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# OIG | OFFICE *of the* INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Independent Prison Oversight

May 2026



**Special Review: The California  
Department of Corrections and  
Rehabilitation's Implementation and  
Compliance With Reforms Governing  
Restricted Housing Units**

*OIG Report N° SR-25-01*

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May 18, 2026

Mr. Jeffrey Macomber  
Secretary  
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
P.O. Box 942883  
Sacramento, CA 94283-001

Dear Mr. Macomber:

Enclosed is the Office of the Inspector General's (the OIG) report titled *Special Review: The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Implementation and Compliance With Reforms Governing Restricted Housing Units*. California Penal Code section 6126, subdivisions (b) and (c), authorize the OIG to initiate reviews of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (the department) policies, practices, and procedures. As of June 2025, 29 of California's 31 prisons have restricted housing units with a total capacity of just over 7,000 beds. In this special review, we focused on the restricted housing units at four prisons: California State Prison, Sacramento; California State Prison, Corcoran; Mule Creek State Prison; and Central California Women's Facility.

We reviewed both historical California regulations on segregated housing confinement and regulations that became effective on November 1, 2023, that were intended to reform segregated housing confinement and implement restricted housing units. We assessed the department's compliance with regulations and policies governing the placement and retention of incarcerated people in restricted housing, the living conditions within those units, and the effects of regulations and policies concerning violence against staff and the incarcerated population. Our review covered the period from November 1, 2021, through December 7, 2025.

Despite significant regulatory revisions to improve conditions within restricted housing units, and both reduce the types of offenses warranting placement in restricted housing and the term lengths associated with those offenses, prison violence against staff and among the incarcerated population has increased. Furthermore, the regulatory revisions have not met the department's goal of reducing the number of people placed in restricted housing, the number of prison rules violations committed, or the number of incidents requiring staff to use force against the incarcerated population.



Moreover, we found that the department did not always ensure staff offered the minimum required out-of-cell time to the restricted housing population. We also found that in some cases, administrative reviews and classification committee hearings for incarcerated people placed in restricted housing were not conducted timely or documented consistently.

Finally, the department has struggled to achieve two objectives of the revised regulations: reducing the number of transfers between prisons and increasing the incarcerated population's participation in a voluntary rehabilitative programming reward system to reduce time spent in restricted housing.

Following publication, we request that the department provide its status on implementing our recommendations at intervals of 60 days, six months, and one year from the special review report date.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amarik K. Singh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Amarik K. Singh  
Inspector General

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Terms Used in This Report	
<b>Administrative segregation</b>	Before November 2023, a maximum-security housing unit for incarcerated people who had been removed from the general prison population for safety or security reasons.
<b>Administrative restricted housing unit term</b>	A duration of time in which an incarcerated person can be placed within the restricted housing unit for meeting one or more qualifiers outlined in regulations and as determined by the Departmental Review Board.
<b>Correctional Clinical Case Management System* (CCCMS) restricted housing unit</b>	A restricted housing unit that provides enhanced care for incarcerated people at the CCCMS level of care who have diagnosed psychiatric disorders but do not require Enhanced Outpatient Program, crisis, or inpatient levels of care. The incarcerated people in this unit are offered enhanced mental health treatment to prevent decompensation.
<b>Departmental Review Board</b>	A departmental board that provides the final review of classification issues that are referred by prison wardens for a resolution or decision at the headquarters level. The board is made up of the director or deputy director of the Division of Adult Institutions, the director or deputy director of the Division of Adult Parole Operations, the chief of classification services, and the chief of health services.
<b>Determinate restricted housing term</b>	A set, specified term assessed when an incarcerated person is found guilty of a specific rules violation such as homicide, violence, threatening to kill or assault people, possession of a weapon, or leading, participating or conspiring to commit a disturbance, riot, or strike.
<b>Gassing</b>	Intentionally placing or throwing, or causing to be placed or thrown, upon the person of another, any human excrement or other bodily fluids or bodily substances or any mixture containing human excrement or other bodily fluid or bodily substances that results in actual contact with another person's skin or membrane.
<b>General population</b>	The segment of the incarcerated population housed in standard, nonspecialized, or nonrestricted housing units. These individuals participate in general work, education, and programming, and are not separated for safety or disciplinary reasons.
<b>General population (GP) restricted housing unit</b>	A restricted housing unit that provides secure housing and care for incarcerated people who are not included in the departmental Mental Health Services Delivery System.
<b>Enhanced Outpatient Program<sup>†</sup> (EOP) restricted housing unit</b>	A restricted housing unit that provides care for incarcerated people at the EOP level of care who have diagnosed psychiatric disorders and are unable to function in the general population but do not require inpatient hospital care. The incarcerated people in this unit are offered enhanced mental health treatment to prevent decompensation.
<b>Restricted housing units</b>	Specialized housing units with established placement criteria designed for incarcerated people who are not suited for housing in the general population. Restricted housing may be accomplished by confinement in a designated restricted housing unit or, in an emergency, to any single-cell unit capable of providing secure housing. There are three types of restricted housing units: Enhanced Outpatient Program restricted housing units, Correctional Clinical Case Management System restricted housing units, and general population restricted housing units.
<b>Restricted Housing Unit Term Matrix</b>	A regulatory list of prison rules violations eligible for placement in restricted housing units and set terms for determinate confinement for those violations.
<b>Restricted population</b>	Incarcerated people who are placed in restricted housing units.
<b>Segregated housing units</b>	A term used prior to the current restricted housing regulations that referred to specialized programming units designed for incarcerated people who were not suited for housing in the general population. Segregated housing units included the administrative segregation unit, security housing unit, and psychiatric services unit. All segregated housing units have been repurposed and renamed to restricted housing units with specific placement criteria under the current regulations.

