



**CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON,  
CORCORAN**

**WARDEN DERRAL ADAMS**

**ONE-YEAR AUDIT**

**OFFICE OF THE  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**DAVID R. SHAW  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**AUGUST 2009**



August 19, 2009

Matthew L. Cate, Secretary  
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
1515 S Street, Room 502 South  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Cate:

Enclosed is the Office of the Inspector General's audit report concerning the performance of Warden Derral Adams at California State Prison, Corcoran. The purpose of the audit was to satisfy our statutory requirement to audit each warden one year after appointment.

Our review found that Warden Adams' managers and other employees rated his management skills and qualities as very good to outstanding. Furthermore, most institutional employees we surveyed consider Warden Adams to be an effective leader, given all of the institution's challenges.

If you have questions concerning this draft report, please contact Jerry Twomey, Chief Assistant Inspector General, Bureau of Audits and Investigations, at (916) 830-3610.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R. Shaw".

David R. Shaw  
Inspector General

cc: Derral Adams, Warden, California State Prison, Corcoran  
Scott Kernan, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Operations, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
Suzan Hubbard, Director, Adult Institutions, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
Elizabeth Siggins, Chief Deputy Secretary (A), Adult Programs, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
Kim Holt, External Audits Coordinator, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Enclosure

  
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor



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## Results in Brief

### Overall, employees gave Derral Adams high marks as warden

From its review, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that Warden Adams has successfully performed his job as warden at the California State Prison, Corcoran (Corcoran). With over 29 years of experience with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and over nine years in the warden or acting warden position, he has demonstrated the skills necessary to manage a complex prison like Corcoran.

Corcoran employees we interviewed told us the institution's operations have improved since Adams became warden in July 2007. While we found some areas that the warden could improve upon, many of the employees we spoke to told us that Adams is the best warden for whom they have ever worked.

During our review, we surveyed Corcoran employees, key stakeholders, and department executives; analyzed operational data compiled and maintained by the department; interviewed Corcoran employees, including the warden; and toured the institution. We compiled the results and categorized them into four areas: safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations. We received mainly positive responses regarding the warden's performance. In some areas where the warden scored low, such as business operations, our interviews with employees indicate that the warden appears to be aggressively addressing employee concerns. On average, the warden was rated by his managers and employees between very good and outstanding.

Effective April 20, 2009, the department temporarily assigned Warden Adams to headquarters as acting Associate Director for High Security and Transitional Housing.

#### CSP, CORCORAN FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Corcoran, CA

**Opened:** 1988

**Mission:** High Security

**Inmate Population:** 5,737

**Designed Capacity:** 3,116 inmates

**Employees:** 2,081

**Budget:** \$267 million, FY 2008-09



**Warden Derral Adams**

## **One-Year Evaluation of Warden Derral Adams**

California Penal Code section 6126(a)(2) requires the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to audit each warden of an institution one year after his or her appointment. To satisfy this requirement, we evaluated Warden Derral Adam's performance at California State Prison, Corcoran (Corcoran) since his appointment.

### **Background of Warden**

Warden Derral Adams has worked for CDCR over 29 years, beginning in 1979 as a carpenter at San Quentin State Prison. He progressed within the plant operations area and in 1987 was promoted to correctional business manager at San Quentin. In June 1990, Adams helped activate Wasco State Prison where he was responsible for developing and implementing policies, procedures, and programs for the new prison. He also served as the Equal Employment Opportunity coordinator for the prison. In February 1995, he became the chief deputy warden at the Central California Women's Facility, and in 2000 he became acting warden. In July 2000, Adams became the permanent warden at the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison. In January 2006, he transferred to the neighboring California State Prison, Corcoran as the acting warden. On July 24, 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger appointed him warden of California State Prison, Corcoran. Effective April 20, 2009, Warden Adams was temporarily assigned to headquarters as acting Associate Director for High Security and Transitional Housing.

### **Institution Overview**

Corcoran is one of the 33 adult prisons operated by CDCR.

The institution, which opened in 1988, was designed as a maximum security prison to house some of the state's most violent inmates. The institution consists of seven facilities (or "yards") including a 75 bed acute care hospital that is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The hospital provides general acute medical, surgical, medical health crisis, and specialty outpatient services.



**Corcoran State Prison**

### ***Inmate Housing***

Corcoran was the first California prison with a dedicated section specially designed with added security features to house inmates whose conduct endangers the institution's

security or the safety of others. This type of inmate housing is called a security housing unit (SHU). Inmates are generally moved to a SHU because they committed a serious rules violation while incarcerated such as participating in gang activity, assault, or murder. Currently, over 21 percent of the institution’s inmate population resides in these high security living units.

Corcoran also has a general population yard, a sensitive needs yard<sup>1</sup> (SNY), an administrative segregation unit<sup>2</sup> (ASU), and a protective housing unit (PHU) for some of the states most infamous inmates. The institution’s various facilities house level I (low security), level III (medium-high security) and level IV (high security) inmates. As of December 31, 2008, Corcoran housed 5,737 inmates in a facility originally designed for 3,116 inmates.

### ***Rehabilitation Programs***

Corcoran offers a variety of work, education, and other rehabilitation programs. For example, the prison’s vocational opportunities include computer technology, electronics, machine shop, mill and cabinet, sheet metal, upholstery, and welding. Inmates also work in the Prison Industry Authority’s (PIA) work programs that include crop farming, dairy/milk processing, laundry, manufacturing, metal fabrication, and wood products. Corcoran’s academic offerings include adult basic education, general educational development, English as a second language, pre-release courses, and literacy programs. Other programs include community service crews, youth diversion, religious services, arts in corrections, and victim awareness.

### ***Budget and Staffing***

For fiscal year 2008-09, Corcoran’s budget was \$267 million. This includes \$190 million for institution and education operations plus \$77 million for medical related services. Corcoran has 2,232 budgeted positions, of which 1,409 (or 63 percent) represent custody employees. Table 1 compares Corcoran’s budgeted and filled positions as of December 31, 2008. Overall, the institution has 93 percent of its total budgeted positions filled.

