population. This obviously changed in February 2007 when a larger percentage of the TC was being tested. It can be speculated that the lack of random selection of those to be drug tested as reported earlier in the review is the primary reason for this result. This also supports the recommendation that housing unit staff be removed from the process of selecting those who are to be randomly drug tested.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **The institution should insure that a representative sample of those housed in the TC unit is drug tested on a monthly basis.**
2. **The institution and VaDOC should establish procedures that insure the selection of those to be randomly tested is decided outside the institution in order to insure impartiality and also insure the pool is a true random selection.**

Investigation Procedures

A key component in the strategy to deter contraband in correctional facilities includes the investigation and prosecution of those in possession of serious contraband and those involved in conspiring to introduce contraband into the secure compound. The project team interviewed both the on-site investigative staff and the VaDOC investigators for the purpose of obtaining information on their perception on where the security breakdowns are occurring at the Lawrenceville facility and to understand the investigative process involved in these cases.

The local investigative staff consists of two full-time investigators, one of which also coordinates the drug testing activities at the institution. The lead investigator has extensive experience both in corrections and as a law enforcement officer in the community. This experience includes 12 years with the VaDOC. He is familiar with both law enforcement investigative procedures and protocols and has a working knowledge of correctional operations. He has been at the facility since November 1998.

Documents indicate that there have been in excess of 65 criminal investigations at Lawrenceville for the time period from January 2006 through May 2007. These include 34 cases involving drugs, 18 cases involving cell phones, and 13 cases involving other criminal behavior. It is clear from the data reviewed that both GEO and state investigators from the VaDOC aggressively pursue criminal cases against inmates and staff where appropriate and when the local prosecutor is willing to pursue a criminal case.

It was noted by the state investigators that the GEO investigators are not sworn investigators and in the past could not independently pursue criminal cases. However, this matter has been reviewed with the Commonwealth Attorney and an agreement has been reached that permit the GEO investigators to pursue agreed upon minor cases. As a result the state investigators will continue to assume the lead in any criminal case of a serious nature.

In terms of operations within the facility the local investigators shared information that was consistent with our overall perception of the facility. These points included:

- The facility policies and procedures are consistent with procedures found elsewhere in the VaDOC and that there have been periodic breakdowns in the procedures mainly due to the fact that staff have been compromised by inmates.
- The absence of drug dogs within the facility has hampered the deterrence and enforcement procedures as it relates to drugs. Over time under GEO the dogs were phased out and the institution relied on use of VaDOC dogs when they were available. The investigators reported that they expected the return of the drug dogs to have a positive effect on the control of drugs within the facility.

- They indicated most instances of drugs and cell phones that occur within the institution involve cases where the contraband is found on the individual. They attribute the willingness of inmates to carry contraband to the lack of aggressive search procedures. They noted this is directly related to the limitations on females to conduct pat searches on males.
- They indicated that the value of cell phones within the institution has increased to the point that a system of “renting” of phones to other inmates has occurred. It was reported that this is based on the fact that the cell phones enable inmates to bypass the phone monitoring system within the system which will permit the discussion of potentially illegal activities without detection.
- They reported that the VaDOC dogs come to the facility 2 -3 times per year for an institutional wide sweep.

The project team was impressed with the efforts of both the institutional investigators and the investigators at the VaDOC. Clearly they have a grasp of the problems that the facility faces and have aggressively pursued prosecution when it is appropriate warranted.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **GEO should maintain and expand the presence of drug dogs within the institution.**

Training: Pre-Service and In-Service

The GEO training manager was interviewed and the training schedule and curriculum reviewed. It was reported that all training schedules and curriculum modules are reviewed and approved by the VaDOC through the office of Major Galloway at the department’s training academy. Each lesson plan is approved also to insure its content meets the standards and policies of the VaDOC.

