

Office of Corrections Ombudsperson
New Jersey State Correctional Facilities
Inspection Tool for General Population Housing Units

The Inspection Tool

The Ombudsperson's general population housing unit inspection tool contains four sections: Sanitation and Shared Spaces, Personal Living Conditions, Fire Safety Measures, and Food Safety & Nutrition. The tool is designed to establish a baseline for adult state correctional facilities minimum standards.

Inspection Standards

Inspection standards are adopted from New Jersey Administrative Code (NJAC), the American Correctional Association (ACA) best practices, codified Department standards and policies and measures for assessing access points to loved ones and to the Department. Based on the infrastructure needs of any given facility, standards may be slightly modified to account for reasonable and suitable alternatives the Department employs to achieve the standard as best as the facility's design may allow.

Scoring & Rating System

The inspection tool is applied in each general population living area in the correctional facility.¹ Each living area is scored individually. One point is awarded for each component within a single inspection standard, and the maximum points possible per standard is five. For standards containing more than five components, each component is worth one-half of a point. The overall inspection rating is determined by calculating a percentage based on the points awarded relative to the total point possible (shown below). Points are deducted when measures are not met on the day of inspection and cannot be remedied before the close of the inspection period. For section two, cell-to-cell observations, points are deducted when interviews with individuals determine 30% or more are affected by an unmet standard.

Percentage	Rating Defined
90% - 100%	Meets all criteria in standards
80% - 89%	Meets most criteria in standards
70% - 79%	Some criteria unmet
60% - 69%	Return inspection may be required
0% - 59%	Return inspection required

¹ For the purposes of the Office's inspection, general population "living areas" may be referred to by the Department as housing units, tiers, or wings within compounds, buildings or facilities. The terminology and physical structure of each correctional facility is unique. To adjust for these variances, the inspection tool is implemented in every independently operated living area. A living area or housing unit is determined by the Office to include the living quarters (single, double, four-person cells, or dormitories) and the communal or shared spaces for showers, kiosk and phones.

Overview of Correctional Facility

Occupancy and General Population Housing Units

Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) Inspections conducted July 10th, 11th, 17th, and 18th, 2024
Nine inspected general population housing units <i>(East houses: 1&2 wings, South houses 1&2 wings, West house 1-wing, R-houses; 1-wing (right), 2-wings (right and left), Post-reception unit 4 (PRU))</i>
General Population Count from each unit during July inspection: 636
Facility Population (July 12, 2024): 1025
Operational Capacity (assessed upon re-inspection October 16, 2024): 1180
Number of cells: 677
Number of single cells: 174 Number of double cells: 503
Number of Reported Decommissioned cells: 31
Reasons for closure of decommissioned cells: <i>Water leaks, malfunctioning doors and/or locks, roofing issues, severe sanitation concerns such as mold.</i>

**The population count, number of cells and decommissioned cells is based on counts provided by custody staff during the onsite inspection and were confirmed by the housing unit log counts.*

Overall Inspection Rating for the Correctional Facility

199 cell-to-cell observations and 242 interviews with incarcerated people.
July Inspection rating: 73% (222.5 points out of a possible 305 achievable points)
Unmet & partially unmet standards: <i>See Point Deductions Worksheet by Standard and Housing Unit (page 8).</i>
*Final Inspection rating: 85.2% (260 points out of 305 achievable points)

**The final inspection score reflects points awarded due to the facility's responsiveness to unmet measures. Return inspections were held in August, October and December - to assess for measures not initially met during the July Inspection.*