**Table 1: Staffing Levels at California State Prison, Corcoran**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Filled Positions</b>	<b>Budgeted Positions</b>	<b>Percent Filled</b>
Custody	1,359	1,409	96.5%
Education	38	39	97.4%
Medical	310	341	90.9%
Support	202	259	78.0%
Trades	156	167	93.4%
Management	16	17	94.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,081</b>	<b>2,232</b>	<b>93.2%</b>

*Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008 California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.*

<sup>1</sup> Because of their crimes, notoriety, or gang affiliations, inmates placed on sensitive needs yards cannot mix with general population inmates.

<sup>2</sup> General population inmates that engage in violent or dangerous behavior or inmates that need temporary protection are placed in more secured housing units known as administrative segregation units (ASU).

## Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To fulfill our objective of assessing the warden’s performance, we employed a three-part approach. First, we used surveys to solicit opinions and comments from employees, department management team members, and other stakeholders. Next, we analyzed operational data maintained by the department and compared it with the averages for like institutions<sup>3</sup> and all institutions statewide. In addition, we reviewed relevant reports prepared by the department or other external agencies. Finally, we visited the institution to interview various employees and follow-up on noteworthy concerns we identified from the surveys, operational data, or reports.

To understand how the staff members and other stakeholders view the warden’s performance, we sent surveys to three distinct groups: department and Corcoran managers, Corcoran employees, and key stakeholders outside the department. For our employee survey, we randomly selected 256 of the institution’s employees and sent them a survey. The survey provides us with information about employees’ perception of the warden’s overall performance plus information about specific operational areas at the prison—Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Relations.

To simplify our analysis of the survey results, we grouped survey respondents into three employment categories: Custody, Health Care, and Other (which includes employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions.) Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified the responses to our questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with our question, we classified it as positive; and, if the respondent ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with our question we classified it as negative.

Our inspectors also analyzed operational data maintained by the department (called CompStat – comparable statistics) and analyzed the responses to our surveys. We also reviewed relevant reports related to the institution’s operations prepared by the department or external agencies. From these efforts we identified strong trends or patterns – either negative or positive – or other issues to help us identify topics for further review and evaluation during our on-site visit to Corcoran.

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<sup>3</sup> Institutions with a similar mission include: California Correctional Institution, Kern Valley State Prison, High Desert State Prison, Pelican Bay State Prison, California State Prison – Sacramento, and Salinas Valley State Prison.

During our visit to Corcoran, we gained insight into the work environment in which the warden works. We interviewed certain key employees and other randomly selected employees, using information gathered from our analysis of statistical information and from employee surveys to identify potential issues for review. Our interviews involved employees in various operational areas throughout the prison, including:

- Business services
- Fleet operations
- Educational programs
- Employee/labor relations
- Food services
- Health care
- Housing units
- Information technology
- Inmate appeals
- Inmate assignments
- Inmate case records
- In-service training
- Investigative services
- Human resources
- Litigation
- Personnel assignment
- Plant operations
- Prison industry authority
- Receiving and release
- Use of force review
- Vocational programs
- Warehouse management

We performed our site visit the week of March 9, 2009. During our visit, we interviewed 51 individuals throughout the prison and asked them to describe and rate the warden's performance. These individuals included custody employees, executive management team members, education employees, and health care professionals.

## Review Results

We found that most responding stakeholders including CDCR (department) management, institutional managers, and employees believe the warden is doing a very good to outstanding job. In the four categories of safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations, we received mostly positive responses with the exception of business operations, which had more negative responses.

### Category 1: Safety and Security

The department's mission is, in part, to enhance public safety through safe and secure incarceration of offenders. The importance of safety and security is embodied in the department's requirement that custodial security and the safety of staff, inmates, and the public must take precedence over all other considerations in the operation of all the department's programs and activities. As shown in Table 2 above, 71 percent of the prison employees we surveyed had positive opinions about the safety and security of the institution.

**Table 2: Safety and Security – Employee Survey Results**

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	68%	32%
Health Care	78%	22%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	73%	27%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>

*Source: OIG Survey of Corcoran Employees. See Appendix for details.*

During our review of the safety and security category, we heard mostly favorable opinions from the employees we interviewed during our field visit. However, after considering the interviews in conjunction with comments from the warden, results from our employee survey, and departmental data on segregation housing and use of force incidents, we noted three areas for further discussion: Survey Results, Interview Results, and Use of Force.

#### *Survey Results*

The survey questions we asked related to safety and security issues scored the most positive responses of all survey questions. For example, 86 percent of the respondents indicated that they have all of the safety equipment they need, and 88 percent indicated that they have received all required training. In addition, 76 percent of the employees responded that they are able to complete all required mission critical assignments.

In contrast to the relative strong scores for equipment and training, only 28 percent of the custody staff members surveyed felt that lockdown time and modified programming time for disruptive inmates was sufficient. As a result, we interviewed institutional management team members and found that they meet regularly with the warden during periods of lockdowns or modified programming to discuss the appropriate ways to re-introduce inmates into normal programming without jeopardizing the safety and security of the institution. We found this approach for resuming programming to be reasonable.