\* A basic level of care in the Mental Health Services Delivery System that offers individual therapy at least once every 90 days, group therapy, and psychiatry follow-up every 90 days for medication monitoring (as needed) and annual treatment planning updates.

<sup>†</sup>The highest level of outpatient care in the Mental Health Services Delivery System that provides substantially more treatment interventions for patients whose symptoms affect their ability to function on a mainline yard and who are more likely to be victimized by other incarcerated people.

Source: The California Penal Code; California Code of Regulations, Title 15; Court Documents; Department Operations Manual; and department memorandum.

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## Introduction

California Penal Code section 6126(b) authorizes the Office of the Inspector General (the OIG) to conduct special reviews of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (the department) policies, practices, and procedures. We initiated this special review after reviewing proposed legislation intended to limit the department's placement of incarcerated people in segregated confinement, and after receiving complaints from the incarcerated population about the department's use of restricted housing. We reviewed historical California regulations on segregated housing confinement and regulations implementing restricted housing that became effective on November 1, 2023. We also reviewed specific departmental policies, procedures, and mandated staff training that implemented the 2023 regulatory reforms. Our review covered the period from November 1, 2021, through December 7, 2025.

As of June 2025, 29 of California's 31 prisons have restricted housing units with a total capacity of just over 7,000 beds. In this special review, we reviewed departmental policy and statewide data regarding prison rules violations and violence, and we assessed compliance with regulations and departmental policies by focusing on the restricted housing units at four prisons: California State Prison, Sacramento; California State Prison, Corcoran; Mule Creek State Prison; and Central California Women's Facility. We reviewed the four prisons' placement and retention processes, the living conditions within the restricted housing units, the effects of the current regulations on the frequency and type of prison rules violations that occur, as well as the effects of the regulations on the frequency in which violence is committed against the incarcerated population and departmental staff. Finally, we assessed the calculation of programming credits for individuals retained in restricted housing units and the department's compliance with regulations mandating minimum time out of cell.

## Background

*Restricted housing*, also colloquially known as *solitary confinement*, *the hole*, or *the prison within a prison*, is made up of maximum-security housing units used to separate vulnerable populations and incarcerated people who violate prison rules from the prison's general population. The behavior of incarcerated people in restricted housing is managed by subjecting them to greater restrictions and, in the case of those who violate prison rules, fewer privileges.

Placing incarcerated people in maximum-security housing units dates back to the 1800s, but the practice expanded in California in 1989 with the opening of Pelican Bay State Prison (Pelican Bay). Pelican Bay was California's first super-maximum facility and, at the time it opened, the most restrictive prison, which housed California's most serious criminal offenders. Incarcerated people in Pelican Bay's security housing were allegedly subjected to solitary confinement and placed in windowless cells with a concrete bed, a concrete desk, and a concrete stool for at least 22.5 hours a day.