Section 1: Sanitation of Shared Spaces – Nine GP Housing Units

Standards		Points Possible	Points Awarded	Re-Inspection
1.1	Documentation of most recent sanitary inspection conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health.	1.0 (per GSYCF facility)	+1.0	Not Required
1.2	Inspections are conducted and documented by the Department to ensure control of pests.	1.0 (per GSYCF)	+1.0	Not Required
1.3	All areas of the correctional facility shall be inspected for cleanliness at least weekly by a designated staff member(s) who shall submit a written report.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.4	Housekeeping schedules are maintained by staff and include the frequency and locations.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.5	Schedule for laundering clothes, linens, and blankets. Clothes and linens laundered once per week and blankets monthly.	3.0 (per unit)	+27.0	Not Required
1.6	Cleaning supplies are made available to the incarcerated persons on the unit.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.7	Communal shower areas are clean and there is one shower for every 16 incarcerated people (based on the number of individuals out of cell during recreation periods). ²	2.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.8	Working telephones are available on the housing unit and there is one phone for every 16 incarcerated people.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.9	Working kiosks are available on the housing unit and there is one kiosk for every 16 individuals.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
1.10	Paper remedy forms are accessible on the housing unit (ea. form is one half of a point). ³	4.0 (per unit)	+18.5	+23.0

² “Clean” or “Sanitary” for Ombudsperson’s Office means no excessive grime, residue, or foreign materials accumulated on floors, side walls, showers, ceilings or other exposed room surfaces. Shared indoor recreational spaces and showers are free of dirt, debris, leaking water, garbage, food particles, and sewage.

³ MR-007 Sick Call, IP Inquiry, IP Grievance, Property Claim, Law Library, Social Services, GTL Discrepancy, OCO RFA.

Section II: Personal Living Conditions: Cell-to-Cell Observations

Standards <i>Points are deducted when the OCO confirms 30% or more of interviewed individuals are affected by an unmet standard.</i>		Points Possible	Points Awarded	Re-inspection
2.1	Cells have working toilets and sinks.	2.0 (per unit)	+18.0	Not Required
2.2	Incarcerated persons interviewed reported receipt of basic clothing, pillow, towel and bedding (sheets and blanket).	5.0 (per unit)	+37.0	+45.0
2.3	Sufficient clean blankets to provide comfort under existing temperature conditions, as deemed appropriate by the facility Administrator, or designee.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
2.4	Each IP is provided secure container that may be used to store clothing.	1.0 (per unit)	+0.0	+9.0
2.5	All incarcerated persons are issued a mattress that is fire retardant.	1.0 (per unit)	+9.0	Not Required
2.6	All single occupancy cells shall contain a minimum of 35 square feet of unencumbered floor space.	1.0 (per single cell units)	+3.0	Not Required
2.7	All multiple occupancy sleeping units shall contain a minimum of 25 square feet of unencumbered floor space per incarcerated person.	1.0 (per double-bunk units)	+1.0	Not easily remedied, issue of design.

*Nine inspected housing units, three single-cell units and six double-bunked units.

Section III: Fire Safety Measures

Standards		Points Possible	Points Awarded	Re-inspection
3.1	The institution is able to produce a fire emergency plan to include the safe evacuation of the incarcerated population.	1.0 (per GSYCF facility)	+1.0	Not Required
3.2	Two fire extinguishers with up to date inspection tags are available on the housing unit.	2.0 (per unit)	+4.0	+16.0
3.3	The facility is up to date with documented fire inspections.	1.0 (per GSYCF)	+1.0	Not Required

Section IV: Food Safety and Nutrition

Standards		Points Possible	Points Awarded	Re-inspection
4.1	Food temperatures are documented in the facility kitchen before transporting to housing units. (<i>Cold food is maintained at proper temperature, 41°F and hot food is maintained at the proper temperature, 135°F.</i>)	2.0 (per GSYCF facility kitchen)	+0.0	+2.0
4.2	*A sanitary space shall be provided for group dining. Meals shall not be served in cells unless it is necessary for purposes of safety or security and only if a (1) small table, (2) shelf and (3) seating arrangement is provided.	3.0 (observable meal serve in South-2 housing unit)	+0.0	Not easily remedied
4.3	All menus including (1) special diets are planned, dated and available for review at least one week in advance and (2) a file of tested recipes, (3) adjusted to prepare the number of meals appropriate to the size of the facility, should be maintained on the premises.	3.0 (per GSYCF)	+3.0	Not Required
4.4	Three meals provided at regular meal times during each 24 hour period. Two of the three meals provided shall be hot meals unless an emergency situation precludes the serving of hot meals. No more than 14 hours shall elapse between the evening and breakfast meals.	5.0 (per GSYCF)	+5.0	Not Required
4.5	Documentation of weekly inspection of all food service areas and equipment is conducted and documentation of daily checks for refrigerator and water temperatures.	2.0 (per GSYCF)	+0.0	+2.0

*GSYCF dining hall is closed for congregate dining, there is insufficient seating for everyone residing in the housing unit and there is not adequate space inside the cell for a table and seating arrangement.