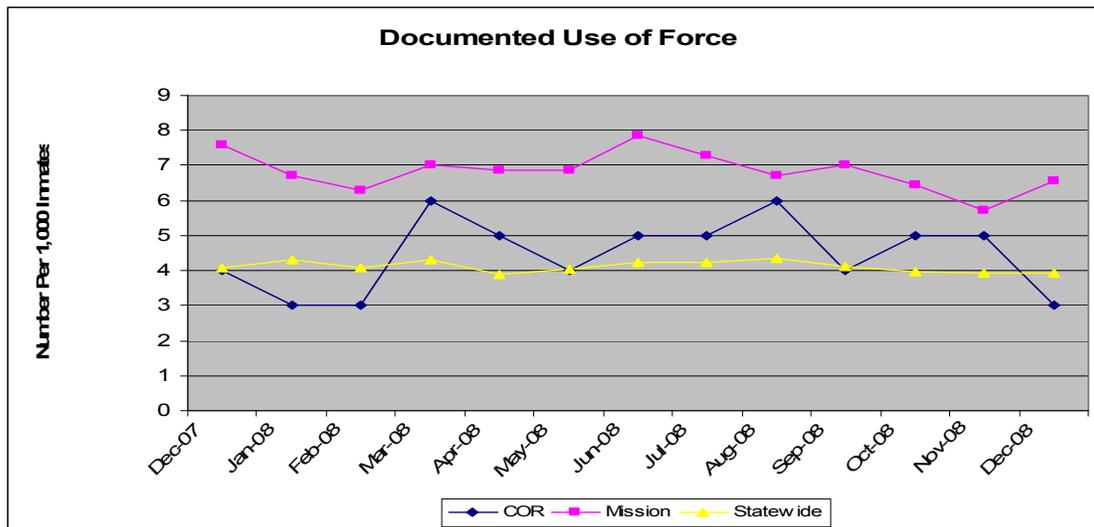
## Interview Results

During our site visit, we interviewed many members of the warden’s executive management team and other institutional employees. In fact, we interviewed over 50 employees and asked for their biggest concerns related to safety and security. We specifically discussed the institution’s security operations and employees raised no systemic problems. A few employees had safety concerns related to reliable transportation, but recently, the department has corrected the issue by updating the institution’s vehicle fleet. Several of the employees also commented that the warden is very proactive at addressing issues related to safety and security, once they were brought to his attention.

## Use of Force

The number of incidents where force is necessary to subdue an attacker, overcome resistance, effect custody, or gain compliance with a lawful order is a measure of inmate behavior and the institution’s ability to safely incarcerate inmates. To assess Corcoran’s use of force, we reviewed the department’s use of force data for the 13-month period of December 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008. As shown in Chart 1, the institution’s rate is slightly higher than the statewide average, which is not surprising given that Corcoran is a maximum security prison. In comparing other institutions with similar high security missions, Corcoran’s use of force rate is consistently below average. We asked one facility captain why the institution’s use of force rate was lower and his response was that they teach employees not to be “heavy-handed” and employees are disciplined when the force they use is deemed unreasonable.

Chart 1:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008, California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.

## Category 2: Inmate Programming

Research shows that inmate programs can reduce the likelihood that offenders will commit new crimes and return to prison. In fact, a 2006 Washington State Institute for Public Policy study of adult basic and vocational education programs found that such programs reduce inmate recidivism by an average of 5.1 percent and 12.6 percent, respectively.<sup>4</sup> The department recognizes these benefits and provides academic and vocational training and a number of self-help and self-improvement services including substance abuse programs to inmates. An added benefit is that programming requires inmates to have a more structured day and less idle time. As a general rule, inmates with a structured day tend to be easier to manage. As a result, the institution’s safety and security can be affected by the amount of available inmate programming.

**Table 3: Inmate Programming – Employee Survey Results**

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	70%	30%
Health Care	83%	17%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	56%	44%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>

*Source: OIG Survey of Corcoran Employees. See Appendix for details.*

Overall, as shown in Table 3 above, 68 percent of all respondents gave favorable ratings to questions related to inmate programming. After our analysis of the information gathered from departmental statistics, employee survey results, and employee interviews we found three areas for more detailed comment: Programming Opportunities, Inmate Attendance, and Programming Improvements.

### *Programming Opportunities*

According to Corcoran’s mission statement, the prison is committed to providing the best medical, mental health, education, vocational and self help programs for all inmates confined to Corcoran. Further, the institution currently offers at least 18 different types of programs to its inmates. They include:

- Vocational: Computer technology, electronics, machine shop, mill and cabinet, sheet metal, upholstery, and welding
- Academic: Adult Basic Education, High School/GED, Pre-Release, English as a Second Language, and Literacy Program
- Other: Substance abuse program, community service crews, youth diversion, religious services, arts in corrections, and victim awareness.

Based on our survey results, we found many positive comments related to inmate programming. As noted above, 68 percent of all respondents gave favorable ratings to questions related to inmate programming. More specifically, 75 percent of the non-custody respondents indicated that the institution is meeting its inmate programming mission under the current warden’s leadership. Additionally, 61 percent indicated that the process under which inmates are assigned to vocational, academic, or other placements works as intended. Finally, 71 percent responded that inmate programming is adequate

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, “Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not,” January 2006.

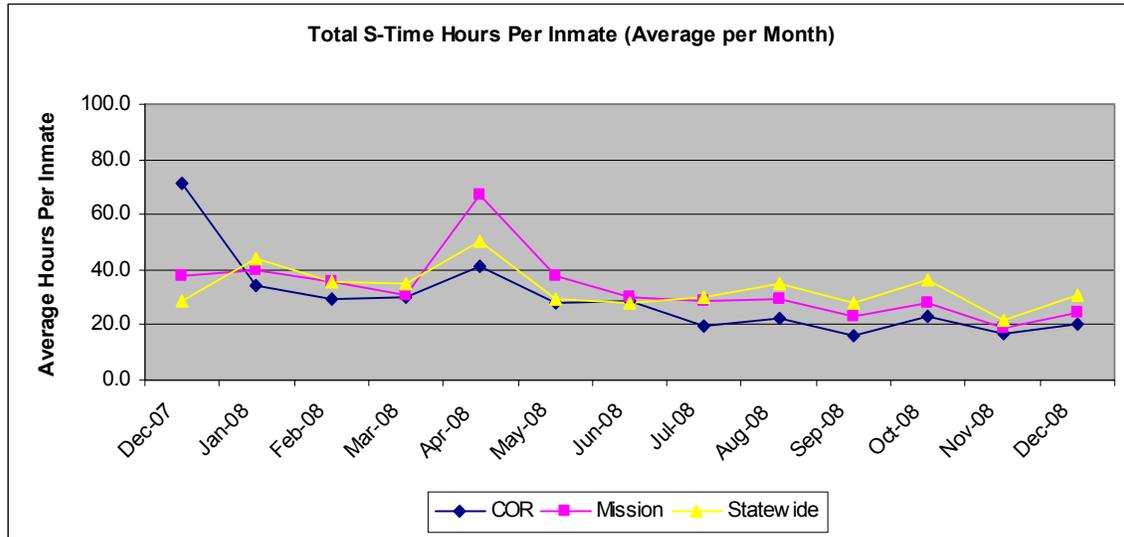
with a sufficient number of education and work placement opportunities. According to the December 2008 departmental data, 2,650 inmates were in work assignments and another 2,214 inmates were on lists waiting for assignment to an inmate program.