In January 1995, a little more than five years after Pelican Bay opened, a federal court found that conditions inside its security housing unit, which included extreme isolation and environmental deprivation, imposed cruel and unusual punishment on mentally ill incarcerated people in violation of the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The court also found that some of the procedures for the placement of incarcerated people in the security housing unit violated due process.

Between 2004 and 2009, three additional lawsuits were filed by incarcerated people housed in Pelican Bay's security housing unit. One of the cases resulted in a settlement agreement whereby the department agreed to end indeterminate solitary confinement, review cases of incarcerated people in the security housing unit by transferring them from solitary confinement to the general population, and agreed to provide some incarcerated people in restricted housing with "increased opportunities for positive social interaction . . . including . . . yard [and out-of-cell] time."

In addition to Pelican Bay's security housing unit, the department has also operated administrative segregation units, psychiatric security housing units, and lockdowns (also referred to as modified programming). In 2005 and 2006, the California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) comprehensively evaluated the cost and effectiveness of the department's disciplinary confinement strategy. The LAO estimated that the department spent more than \$400 million annually on disciplinary confinement, which required significantly more resources including higher custody staffing levels, more overtime, more single celling of incarcerated people, and more administrative workload. Despite the

significant spending, the LAO concluded that the department could not provide evidence that disciplinary confinement was either effective in reducing prison violence or the most efficient use of State funds.

Since then, the practice of disciplinary confinement has received increased scrutiny, and efforts have been made to change it. In 2022, the California Legislature introduced Assembly Bill 2632 to limit the time an incarcerated person could be held in segregated confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days and no more than 45 days in a 180-day period. Although the bill passed in both the California State Assembly and the California State Senate, the Governor vetoed it. In his veto message, the Governor indicated that he prioritized improving conditions within the custodial setting and supported limiting the use of segregated confinement. However, he determined that Assembly Bill 2632 established standards that were overly broad and exclusions that could risk the safety of both incarcerated people and prison staff by categorically prohibiting the placement of large portions of the incarcerated population in segregated housing—even if such a placement is to protect the safety of all incarcerated individuals in the prison. Therefore, the Governor directed that the department instead develop regulations that would restrict the use of segregated confinement except in limited situations, such as when the individual has been found to have engaged in violence in the prison.

## The Current Restricted Housing Unit Regulations

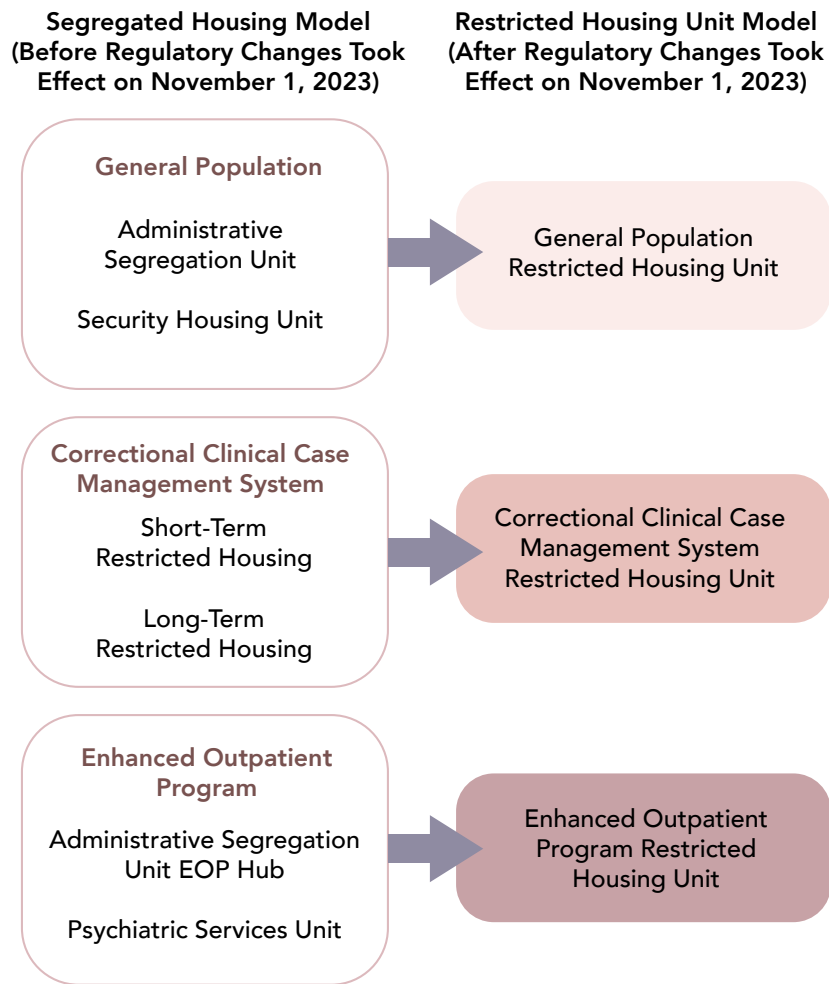
In response to the Governor's veto of Assembly Bill 2632, the department implemented regulations intended to reform the structure of disciplinary housing, improve conditions within restricted housing units, and both reduce the number of incarcerated people being placed in restricted housing and the amount of time incarcerated people spend in restricted housing. The department made significant changes to regulations to meet these goals.<sup>1</sup>