All GEO staff receive their pre-service and in-service training on-site at the facility. Records indicate that no one is placed on assignment until the completion of the required training modules. All security staff receive training in the same increments as VaDOC staff including the 120 hours of OJT.

It was reported that the Field Training Officer program includes four trained staff. The training manager feels the institution needs to maintain a level of 12 FTO’s to fully meet the needs of the staff being hired at the facility. Selection and training of these staff members are again done in conjunction with the staff of the VaDOC training academy – in this case Major Holcomb.

Observations of staff during their performance of their duties indicate that the training programs have been effective in preparing and sustaining a professional work force. Despite the fact we observed some inconsistency in applying policy, it not a result of the lack of understanding the policies or not being properly trained.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Given the level of turnover at the facility it is recommended that the facility identify, train and maintain a cadre of at least 12 Field Training Officers.**

Disciplinary Hearing Procedures

The Disciplinary Hearing Officer assigned to the Lawrenceville Correctional Center is required to be an employee of the Virginia Department of Corrections. Disciplinary violation reports are issued when an employee witnesses an inmate in violation of an established rule. Standard policies regarding understanding the charges, timelines for preparation of defense, right to a hearing and opportunity to call witnesses is all applied. What appears to be unique is the opportunity for the inmate to accept a predetermined penalty for violation of an offense instead of proceeding with a disciplinary hearing. This practice is referred to as accepting a "Penalty Offer." Predetermined sanctions are offered to the inmate in lieu of a disciplinary hearing. Such sanctions are in writing and clearly identify the penalty for each offense. A review of four months of completed disciplinary cases revealed that "Penalty Offers" is a widely accepted practice at Lawrenceville. The following table describes the frequency and disposition for each month:

	August	December	March	April	Average	% of Total
Total Disciplinary Charges Completed	171	134	183	140	157	
-Total Dismissed/Not Guilty	25	11	17	15	17	10.8%
-Total Found Guilty	49	30	34	19	33	21%
-Penalty Offers Accepted	97	93	132	106	107	68.2%

As reflected in the table an average of 62 percent of all completed disciplinary reports result in the inmate accepting the "Penalty Offer", instead of pursuing a disciplinary hearing. "Penalty Offers" can be administered by qualified staff within the facility.

One factor that may impact the use of "Penalty Offers" is a memorandum from the Virginia Department of Corrections that identifies specific sanctions for violation of drug related offenses. A memorandum dated September 29, 2005 (issued by John Jabe, Re: Policy Change) provides guidance to the institution personnel on the authorized sanctions for inmates found guilty of offense code 122, a drug related offense. Code 122 contains a series of drug offenses of different levels and types. Such sanctions vary based on whether the conviction is a first, second or third offense. These sanctions were intended to prevent the flow of drugs into the facilities.

A review of the restrictions established for violation of the Code reflect an increase in the frequency of drug testing, loss of good time earning privileges, limited visitation, restricted telephone access and possible increase in security levels as identified sanctions. Placement in isolation is not identified as an option. On the date of the profile review of inmates in the segregation unit, there were three inmates housed for violation of 122A, which is Possession of Unauthorized or Unprescribed drugs. One inmate was pending transfer, one pending a hearing and one in isolation status. Each inmate also had an additional charge besides the 122 offense.

A further review of the inmate profile reflected that two inmates were in isolation status for a cell phone related violation, 131. One inmate received 20 days in isolation and the other received 30 days in isolation. Current VaDOC policies limit isolation time to no more than 30 days.

Segregation

Placement in the segregation unit is currently used for inmates for several reasons including both disciplinary and administrative purposes. Inmates pending disposition of a major disciplinary hearing, requesting protective custody placement, pending transfer, on investigation status, or receiving isolation sanctions can all be found in the segregation unit. Staff reported that there were 51 cells available for housing in the Segregation Unit. The number of beds in the segregation unit represents approximately 3.2 percent of all beds at the medium security facility. A profile of the inmate segregation population was reviewed to clarify how the segregation unit was being used. Additional explanations were provided by the correctional sergeant assigned to the segregation unit.