### ***Inmate Attendance***

The department establishes the amount of time that assigned inmates must attend academic and vocational training classes each day. As a result, each institution can be evaluated as to how effectively it complies with school-day attendance requirements because administrators must track inmate class absences. The department refers to absences caused by circumstances beyond the inmate's control as "S-time." Such absences may result from security-related needs such as lockdowns, modified programming, investigations, and inmate medical appointments. Education-related absences, such as teachers calling in sick, also contribute to S-time. Institutions with high or increasing patterns of S-time indicate that prison management may be ineffectively using their academic and vocational programs, or even wasting the resources that give the inmates what they need to succeed upon parole.

Maximizing an inmate's exposure to rehabilitative programming is a positive step towards reducing recidivism. Conversely, the amount of time that inmates do not receive normal programming can indicate an inefficient use of both institutional teaching resources and available inmate programming time. The lost time is measureable and is tracked by the department. Chart 2 below reflects the average per inmate S-time at Corcoran, and it is generally less than the average of other comparable institutions as well as the average of all institutions statewide. The school principal told us that getting inmates to school each day is a challenge; however, as discussed below, the institution implemented a program to prevent inmates without proper authorization from skipping their education programs. In addition, to avoid cancelling classes due to absent teachers, the institution uses teachers affected by partial lockdowns as substitute teachers in other parts of the education program. Strategies such as these have a direct impact in reducing the amount of S-time accumulated each day.

**Chart 2:**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008, California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.

**Programming Improvements**

Our employee interviews identified several areas where the warden influences what appear to be significant and positive changes to inmate programming. First, effective April 2008, the warden implemented a requirement that all inmates must read at the ninth grade level before they are eligible to work in a paying job. Second, to help maximize education learning time, the institution recently developed a daily morning protocol that identifies those inmates absent from education classes without prior authorization. Custody officers are then quickly summoned to find the inmate and get him to school before too much of the day’s learning time elapses. Finally, according to one Prison Industry Authority (PIA) administrator to whom we spoke, the warden is very proactive during lockdown periods in getting inmates to their PIA job assignments, which is important because other prisons and state agencies rely on the timely supply of goods produced by the inmates working for PIA.

**Category 3: Business Operations**

An institution’s business operations include budget planning and control; personnel administration; accounting and procurement services; employee training and development; and, facility maintenance and operations. It is important for the warden to be knowledgeable in these areas to effectively perform his duties.

**Table 4: Business Operations – Employee Survey Results**

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	43%	57%
Health Care	45%	55%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	41%	59%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>

Source: OIG Survey of Corcoran Employees. See Appendix for details.

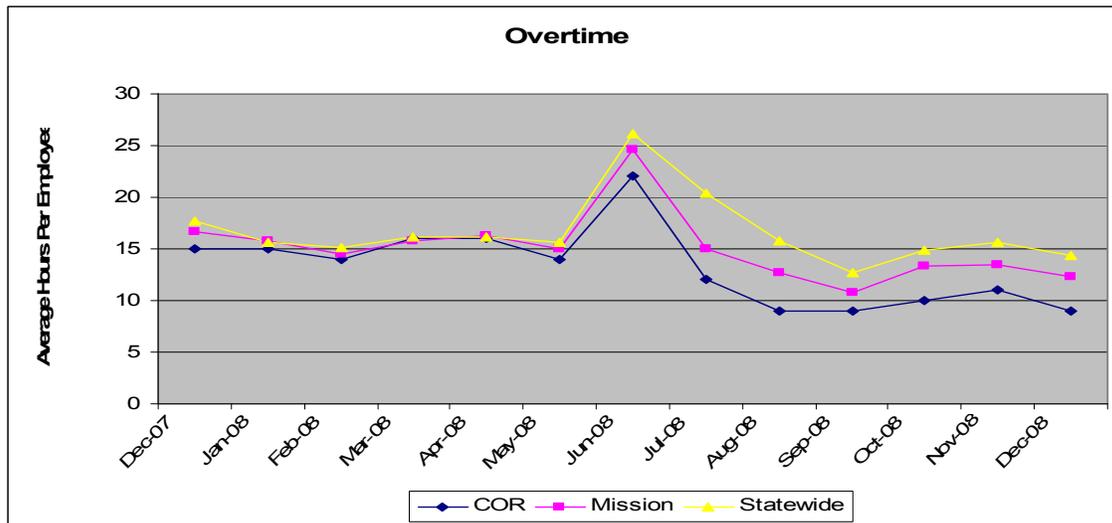
As shown in Table 4, 43 percent of the prison employees had positive responses about the institution’s business operations and 57 percent had negative responses. Our analysis of the information gathered from the department’s data, employee survey responses, and employee interviews uncovered four specific areas that we discussed further with the warden and other management team members: Overtime Usage, Administrative Segregation Housing, Staffing Shortage, and Facility Maintenance.

***Overtime Usage***

The control of overtime is one indicator of a warden’s ability to manage his institution’s overall operations because it requires the warden to ensure that good budgeting, planning, and personnel administration practices are in place. To assess Corcoran’s overtime usage, we compared its overtime statistics to both the statewide average for all prisons, as well as the average for the other seven prisons with a similar high security mission. We found that since June 2008, Corcoran incurred fewer overtime hours per employee, on average, than other prisons. As displayed in the Chart 3 below, since June 2008, Corcoran’s average overtime hours per employee are 5.43 and 2.86 hours per month fewer compared to the statewide average and its peer mission prisons, respectively. Based on the data, the warden appears to be doing a good job at controlling overtime.