Section V: Heat Mitigation

Standards <i>A temperature recording exceeding 86°F triggers the heat mitigation section of the inspection tool (5.1-5.8). This occurred in six housing unit.</i>		Points Possible	Points Awarded
5.1	Fans are operable on the housing unit.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+5.0
5.2	Accessible windows are open.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+6.0
5.3	Temperatures are documented once per shift in unit logbook.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+6.0
5.4	Showers are increased in frequency.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+6.0
5.5	Educational flyers concerning heat safety are posted on the unit and/or distributed via JPay.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+4.0
5.6	Population has increased access to ice.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+3.0
5.7	Population has increased access to fluids.	1.0 (per applicable unit)	+0.0

*See point deduction matrix for applicable units on page 8.

* The housing units were inspected once for heat mitigation protocol. The facility took significant steps after the first day to remedy barriers to accessing ice which is reflected in the units we inspected later in the week. Increased access to fluids was not achieved for everyone therefore points were not awarded. During the heat protocol, individuals are able to purchase an additional case of water per canteen order, but this does not apply universally because it is dependent on financial resources.

Initial Inspection in July: Point Calculations by Housing Unit & Inspection Standard

	East 1	East 2	South 1	South 2	West 1	R-2-L	R-2-R	R-1-R	PRU 4	Points Awarded	Points Possible
1.1 Dept. of Health Inspection	Garden State provided proof or a recent inspection conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health for the institution's kitchen areas. Zero points deducted.									+1.0	1.0
1.2 Ensure control of pests	Garden State provided documentation of contracted pest control services which are facilitated multiple times a week through the institution. Zero points deducted.									+1.0	1.0
1.3 Cleanliness Inspections	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
1.4 Housekeeping Schedules	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
1.5 Launder Clothes, Linens, Blankets	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+27.0	27.0
1.6 Cleaning Supplies	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
1.7 Clean Showers: 1 for every 16 IPs	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:9)	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:9)	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:9)	Partial, -1.0 pt. (1:7)	Partial -1.0pt. (1:7)	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:7)	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:4)	Partial, -1.0 pt. (1:5)	Partial -1.0 pt. (1:14)	+9.0	18.0
1.8 Phones: 1:16	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
1.9 Kiosks: 1:16	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
1.10 Paper Remedy Forms	Partial, -2.0 pts	Partial, -3.0 pts	Not Met, -5.0 pts	Partial, -3.0 pts	Partial, -2.5 pts	Partial, -2.5 pts	Partial, -3.0 pts	Partial, -2.5 pts	Partial, -3.0 pts	+18.5	36.0
*None of the units met the standard of cleanliness for inspected shower areas. Showers are in need of tiles, new grout/caulk, deep cleaning and properly fitted shower curtains on tracks.											

	East 1	East 2	South 1	South 2	West 1	R-2-L*	R-2-R	R-1-R	PRU 4	Points Awarded	Points Possible
2.1 Working Toilets/Sinks	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+18.0	18.0
2.2 Clothing Towel, Pillow, Blanket, Sheets	Partial, -1.0 pt. 51% w/out pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 79% w/out pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 93% w/out a pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 67% w/out a pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 96% w/out a pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 75% w/out a pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 48% w/out a pillow	Partial, -1.0 pt. 78% w/out a pillow	Met Standard	+37.0	45.0
2.3 Clean Blankets	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
2.4 Provide secure container	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Not Issued	+0.0	9.0
2.5 Mattress	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	+9.0	9.0
2.6 Single Cells 35 sq. ft. floor space	NA, Double Cell	NA, Double Cell	NA, Double Cell	NA, Double Cell	NA, Double Cell	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	NA, Double Cell	+3.0	3.0
2.7 Multiple occupancy cells 25 sq. ft. floor space per individual	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	Not Met, -1.0 pt. Approx. 18sq.ft. per IP	NA, Single Cell	NA, Single Cell	Met Standard	+1.0	7.0
3.1 Fire Plan	Garden State provided documentation of the institutions emergency fire evacuation plan.									+1.0	1.0
3.2 Two Fire Extinguishers Serviced w/in 12 mos.	Met Standard	Partial, -1.0 pt. (1 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	Partial, -1.0 pt. (1 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	Not Met, -2.0 pts (2 OOSD)	+4.0	18.0
3.3 Fire Inspections	Garden State provided documentation of the institution’s most recent completed fire inspection.									+1.0	1.0
*R-2-L contains both single and double cells.											
* OOSD is “out of service date.” Fire extinguishers are to be serviced every 12 months. Any tags showing data of last serviced June 2023 or before are not current.											