As reflected in the table below the majority of inmates housed in the segregation unit are classified as Administrative Segregation inmates of whom 11 were for protective custody reasons. Eleven inmates in protective custody appears to be a high number for a medium security level 3 facility and represents close to the same number of inmates in isolation status. Staff reported that the current number is consistent with the average.

**Inmate Profile – Segregation Placement
May 10, 2007**

Status	May 10, 2007	Percent of Segregation Population
Administrative Segregation	35	72.92 %
- Protective Custody	11	22.92 %
- Investigation	9	18.75 %
- Pending Transfer	6	12.5 %
- Pending Hearing	5	10.42 %
- Other	4	8.3 %
Disciplinary Isolation	13	27.08 %
- 200 Series	10	20.83 %
- 100 series	3	6.25 %

Placement in isolation does not appear to be a sanction frequently used at Lawrenceville. Although there are required restrictions that will impact all inmates, such as placement in good time class level 4, which prevents the inmate from earning day for a day good time, removal from the current environment for a short period of time in addition to current restrictions may prove to impact the demand for drugs into the facility.

Staff reported that fewer than one percent of the total population is housed in isolation status. In view of the high number of cell phones recovered in comparison with other facilities, number of positive drug test results and frequent requests for protective custody placement by the inmate population, having less than one percent of the population in isolation may require further review to determine whether the appropriate sanctions are in place at Lawrenceville.

The high rate of positives at this facility indicates that the GEO should be more aggressive, at least in the short term, when it comes to requesting and justifying the moving of inmates who test positive to a higher secure facility. The existing disciplinary sanctions clearly are not having a deterrent effect on the population and needs to be reviewed and modified, at least until the present situation is improved.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **GEO should review the Sept 29, 2005 requirements and fully document and justify a security level change when it is warranted in order to provide a more immediate sanction and deterrent to inmates who test positive at this facility.**

DOC Contract Monitor

The project team benefited from the assistance and knowledge of the VaDOC contract liaison who is stationed full-time at Lawrenceville to monitor the operations of the facility and to report on compliance with the provision of the GEO contract. The contract liaison reports directly to the Regional Director.

The contract liaison reviews the operation of the institution on a daily basis, review documents submitted by GEO per the provisions of the contract, and reports on the status of compliance to the central office contract manager.

The contract liaison was able to assist the project team in obtaining key documents, explaining the operations of the facility, providing some history on procedural changes, and informing us on his impressions of the institution. Some of the key points that were obtained from our interviews and discussions include the following:

- He believed that presently there is a lack of strong deterrent within the institution as it relates to drugs and contraband. He believes that the lack of a drug dog has significantly impaired the institutions ability to detect and to deter the introduction of drugs into the institution.
- He acknowledged that the institution failed to comply with the drug testing requirements of the VaDOC for a long period of time in 2005 and 2006. He attributed this to the lack of a drug testing analyzer that they now utilize. He did note that in January 2007 the Regional Director directed that this issue be more carefully reviewed and monitored in order to insure compliance.
- He indicated that the change in the damages portions of the agreement as it relates to staff vacancies was negotiated between the former regional director and the warden and was intended to reflect the reality of the time required to fill positions. Under the prior understanding damages were considered for every day a position listed in Appendix E of the contract was left vacant. This was modified to positions that had been vacant 30 days or longer.
- He concurred with our assessment that search procedures were inconsistent in their application to staff and visitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The VaDOC should review the role and reporting structure of the contract liaison to insure that areas of non-compliance such as reflected in the failure to test five percent of the population that are reported through agency channels are aggressively and immediately addressed and corrected.
2. It is recommended that the VaDOC consider the ramifications of requiring GEO to maintain a minimum number of male security staff. Such a discussion has possible legal implications in terms of equal protection of a protected class, equal opportunity, etc., but should be reviewed in light of the impact this situation has on the operation of the facility given the restrictions on the ability of females to search male inmates.

