



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE | OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

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Notification of Security Concerns at the
Federal Bureau of Prisons Camp Locations

INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE | OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

June 4, 2021

To: Michael Carvajal
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Horowitz".

From: Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General

Subject: Notification of Security Concerns at the Federal Bureau of Prisons Camp Locations

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise you of concerns the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has identified in connection with inmate accountability and security at the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Federal Prison Camp (FPC) and Satellite Prison Camp (SPC) locations. The OIG identified these concerns in connection with multiple investigations involving prison escapes, including an investigation at the Federal Correctional Complex (FCC), SPC, Beaumont, Texas, where the escape of 4 inmates went undetected for more than 12 hours despite 3 overnight inmate counts during that period of time. The OIG's investigation at FCC Beaumont did not substantiate allegations that Correctional Officers violated policy, because (1) the evidence showed that the inmates who escaped may have had other inmates pose as them or placed dummies in their beds to deceive Correctional Officers during the nighttime counts; and (2) the evidence showed that the Correctional Officers likely complied with BOP and FCC Beaumont policy when conducting the nighttime counts. However, the OIG identified security concerns that enabled the inmates' escape, and we are told that FCC Beaumont has already begun taking actions to address these concerns. We believe similar steps should be taken by the BOP at FPCs and SPCs BOP-wide. In this memorandum, the OIG makes three recommendations, which are consistent with actions already initiated at FCC Beaumont, to address the concerns we identified.

Relevant Authorities

According to the BOP's website, FPCs are minimum security institutions that "have dormitory housing, a relatively low staff-to-inmate ratio, and limited or no perimeter fencing." These institutions are focused on work and programs for inmates. Several BOP institutions have an SPC, which is a "small, minimum security camp adjacent to the main facility" that typically provides "inmate labor to the main institution and offsite programs." Correctional Officers at FPCs and SPCs are referred to as Camp Correctional Officers.

While inmates at FPCs and SPCs are generally permitted to move among buildings during daytime hours, they are not permitted to leave institution grounds without prior approval and must report to their assigned locations at night and during prison counts. The BOP's Correctional Services Procedure Manual (CSPM) states, "Continuous inmate accountability will be maintained through a system of accurate counts and census checks." The CSPM further states that each institution will conduct a minimum of five official inmate

counts in a 24-hour period and that the 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. counts must be “stand-up counts,” where inmates must stand during the count and can be observed. By contrast, during overnight counts, when inmates are sleeping, Correctional Officers are not required to wake inmates up and have them stand for the count.

According to the CSPM, each count must be conducted by at least two officers, as follows:

One staff member will count while the second staff member stands in a position to observe inmate movement. When the first staff member completes the count, the staff member will change positions. The second staff member will conduct the count while the other staff member observes the inmates. If the staff members [sic] count totals do not match, a recount will be conducted in the same manner.

Each FPC and SPC has Special Instructions and Specific Post Orders for Camp Correctional Officers. Similar to the CSPM, FCC Beaumont’s Special Instructions for Camp Correctional Officers includes the following procedures for official counts:

- “All inmates must report to their cubicle;”
- “Two staff members will count each unit; one staff member will count while the second staff member positions him/herself to where he/she can see inmate movement;” and
- “After the first officer finishes counting the second officer will count while the first officer positions him/herself where he/she can see inmate movement.”

In addition, the CSPM states:

Staff will not conduct a count based upon movements, sounds, or configurations from a covered bed. Staff will ensure they are positively observing human flesh before counting any inmate.

Both the CSPM and FCC Beaumont’s Specific Post Orders for Camp Correctional Officers discourage correctional officers from using excessive light when conducting nighttime counts in order to avoid waking inmates in the middle of the night. Specifically, the CSPM states, “When counting at night, a flashlight must be used judiciously; however enough light will be shown on the inmate to leave no doubt the officer is counting human flesh.” FCC Beaumont’s Specific Post Orders state, “When using flashlights during the morning hours to count, use the amount of light required to ensure you have counted human flesh.”

The Issue

The OIG has found through multiple investigations that many FPCs and SPCs have security weaknesses that have in some cases enabled inmates to escape undetected. While the security weaknesses vary by facility, they include unsecured outer building doors within some FPCs and SPCs, even during times when inmates were not permitted to move freely; door locks and sensors that were susceptible to tampering, thus leading to alarms failing to function when locked doors were opened without authorization; limited or no outer perimeter fencing; and limited video surveillance. For example, in the incident that occurred at the SPC at FCC Beaumont, the escape of 4 inmates was not detected for over 12 hours, despite 3 overnight inmate counts conducted during that time period. The evidence showed that the 4 inmates escaped the facility after the 4:00 p.m. stand up count (for which they were present) and that, despite the Correctional Officers conducting counts at 12:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m., and 5:00 a.m., they were not discovered missing at those times.

The inmates were ultimately discovered missing during a stand-up count at 10:00 a.m. We found that the outer doors of separate buildings within the SPC at FCC Beaumont were unsecured in that they were

unlocked, were unmanned, were not equipped with surveillance cameras, and had either nonfunctioning alarms or alarms that could be manipulated by inmates, even during times when inmates were not permitted to move freely within the SPC, such as during counts and at nighttime. In addition, we were told that inmates sometimes place dummies in their beds or physically place themselves in other inmate beds during inmate counts. We found that unsecured doors allow inmates to move freely within the SPC even when they were not permitted to do so and, thus, make it easier for them to both pose as other inmates during counts and escape from the SPC. Because BOP policy discourages correctional officers from using excessive light when conducting inmate counts, the inmates may be successful in using these methods to deceive correctional officers into counting them when they are not actually present. We were told that as long as inmates return to their assigned building and bunk before the correctional officers conduct stand-up inmate counts, they can escape the SPC undetected.

The OIG has further found that the security risks identified above increase the risk that inmates will bring contraband into FPCs and SPCs. We were told that two of the inmates who escaped the SPC at FCC Beaumont left the facility to obtain contraband.

During the FCC Beaumont investigation and other OIG investigations, the OIG has found that inmates escaping into the community can place the community at risk. The OIG also has found during numerous investigations that inmates bringing contraband into prison facilities is a security issue that places prison staff and the other inmates at risk. Moreover, Camp administrators told the OIG that they agree that additional security measures at FPCs and SPCs would be helpful, and FCC Beaumont has already begun efforts to improve security at its SPC, including adding a perimeter fence, repairing building door alarms, and adding video surveillance and additional lighting at building doors.

Conclusions

The OIG has determined that gaps in security at FPCs and SPCs present risks that inmates will escape and, if they return, smuggle contraband back into facilities undetected, which endangers the community, other BOP inmates, and correctional staff.

Recommendations

The OIG recommends that the BOP take the following three measures to address the concerns identified in this memorandum:

1. The BOP should ensure that alarms on all exterior building doors in FPCs and SPCs are in working condition and should take appropriate measures to prevent them from being susceptible to tampering.
2. The BOP should ensure that all existing video cameras in FPCs and SPCs are in working condition.
3. The BOP should install video cameras on all exterior building doors at FPCs and SPCs, so that BOP Control Officers can observe the doors while Camp Officers are occupied with performing their duties, such as inmate counts.

Please advise the OIG within 60 days of the date of this memorandum on what actions the BOP has taken or intends to take with regard to these issues. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the information in this memorandum, please contact me at (202) 514-3435 or Sarah E. Lake, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, at (202) 616-4730.

cc: Bradley Weinsheimer
Associate Deputy Attorney General Department of Justice

Louise Duhamel
Acting Assistant Director, Audit Liaison Group, Internal Review and Evaluation Office, Justice
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