In our interviews with employees at the prison, we asked knowledgeable employees why Corcoran does better in controlling overtime. Employees told us that overtime usage is partly a function of sick leave usage because when employees assigned to mandatory posts call in sick, other staff members must work overtime to fill the post. Employees told us that Corcoran’s overtime figures were lower because the warden supports an aggressive statewide program to hold employees accountable for their sick leave usage. The program includes holding regular meetings to identify the worst or most habitual users of sick leave. These meetings result in holding those identified employees accountable to provide adequate justification for their illnesses.

**Chart 3:**



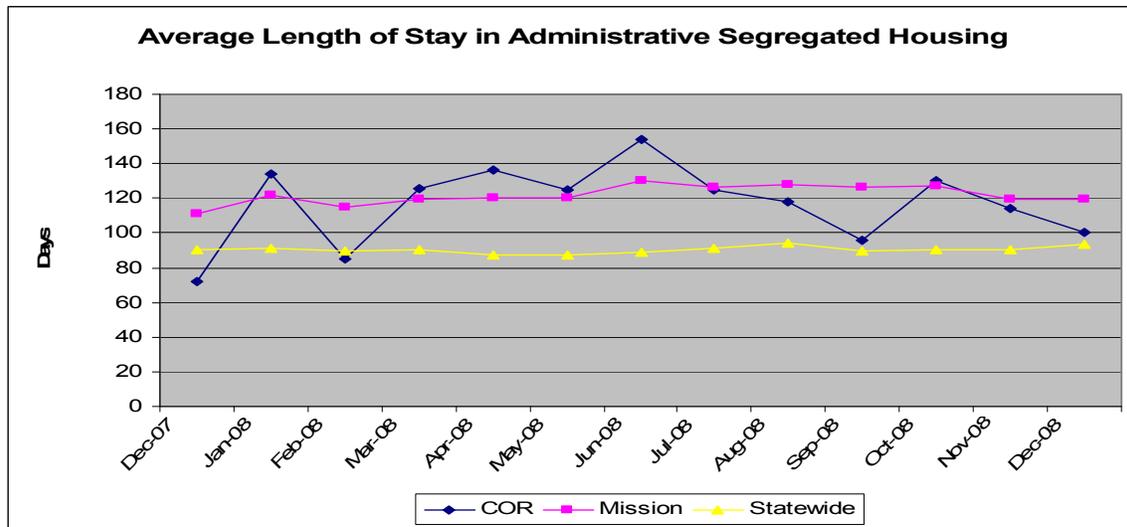
Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008, California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.

## *Administrative Segregation Housing*

Inmates that are either disruptive to other inmates or victimized by other inmates are temporarily placed in segregated housing areas known as Administrative Segregation Units (ASU) until employees investigate the level of threat to the institution or inmate. ASU housing areas are more expensive to operate than general population housing units because they have increased security requirements. Effectively managing the time it takes the institution to investigate the level of threat can significantly reduce the average length of stay, and in turn, the cost of housing an inmate in ASU. As a result, the average length of stay in ASU is an indicator of how well an institution is managing its resources.

We reviewed the institution's data for the average length of stay in ASU for the period of December 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008. Based on the data, Corcoran's average is significantly higher than the statewide average. However, we would expect Corcoran to be higher than the statewide average because of the types of inmates incarcerated at the institution. When compared to other prisons that have similar high security missions, Corcoran appears to be about average.

**Chart 4:**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008, California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.

## *Staffing Shortage*

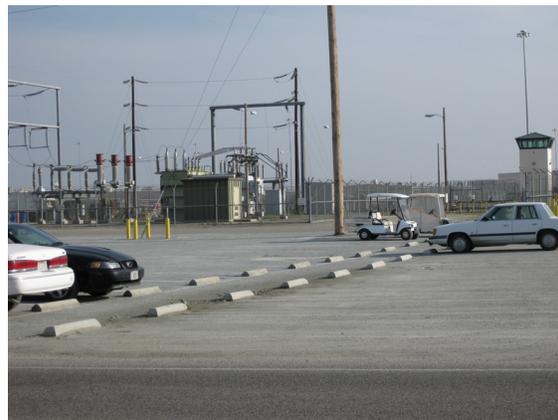
Responses to our employee survey also indicated that some respondents believe staffing shortages exist at the prison, particularly in the plant operations areas. In fact, 42 percent of those responding indicated that the institution did not have enough employees to get all required work done. We followed up on this concern by interviewing a personnel employee who indicated that the warden is very proactive at getting vacant positions filled. In addition, according to staffing data, 93 percent of the institution's 2,232 budgeted positions were filled as of December 2008 (see Table 1) including 93 percent of the trades positions. In fact, as discussed below, we found that the warden has been successful in establishing and filling several new positions since his appointment.

However, we would note that in the area of support positions, Corcoran had a 22 percent vacancy rate.

### ***Facility Maintenance***

Survey responses identified specific concerns with staffing levels and infrastructure maintenance upkeep. Based on the survey responses, 70 percent of those responding indicated that plant operations was not able to meet repair needs in assigned work areas, and 62 percent indicated that the repairs in inmate areas were inadequate. We heard many comments on how the previous wardens had allowed plant operations to be neglected over the years. In fact, the current warden told us that when he arrived, the prison was only twenty years old, but it looked fifty years old due to neglect. We followed up on this concern by physically observing many areas of the facility and interviewing employees in order to identify areas of the institution that need improvement.

During our site visit, we observed numerous areas where the infrastructure improvements were underway. They included renovating employee parking lots (Figure 1), moving case records to a new and expanded location (Figure 2,3), adding exercise yard fence lines (Figure 4) and sewage plant improvements (Figure 5).



**Figure 1 – Recently renovated parking lot**



**Figure 2 – Modernized case records work space**



**Figure 3 – Expanded case records work area, formerly cafeteria space**

Although the survey responses initially indicated that the prison was run down and in disrepair, of those employees we subsequently spoke to, the vast majority indicated that the warden was actively working to repair the institution’s infrastructure with fresh paint, renovated parking areas (Figure 1), and new kitchen equipment.