Operation of the Mail Room

The operation of the mail room was observed and the supervisor interviewed in order to determine the effectiveness of the procedures within this function. The staff complement for the mail room totaled three staff, including the supervisor.

During the observation it was clear that staff was knowledgeable and aware of the methods that could be utilized to introduce contraband into the institution through the mail. It was noted that all packages were processed by the intake and personal property staff located in the intake area of the institution. The focus of the mail room staff involved the prevention of money from entering the institution through the mail. The supervisor explained the techniques that are utilized to detect money in the mail and the process that was followed to inspect each letter. No problems were noted or observed in this area,

The supervisor further explained the process utilized to deliver legal mail to offenders. Mail room staff recorded the legal mail as being received and then it is passed to the inmate's individual housing unit counselor for delivery unopened to the inmate. The counselor is required to observe the legal mail being opened and inspects the contents to insure that no contraband was contained in the letter. This process is standard throughout the correctional community with the exception of who delivers the letters directly to the inmate. Many systems attempt to reduce the number of individuals involved in order to maintain consistency and also limit the potential of staff being compromised. Most systems have one designated staff member handle this process who is trained in security procedures and especially familiar with practices related to the search for contraband. With all the housing unit counselors involved in this process, the potential for error is greater than otherwise expected.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. GEO should limit the number of staff involved in the delivery of legal mail to individual inmates in order to improve consistency and minimize the potential for staff to be compromised.
2. GEO should pursue the acquisition of a package x-ray machine to permit ongoing inspection for contraband of packages, parcels, etc.

Operation of Intake and Personal Property processes

Inmates are processed into and out of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center in a designated intake room. These operations are conducted under the direction of the Warehouse and Intake Manager. As it pertains to the processing of inmate property, these activities are to follow the Center's policy #13.003, *Inmate Personal Property*.

The intake room is staffed by two to three non-uniformed staff that processes the incoming inmate's paperwork, search his property, and issue clothing and other items. Additionally, a male sergeant is on hand to perform strip-searches on the inmates.

Inside the intake area there are two additional rooms or cells to hold the inmates. One cell is used to hold those inmates that have not been searched and the other is for the inmates that have been searched. There is another curtained off area where the strip-searches are actually performed.

Process Observations

Inmates arrive at the intake room with their property contained in sealed cardboard boxes. The boxes are placed on the floor and the inmates are secured in a room while waiting a strip-search.

When the inmate is to be searched, he is moved into a curtained off area and searched in private. It was noted that the inmates' footwear was not examined in detail during these searches. Once a search was completed, the inmate was then secured in a second cell away from the inmates who had not been searched.

After all of the inmates were searched, they were released from the second cell one at a time to stand by while his personal property is searched. The non-uniformed employees review the accompanying paperwork and make a new inventory of the property while the Sergeant searches and identifies the items. Items not listed on the incoming inventory sheet are confiscated and not given to the inmate.

It was during this process that the project team observed that items such as televisions, CD players, radios, and headphones were subjected to only a perfunctory scrutiny. It did not appear that these were examined for tampering or to see if they contained contraband. Also, some packages such as tubes or bottles contained in small boxes were not opened during the search process.

Upon completion of the inventory, the inmate signs the inventory sheet and is issued his clothing, linens, and shoes. Frequently, inmate workers assist in this process but did not do so on the day of the assessment due to all inmates being confined to their cells for a special commissary delivery.

It was relayed to the project team that some inmate personal property items were stored in the intake room. When asked if the inmate workers either had access to this property or handled it, the manager stated that neither was the case.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Consider additional training and supervisory oversight of the personal property function to ensure inmates' property is examined for tampering and that all containers are thoroughly inspected.

