

Drug Interdiction Efforts

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) experienced several incidents over a one-week period in August 2018 in which staff and inmates incurred adverse effects from illicit substances. The DOC is taking the following steps to ensure the safety of staff and inmates:

- ✓ **Development of employee training regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)** – By September 15, 2018, all staff who process inmate mail, search inmates and/or search inmate property will be given additional training to enhance similar information provided during basic training and annual trainings. The enhanced training, which is being developed by the DOC's Bureau of Operations, will be geared toward illicit substances and will focus on the donning and removal of gloves, the use of universal precautions and how to prevent cross contamination.
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- ✓ **Training and equipment procurement for the safe handling and decontamination of illicit substances** – By October 1, 2018, every state prison's facility safety manager will provide Fire Emergency Response Team (FERT) members a specialist training that focuses on HazMat equipment and the handling of and decontamination of illicit substances. Facilities will train and provide FERT members with decontamination suits, gloves, respirators and safety goggles.
 - ✓ **Procurement of safety disposal equipment** – The DOC will identify an appropriate canister or unit and bags that can be seals for use in the mailrooms to safely secure/dispose of questionable items. These canisters/units also would be used by facility security office staff. By August 17, 2018, an email will be sent to facilities providing them with the approved canister/unit and ordering information.

**“WE ARE GOING TO DO
WHATEVER IT TAKES TO
PROTECT OUR STAFF, AND IF
WE HAVE TO LOCK DOWN
EVERY DAY, THAT’S WHAT
WERE GOING TO DO.”**

**-JOHN WETZEL
SECRETARY**

- ✓ **Evaluation and procurement of body scanner devices for each facility** – The DOC is in the process of evaluating three body scanner systems (one at a community corrections center, one at SCI Coal Township and one soon-to-be-placed at SCI Huntingdon). Once the evaluations are complete, the DOC will order body scanners for every state prison and for several DOC-operated community corrections centers. The deadline for this initiative is ASAP.



- ✓ **Implementation of inmate mail processing through a third-party vendor that will receive, scan and forward copies of mail back to the respective facility for distribution** – This is being actively researched with a goal of implementing it ASAP.
- ✓ **Implementing a procedure to copy legal mail** - This is being actively researched with a goal of implementing it ASAP.
- ✓ **Procurement of K9 Narcan auto injectors** – By September 12, 2018, the DOC will purchase Narcan auto-injectors (similar to an epi-pen) for use on K9s. The DOC is in the process of obtaining a prescription from a veterinarian.
- ✓ **Development of a drug awareness public service announcement to be shown on the inmate TV channel** – The DOC is in the process of development content to show on the inmate TV channel until videos can be obtained or created. The initial information will begin airing by August 17, 2018.
- ✓ **Expansion of the K9/Drug Interdiction Unit** – The DOC is in the process of developing a plan to expand the unit to include three new handlers/dogs (one team in each region of the state) that would involve parole agents being trained and assigned as K9 handlers who will assist parole agents in the field.

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The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) operates as one team, embraces diversity, and commits to enhancing public safety. We are proud of our reputation as leaders in the corrections field. Our mission is to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to inmates, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.