Several employees interviewed credited the warden for the recent expansion of the plant operations work force. According to state budget information, Corcoran’s approved facility operations grew by 13 percent from 73 positions for the fiscal year 2006-07 to 82.5 positions for the fiscal year 2008-09. In addition to getting more employees for the plant operations program, the institution also pursued getting authorization for additional infrastructure improvements. We were also told that during fiscal year 2007-08, the institution received approval for an additional \$11.8 million in infrastructure improvements above the normal facility operations allotment of \$2.5 million.



**Figure 4 – New Security Fence**



**Figure 5 - New sewage clean-out system**

## Category 4: Employee-Management Relations

“Successful leaders invite communication, listen well, and prove themselves trustworthy by exhibiting rational, caring, and predictable behavior in their interpersonal

relationships.”<sup>5</sup> The warden’s ability to communicate plays an important role in employee relations and is vital in implementing the department’s vision and mission at the institution level. Not only must the warden interact with employees at all levels and communicate instructions and directions clearly and effectively, but the warden must also communicate effectively with departmental headquarters as well as the surrounding community.

**Table 5: Employee-Management Relations – Employee Survey Results**

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	51%	49%
Health Care	69%	31%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	63%	37%
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>42%</b>

*Source: OIG Survey of Corcoran Employees. See Appendix for details.*

As shown in Table 5 above, 58 percent of the prison employees had positive opinions about various areas related to employee-management relations. Although the opinions of employees and other stakeholders provide one measure of the warden’s employee-management relations, another measure can be found in the number of grievances filed by the institution’s employees. Our analysis of employees’ responses to our surveys; interviews with the warden’s management team and other employees; and statistics on employee grievances resulted in five topics for further consideration: Values and Communication, Management Communication, Knowledge of Operations, Employee Grievances, and Survey and Interview Comments.

### *Values and Communication*

The questions we asked in the employee-management relations category dealt with such areas as the warden’s accessibility, knowledge, communication abilities, and cultural environment and sensitivity. As shown in Table 5 above, only 58 percent of the prison employees had positive opinions about various areas related to employee-management relations. We further found the individual question responses in the employee-management relations category to be of mixed opinions. Of those employees that we randomly surveyed, 87 percent indicated that the warden emphasizes an institutional culture calling for staff to have integrity, ethics, professionalism, honesty, motivation and respect. We also found that custody employees, the largest category of survey respondents, gave the warden the lowest overall rating at 51 percent favorable while the other two categories of survey respondents (Health Care, Other) gave more favorable ratings of 69 percent and 63 percent, respectively.

We also noted that only 44 percent of the survey respondents indicated that the warden had a good relationship with their local union. Based on negative comments from some employees, the warden’s relationship with the correctional officer’s local union representative was an issue of initial concern to the OIG. We interviewed both the union

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (December 2006).

representative and the warden and found the line of communication between the two individuals to be strained. The union representative told us that the warden is not communicating. Conversely, the warden told us that he has a standing offer for the union representative to attend his weekly meetings to discuss issues; however, the union representative has not done so. Overall, based on our discussions with the local union representative, he did not present any significant labor issues other than his lack of open communication with the warden.

### ***Management Communication***

Opinions from the management team regarding communication were more positive than the opinions from other employees. We interviewed nearly all management team members including program managers, facility captains, associate wardens, and both chief deputy wardens, and found that the warden generally is very receptive to input from his employees and is a good listener. Some team members commented that the warden is open-minded, values input, receptive to suggestions, and has “a lot of experience to bring to the table.” Our interviews also found that members of the management team believe they work well together as a group and get work done despite small conflicts. Some managers commented that the warden’s management team is filled with “Type A” personalities. In contrast, our employee survey revealed an area of concern related to communication. Sixty-one percent of those surveyed indicated that warden did not welcome feed back, including criticisms from the employees.

### ***Knowledge of Operations***

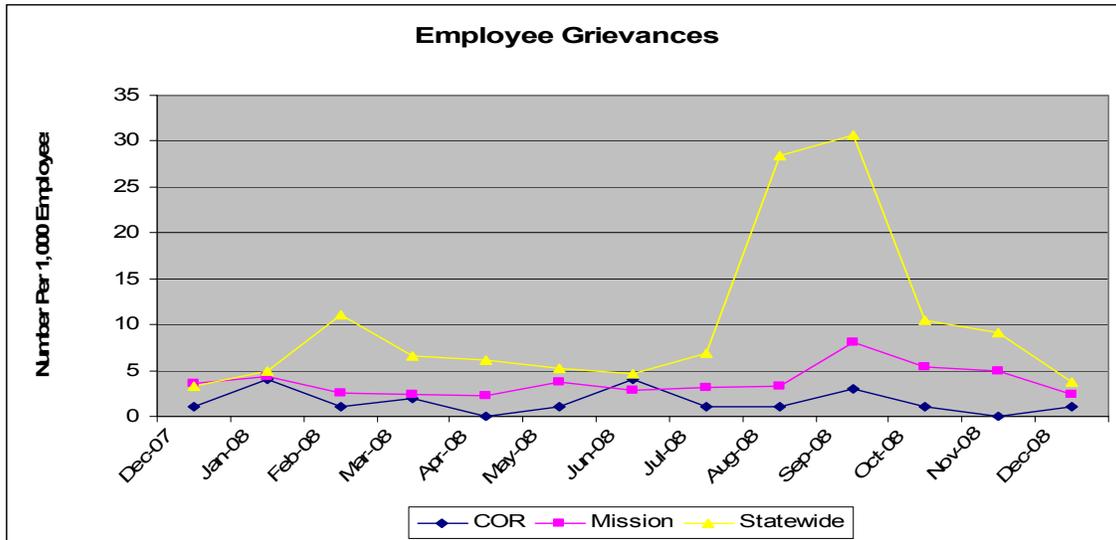
An important warden skill is the ability to confidently convey an understanding of the institution’s day-to-day operations. The warden scored very high in this area of our employee-management relations category of our survey. Almost 73 percent of all the respondents indicated that the warden was knowledgeable in the daily operations of the prison. Another 60 percent of the respondents indicated that the warden was knowledgeable of the daily operations in their own assigned work area. Employees commented that the warden is very knowledgeable in the non-custody aspects of the prison operations because he progressed from a trades carpenter through to the correctional business manager side of the operations. Employees gave the warden credit for learning the custody side of operations without having actually ever served as a custody officer.