Preferred Work Assignments

The Lawrenceville Correctional Center has a number of job opportunities available to the inmate population. 80 – 85 percent of all inmates have a work or program assignment. All inmates securing jobs are required to complete a screening process to determine their appropriateness for the position. If an inmate is eligible for a position the supervising employee will interview the inmate for further consideration. Upon completion of the interview and verification of assignment eligibility by the job coordinator the inmate may be hired. All inmates who receive a job assignment are compensated.

Job assignments that are considered preferred by a large portion of the inmate population include a visitation clean-up worker and assignment to maintenance. Both positions are high demand positions.

There are three inmate visiting room positions. Two of the positions are responsible for cleaning up the visiting room during and immediately after visitation. The major attraction to the position for the inmate is their access to the public. Inmate visitation workers are able to move throughout the visiting room and observe activity. In addition to the visitation clean up workers there is one inmate assigned to take photographs in the visiting room. Due to the inmates access to the public and responsibility to observe their surroundings (for clean-up), these positions are highly sensitive and vulnerable assignments.

Specific inmate maintenance assignments are highly attractive assignments due to the pay (\$.42 cents per hour), mobility through out the facility, and the skilled labor responsibilities of the position.

Currently the facility has a policy in place that requires all inmates to be interviewed for their job assignment and to be screened by the job coordinator. Specific requirements are mandated prior to the inmate being able to fill the job assignment. Screening applicants prior to placement is a key element in ensuring the appropriate inmates are assigned to select positions. Monitoring inmate performance and compliance with established policies is essential to maintaining the integrity of the area.

RECOMMENDATION:

None

F. Summary

This project focused on the security operations systems of the Lawrenceville Correctional Center, and more specifically on the security systems designed to eliminate, detect and control contraband within the institution. The project team, in cooperation with the VaDOC and the GEO staff assigned to Lawrenceville, reviewed the operations, security procedures, and the level of compliance with both the VaDOC and GEO operations security procedures. The review also included an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee/visitor shakedowns upon entering the institution's security perimeter; the effectiveness of the institutions drug testing procedures; and the effectiveness of the random and routine shakedowns of inmates and inmate cells. Finally, MGT also assessed the overall effectiveness of the institutions policies, procedures, and practices as it relates to the searches for and control of contraband within the institution.

At the conclusion of this assessment the MGT project team formally presented its findings and recommendations to the VaDOC and representatives of GEO and the Lawrenceville Correctional Center. As documented in this report MGT found the institution to be a safe and secure facility that has a low incidence of violence. Staff were found to be professional and committed to operating a facility that is in compliance with contemporary correctional standards and specifically the standards and requirements of the VaDOC.

As has been documented in reports provided by both GEO and the VaDOC there has been a high incidence of contraband in the institution since 2005. What is important from our perspective is that both the leadership of the VaDOC and administrators of Lawrenceville have recognized that a problem exists and have taken aggressive action, including initiating this independent review, to identify the possible contributing factors to the situation and to implement appropriate corrective action. Many of the problems reported in this final report have been previously identified through reviews and assessments initiated by the VaDOC in the later part of 2006 and early in 2007. As can be seen from the drug testing results for 2007, these actions are already impacting the presence of drugs within the institution.

The situation we found at Lawrenceville is certainly not unique. Institutions that are well run, staffed appropriately, operating based on sound and comprehensive policy and procedures, can experience situations where the inconsistent application and enforcement of the security requirements result in serious breaches of the security envelope of the institution. In this case those breaches resulted in the high incidence of drugs and cell phones being introduced into the institution.

It was clear, however, that the systems, procedures, and policies are in place at Lawrenceville that will, and has to large degree, permitted this situation to be corrected through a strong response by both GEO and the VaDOC. This was further reinforced to us by the willingness of both parties to immediately respond aggressively to our recommendations and suggestions as they were being presented to them. It is our belief that the problems we observed and documented are easily correctable and will result in significant reductions in the incidence of contraband within the institution.

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