State of Iowa Department of Corrections

Policy and Procedures

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Authority:

1. PURPOSE

To outline procedures for ensuring code, standard, statutory, and regulatory compliance in all Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) institution maintenance, repair, renovation, and construction activities.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the IDOC to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the physical plant in each of its institutions, and to protect against the development of conditions that might adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of incarcerated individuals, staff, or public.

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3. DEFINITIONS - As used in this document:

A. Safety Officer - The employee charged with oversight of an institution's Occupational Health and Safety Program and compliance with applicable fire and life safety standards.

B. Authority Having Jurisdiction - May be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual, such as the fire chief, fire marshal, chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, health department, building official, electrical inspector, IDOC Safety Director or other person or entity with standing authority who are knowledgeable about the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code. As approved by the Director for specific purposes, this person may be employed by the DOC or the State of Iowa, provided that he or she is not under the authority of the institution administrator and that the report generated is referred to higher authorities within the Department independent of influence by the Warden or staff, no matter who generates the report.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Building Codes

Each IDOC institution constructed, renovated, or in which an addition is built will conform to all applicable federal, state, and where applicable, local building codes.

B. Safety Codes

Each institution will conform to applicable federal, state, and where applicable, local fire safety codes.

C. Fire Alarm Systems

Fire alarm and automatic detection systems, approved by the authority having jurisdiction, will be in place at each institution, unless the State Fire Marshal's Office approves a temporary waiver. When a waiver is granted, a plan for remediation of the deficiency within a reasonable period of time will be developed and implemented.

D. Variances

1. Variances, exceptions, or equivalencies may be approved by the authority having jurisdiction when they do not constitute a serious life safety threat.

2. The institution conforms to applicable federal, state, and where applicable local fire safety codes. Compliance is documented by the authority having jurisdiction. A fire alarm and automatic detection system are required, as approved by the authority having jurisdiction, or there is a plan for addressing these or other deficiencies within a reasonable time period. The authority approves any variances, exceptions, or equivalencies that do not constitute a serious life safety threat to the occupants or the institution.

E. Code Compliance

1. Each institution will identify a Safety Officer trained in fire and life safety issues who will be responsible for monitoring code compliance.

2. The Safety Officer is responsible for scheduling and monitoring all required inspections of federal, state, and where applicable local fire safety codes conducted by the authority having jurisdiction and will maintain documentation of all required inspections and of compliance.

3. The Warden will designate area supervisors who will be trained by the Safety Officer. These area supervisors are responsible for conducting a weekly safety/sanitation inspection of their area of responsibility.

4. All issues of non-compliance with mandatory applicable federal, state, and where applicable local fire safety codes will be reported to the Warden who will take the appropriate measures to comply with the code requirements at the earliest possible date. The Deputy Director of Institution Operations will also be notified.

F. Inspections

1. The Safety Officer will review documentation of all areas inspected; will conduct a monthly health, sanitation, and safety inspection of all areas of the institution; and will maintain current records of all code compliance/non-compliance issues. They will also retain all documentation of inspections.

2. There is a weekly fire and safety inspection of the institution by a qualified departmental staff member. This policy and procedure is reviewed annually and updated as needed.

3. The institution complies with all applicable health codes and regulations of the governing jurisdiction, and there is documentation that any past deficiencies noted in annual inspections have been corrected.

4. Copies of all inspections will be forwarded to both the institution or program administrator and the IDOC Safety Director.

5. The following institution inspections are required:

    a. Weekly sanitation inspections of all institution areas by a qualified departmental staff member.

    b. Comprehensive and thorough monthly inspections by the institution's Safety Officer and an annual inspection performed by the IDOC Safety Audit Team.

G. Modifications to the Physical Plant

1. Additions to, or modifications of, the physical plant of any IDOC institution may be undertaken only with consideration to the architectural and structural integrity of the institution and in accordance with applicable federal, state, and where applicable local codes and ordinances. Approval of the authority having jurisdiction will be received prior to construction or modification of any structure or life safety system.

2. In the event of emergency, the Warden may authorize physical plant changes in order to protect the immediate health, safety, or welfare of the public, staff or incarcerated individuals. Under such circumstances, the Deputy Director of Institution Operations will be notified as soon as is practical.