### ***Employee Grievances***

All employees have the right to express their grievances through an established departmental procedure. Based on Chart 5 below, Corcoran appears to be well below both the statewide average and the mission average for number of employees that filed a grievance during the period of December 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008. In addition, the institution did not have any large swings in recent grievance filings suggesting that employee morale has been relatively stable in recent months. However, according to our

survey results, 47 percent of the respondents indicated that they do not believe that the grievance process works as intended.

**Chart 5:**



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, CompStat for December 31, 2008, California State Prison, Corcoran. Unaudited data.

**Survey and Interview Comments**

Employees cited other activities the warden has completed to improve his relationship with staff members. Some of the activities include hosting an annual crab feed fundraiser to generate funds for periodic employee appreciation days. The warden also schedules his employee appreciation days in a manner that allows all three work shifts to participate at times just prior to or after their normal work hours. The warden also hosts an annual Christmas dinner for employees and their families.

In addition, department officials and Corcoran managers we surveyed rated Adams favorably for his management skills and qualities. In our survey, we asked the officials and managers to consider the warden’s performance in six management skills and qualities and rate the performance as either unacceptable, improvement needed, satisfactory, very good, or outstanding. As shown in Table 6, the survey results indicate that Warden Adams is performing at a level of “very good” to “outstanding” in various management related categories.

**Table 6: Rating of Warden’s Management Skills and Qualities**

Category	Average Rating
Personal Characteristics/Traits	Very Good
Relationships with Others	Very Good
Leadership	Outstanding
Communication	Very Good
Decision Making	Outstanding
Organization/Planning	Outstanding

Source: *OIG Survey of CDCR and CORCORAN Management.*

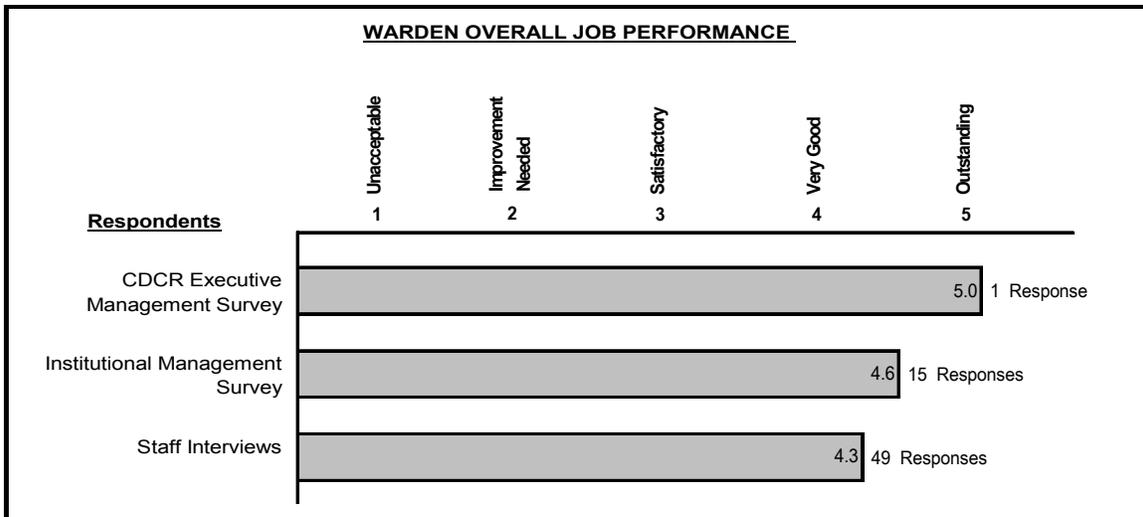
Overall, the results of this survey are consistent with many comments we received from employees during our site visit. In several instances, we did hear negative comments from employees such as the warden needs to work on his people skills and that he could be rated even higher as a warden if his treatment of people were better. On the other hand, we also heard many positive comments such as the warden is a “doer” and looking to improve the institution and serve the inmates, employees are held accountable, he takes input and makes good decisions, and he has the knowledge and confidence to run the institution.

## Overall Summary

In our survey, we asked employees whether they agree that, given all of the institutional challenges, the warden was an effective leader. Of those respondents providing either a positive or negative opinion, 59 percent gave positive responses that they either agree or strongly agree with the statement. The remaining 41 percent stated that they disagree or strongly disagree that he is an effective leader. Our analysis of the responses identified that custody employees in particular did not support the assertion that the warden was an effective leader. We suspect that the strained relationship between the warden and the custody officer’s union representative might be affecting custody employee’s opinions.

In addition to our review of the four key areas identified above, our assessment of the warden’s performance also included an overall performance rating. We based the rating on survey responses from department officials and Corcoran managers and from interviews we conducted with Corcoran employees during our site visit. As shown in Chart 6 below, those individuals rated Warden Adams’ overall performance between “outstanding” and “very good”.

**Chart 6:**



Although only one person from CDCR’s executive management team responded to our inquiries regarding the warden’s performance, that person indicated that the warden is

doing an outstanding job. In addition, fifteen persons responding to our institutional management survey gave an overall warden rating that averaged between very good and outstanding. Finally, of the 49 interviews we conducted with employees who answered the question, the average warden rating response was also between very good and outstanding.

Overall, we found the institution's safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations to be at a satisfactory or higher level. Collectively, the survey and interview responses identified no areas of systemic problems impacting the institution or the warden's ability to be an effective leader. In conclusion, the Inspector General's review of Warden Adams' performance approximately one year after appointment indicates that he is doing a very good to outstanding job at managing the prison's operations.

