

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

New Jersey State Prison, West Compound: Inspection in October 2024: 28th, 29th, 30th; December 11th; January 22, 2025; March 12th and May 8th
Seven inspected general population housing units <i>West Compound: 1 Right, 2 Right & Left, 4 Right & Left, 6 Right & Left</i>
General Population Count (October inspection dates): 610
Facility Population (October 28, 2024): <i>610 West Compound General Population</i> <i>1,318 NJSP Facility (West, North, South)</i>
Operational Capacity:
Number of cells: 637
Number of single cells: 552 Number of double cells: 85
Number of Reported Decommissioned cells:
Reasons for closure of decommissioned cells:

**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

116 cell-to-cell observations and interviews with incarcerated people.
Initial Inspection rating: 78% (162 points out of a possible 206 achievable points)
Unmet & partially unmet standards: <i>See Point Deductions Worksheet by Standard and Housing Unit (page).</i>
*Final Inspection rating: 82% (169 points out of 206 achievable points)

**The final inspection score reflects points awarded due to the facility's responsiveness to unmet measures. Return inspections were held in dates - to assess for measures not initially met during the original inspection date Inspection.*

Section 1: Sanitation of Shared Spaces – Seven 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 (facility)	1.0	Not Required
1.2	Inspections are conducted and documented by the Department to ensure control of pests.	1.0 (facility)	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)	7.0	Not Required
1.4	Housekeeping schedules are maintained by staff and include the frequency and locations.	1.0 (per unit)	7.0	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)	21.0	Not Required
1.6	Cleaning supplies are made available to the incarcerated persons on the unit.	1.0 (per unit)	7.0	Not Required
1.7	Communal shower areas are clean and there is one shower for every 16 incarcerated people (based on # of individuals out of cell during recreation periods). ²	2.0 (per unit)	12.0	Not easily remedied, issue of design
1.8	*Working telephones are available on the housing unit (1:16).	1.0 (per unit)	NA	NA
1.9	Working kiosks are available on the housing unit and there is one kiosk for every 16 individuals.	1.0 (per unit)	0.0	Not easily remedied, issue of design
1.10	Paper remedy forms are accessible on the housing unit (ea. form is one half of a point). ³	4.0 (per unit)	20.0	Not Required

*See 2.8 telephones are provided to the incarcerated person population cell to cell.

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 (hot/cold water).	2.0 (per unit)	6.0	Cannot remedy, issue of design
2.2	Incarcerated persons interviewed reported receipt of basic clothing, pillow, towel, and bedding (sheets and blanket).	5.0 (per unit)	28.0	Dept. would not remedy
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)	7.0	Not Required
2.4	Each IP is provided secure container that may be used to store clothing.	1.0 (per unit)	0.0	7.0
2.5	All incarcerated persons are issued a mattress that is fire retardant.	1.0 (per unit)	7.0	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)	0.0	Not easily remedied, issue of design
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)	2.0	Not easily remedied, issue of design
2.8	Incarcerated people are provided access to working telephones on the unit.	1.0 (per unit)	7.0	7.0

*7 inspected housing units, 2 single-cell units and 5 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 (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)	14.0	Not Required
3.3	The facility is up to date with documented fire inspections.	1.0 (facility)	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 kitchen)	2.0	Not Required
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.	1.0 (for observable group dining)	1.0	Not Required
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 (facility)	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 (facility)	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 (facility)	2.0	Not Required

*NJSP provide group dining which equates to one point for the facility.

Section V: Heat Mitigation

The temperatures on the units did not measure 86 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Therefore, the heat mitigation portion of the inspection instrument was not able to be conducted.

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

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

[illegible]

[illegible]

	1 Right	2 Right	2 Left	4 Right	4 Left	6 Right	6 Left	Points Awarded	Points Possible
2.3 Clean Blankets	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	7.0	7.0
2.4 Provide secure container	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	0.0	7.0
2.5 Mattress	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	7.0	7.0
2.6 <u>Single</u> Cells 35 sq. ft. floor space	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	NA	NA	Not Met	Not Met	0.0	5.0
2.7 <u>Multiple</u> occupancy cells 25 sq. ft. floor space per individual	NA	NA	NA	Met Standard	Met Standard	NA	NA	2.0	2.0
2.8 Telephone Access	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	Met Standard	7.0	7.0

***After the initial inspection NJSP Administration approved plastic containers free of charge to new facility admissions.**

	1 Right	2 Right	2 Left	4 Right	4 Left	6 Right	6 Left	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Inspection Temperature Readings	The temperatures on the units did not measure 86 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Therefore, the heat mitigation portion of the inspection instrument was not conducted.							-----	-----

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 Missing at least one: change of clothing, towel, sheet(s) and/or blanket		2.2 *Had to Purchase a full size towel		2.4 Purchased a secure container or had no containers		Yes, Daily Phone Access	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 Right	13	4	30.8%	2	15.4%	6	46.2%	13	100.0%	13	100.0%
2 Right	14	0	0.0%	4	28.7%	6	42.9%	13	92.9%	14	100.0%
2 Left	18	1	5.6%	1	5.6%	7	38.9%	18	100.0%	18	100.0%
4 Right	14	1	7.1%	2	14.3%	10	71.4%	14	100.0%	14	100.0%
4 Left	14	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	50.0%	14	100.0%	14	100.0%
6 Right	31	2	6.5%	0	0.0%	22	71.0%	31	100.0%	31	100.0%
6 Left	12	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	8.3%	12	100.0%	12	100.0%
Total	116	10	8.6%	9	7.8%	59	50.9%	115	99.1%	116	100.0%

*Note: IPs are issued at towel at intake as part of their “b-bag” however, measurements of towel reflect 38 total inches in length which is not sufficient for a full size man in housing unit lacking any privacy for bathing.

- 100% of IPs in the units reported daily access to phone. 2 individuals stated they don't use the phone and one due to needing to call out of country and GTL not setup for him to do so. Access to phone was observed throughout all the units.