	East 1	East 2	South 1	South 2	West 1	R-2-L	R-2-R	R-1-R	PRU 4	Points Awarded	Points Possible
4.1 Cold and hot food temps. documented in kitchen	--	--	--	Not Met -2.0 pts	--	--	--	--	--	0.0	2.0
4.3 Dining Space	--	--	--	Not met, -3.0 pts.	--	--	--	--	--	0.0	3.0
4.4 Meal Preparation	Garden State provided documentation of (1) menus including (2) special diets and (3) ratios for calculating appropriate portions. Zero points deducted.									+3.0	3.0
4.5 Meal Serves	Garden State documentation along with interviews with staff and incarcerated people verified incarcerated individuals receive three meals a day (two of which are served hot) and less than 14 hours elapses between dinner and breakfast.									+5.0	5.0
4.6 Food area inspections	Standard Not Met. The institution's main kitchen area was (1) unable to provide documentation of weekly food service area inspections and recordings of (2) refrigerator and (3) water temperatures.									+0.0	3.0
Inspection Temperature Readings	87.5	90.1	85.0	86.0	87.7	89.9	90.1	89.4	79.0	--	
5.1 Working Fans	Met Standard	Not Met	--	--	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	+5.0	6.0
5.2 Windows Open	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	--	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	+6.0	6.0
5.3 Temps. recorded	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	--	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	+6.0	6.0
5.4 Increased Showers	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	--	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	+6.0	6.0
5.5 Heat Illness Posters	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	--	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Met Standard	Met Standard	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	--	+4.0	6.0
5.6 Access to Ice	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	--	--	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	--	+3.0	6.0
5.7 Increased Fluids	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	--	--	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	Not Met, -1.0 pt.	--	+0.0	6.0

Reference table for point deduction matrix: cell-to-cell interviews

General Population Housing Units	# of IPs Interviewed	Cell to Cell Observations					
		2.1 Toilet/Sink Issues		2.2 No Pillow		2.2 Missing at least one: change of clothing, towel, sheet(s) and/or blanket	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
East 1	37	7	18.9	19	51.3	5	13.5
East 2	39	5	12.8	31	79.4	9	23.0
South 1	44	12	27.2	41	93.1	23	52.2
South 2	30	3	10.0	20	66.6	12	43.3
West 1	23	4	17.3	22	95.6	5	21.7
R2L	20	3	15.0	15	75.0	1	5.0
R2R	27	0	0.0	13	48.1	7	25.9
R1R	9	0	0.0	7	77.7	1	11.1
PRU 4	13	2	15.3	3	23.0	0	0.0
Total	242	33	13.6	171	70.6	63	26.0

Reference table: employment and activities (June 18, 2024 job roster and July 2024 program enrollment)

	Counts	Employed: Meaningful Work		Enrolled: All Activities		Employed + Enrolled		No Engagement	
	# of people	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outside Houses	468	95	20.2	156	33.3	241	51.5	227	48.5
R-House	155	59	38.0	85	54.8	113	72.9	42	27.0
PRU 4 / Overflow	28	14	53.5	1	3.5	15	53.5	13	46.4
GP Total	651	167	25.9	242	37.2	369	56.7	282	43.3