# Appendix

## Results from our survey of institution employees

To prepare for our site visit, we randomly selected 256 of the institution's employees and sent them a survey. The survey provides us with information about employees' perception of the warden's overall performance plus information about specific operational areas at the prison—Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Communication. Eighty-four Corcoran employees responded to our survey—a 33 percent response rate. To simplify our analysis of the survey results, we grouped survey respondents by category and identified response trends.

Specifically, we grouped the respondents into three employment categories: Custody, Health Care, and Other (which includes employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions.) Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified the responses to our questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with our question, we classified it as positive; and, if the respondent 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with our question we classified it as negative. We did not include passive responses. If employees responded that they were 'neutral' or responded 'unknown' to our question, we excluded their response.

We report the results of our employee survey in a table on the following page.

**Appendix: Compilation of Institutional Employee Survey Responses - California State Prison, Corcoran**

Operational Area/Question	Respondents' Employment Category						Total Responses			
	Custody		Health Care		Other		Pos	(%)	Neg	(%)
<b><u>Safety and Security</u></b>										
• You are able to complete required (mission critical) assignments in your work area.	25	5	13	5	13	6	51	76%	16	24%
• You have been issued or have access to all of the safety equipment you need.	31	2	12	2	12	5	55	86%	9	14%
• You receive all required (mandatory) training.	29	5	15	2	17	1	61	88%	8	12%
• The employee investigation/disciplinary process works as intended (is appropriate and timely).	14	15	5	4	7	7	26	50%	26	50%
• The CDC-115, inmate disciplinary process works as intended (is appropriate and timely).	27	10	6	2	9	2	42	75%	14	25%
• The CDC-602, inmate appeal process works as intended (is appropriate and timely).	26	8	10	3	8	3	44	76%	14	24%
• The use and duration of inmate lockdown time or modified program time is appropriate.	10	26	6	1	6	2	22	43%	29	57%
• The institution is meeting its mission(s) under the current warden's leadership. <sup>1</sup>	10	10					10	50%	10	50%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>311</b>		<b>126</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>71%</i>		<i>29%</i>	
<b><u>Inmate Programming</u></b>										
• The inmate assignment process works as intended (appropriate placement).	19	9	4	1	5	8	28	61%	18	39%
• Inmate programming is adequate (sufficient number of education and work placements).	19	7	3	0	5	4	27	71%	11	29%
• The institution is meeting its mission(s) under the current warden's leadership. <sup>1</sup>			8	2	10	4	18	75%	6	25%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>73</b>		<b>35</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>68%</i>		<i>32%</i>	
<b><u>Business Operations</u></b>										
• Your assigned work area has enough staff to get all of the required work done.	22	16	11	6	10	9	43	58%	31	42%
• Plant Operations is able to meet maintenance / repair needs in your assigned work area.	9	24	6	11	4	10	19	30%	45	70%
• Plant Operations is able to meet maintenance / repair needs in inmate areas.	14	19	1	5	4	7	19	38%	31	62%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>81</b>		<b>107</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>43%</i>		<i>57%</i>	
<b><u>Employee-Management Relations</u></b>										
• The warden is knowledgeable about the day to day operations in your work area.	12	11	9	2	8	6	29	60%	19	40%
• The employee grievance process works as intended (is appropriate and timely).	12	13	6	4	6	4	24	53%	21	47%
• The warden works effectively with the local bargaining unit representatives.	7	19	4	1	6	2	17	44%	22	56%
• The warden regularly speaks or meets with inmates.	4	10	0	1	2	2	6	32%	13	68%
• You are kept up to date on issues that affect CDCR as a whole.	14	15	12	4	10	8	36	57%	27	43%
• The warden regularly visits your workplace.	6	25	4	9	5	14	15	24%	48	76%
• The warden welcomes feedback, including criticism from institution staff.	7	15	3	6	6	4	16	39%	25	61%
• The warden is knowledgeable about the day to day operations.	16	6	6	1	7	4	29	73%	11	28%
• The warden is accessible to you to discuss issues.	16	8	5	2	8	4	29	67%	14	33%
• The warden does not abuse his/her power or authority.	11	15	6	1	8	2	25	58%	18	42%
• The warden emphasizes an institutional culture calling for staff to have integrity and be highly ethical, professional, honest, motivated, and respectful.	24	4	9	1	12	2	45	87%	7	13%
• The warden emphasizes an institutional culture calling for cultural sensitivity and discrimination prevention, including sexual harassment prevention.	23	3	11	1	12	0	46	92%	4	8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>317</b>		<b>229</b>	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>58%</i>		<i>42%</i>	
<b><u>Overall Warden Rating</u></b>										
Considering all institutional challenges, the current warden is an effective leader.	13	18	9	1	10	3	32	59%	22	41%
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>59%</i>		<i>41%</i>	

Source: OIG, Institutional Employee Survey Results for Corcoran

<sup>1</sup> This question applies to more than one operational area.

# **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Response**

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

P.O. Box 942883  
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001



August 6, 2009

Mr. David R. Shaw  
Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
P.O. Box 348780  
Sacramento, CA 95834-8780

Dear Mr. Shaw:

We are pleased to submit this response to your draft report entitled, *California State Prison, Corcoran (COR) Warden Derral Adams One Year Audit*, and agree with your acknowledgement that Warden Derral Adams is an effective administrator, responsive to institution problems, and very proactive in addressing issues related to safety and security.

Your report's overall assessment of Warden Adams was very good and representative of the efforts he has put forth to achieve the goals set forth by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). This effort is underscored by your report's assessment that under Warden Adams; COR's use of force rate is consistently below departmental average, the institution is meeting its inmate programming mission, and the Warden supports an aggressive statewide program to hold employees accountable for their sick leave usage. We are heartened to read in your report that 87 percent of COR staff surveyed indicated that the Warden emphasizes an institutional culture calling for staff to have integrity, ethics, professionalism, honesty, motivation, and respect. We readily concur with this assessment, and appreciate the positive review and strong indication of Warden Adams' skill set and commitment to CDCR.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please call my office at (916) 323-6001.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Kernan", written over a horizontal line.

SCOTT KERNAN  
Undersecretary, Operations

cc: Derral Adams