First, the new regulations reduced the department's six types of segregated housing units to three types based on the incarcerated person's mental health level of care as illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page.

Second, the new regulations reduced the number of offenses punishable by restricted housing terms from 32 to 18. The 18 offenses for which determinate restricted housing confinement is imposed fall into seven categories as follows: homicide; violence against persons; the threat to kill or assault persons; possession of a weapon; disturbance, riot or strike; and conspiracy.

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1. On April 10, 2026, the department submitted emergency regulations to the Office of Administrative Law to further revise regulations governing restricted housing units. We did not assess the impact of the proposed revisions as part of this special review.

**Figure 1. Shift From Segregated Housing to Restricted Housing Units**

Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of regulations and departmental memorandums.

Third, the new regulations reduced restricted housing terms by approximately half and no longer allow terms to be served consecutively, or back-to-back. Under the new regulations, incarcerated people serve multiple independent terms simultaneously to prevent indefinite extensions of time in restricted housing. Now, the longest determinate restricted housing term that can be imposed is 24 months for murder, attempted murder, solicitation of murder, or voluntary manslaughter of a nonincarcerated person. A full comparison chart can be found in Appendix B.

Fourth, the new regulations introduced a reward system whereby individuals serving restricted housing terms can be awarded credits towards time off their restricted housing terms by completing voluntary rehabilitative programs, mental health group treatment, therapeutic programs, or social life skills programs. For every 20 hours of voluntary rehabilitative programming they complete, incarcerated people reduce their terms in restricted housing by five days, not to exceed 25 percent of their set terms, thereby expediting their release and shortening the time they spend in restricted housing.

Finally, the department made significant changes to standardize the amount of time incarcerated people spend out of their cell to include a minimum offering of 20 hours weekly and increased access to programming opportunities.

### **Restricted Housing Unit Placement Process**

As shown in Figure 2 on page 7 of this report, the department must follow a specific process before placing incarcerated people in restricted housing.

Incarcerated people may be placed in restricted housing if they:

- (1) present an immediate threat to the safety of themselves or others,
- (2) endanger a prison's security, or
- (3) jeopardize the integrity of an investigation into alleged serious misconduct, criminal activity or the safety of any person.

Incarcerated people are issued a placement notice detailing the purpose and reasons for their placement in restricted housing. They are generally first housed in a suicide-resistant intake cell or with a cellmate, if appropriate, as a precaution against suicide during the first 72 hours of placement. After 72 hours, they are rehoused in restricted housing consistent with their offender history and background. Incarcerated people can appeal their placement in restricted housing through the grievance process.

### **Administrative Review and Classification Committee Hearing**

Prison staff must typically conduct an administrative review within one business day after placing an incarcerated person in restricted housing to determine whether placement is appropriate and whether continued retention is necessary. This administrative review must be conducted by a captain, a correctional counselor III, or a higher-level staff member but cannot be done by the staff who authorized the initial placement. The determination of whether restricted housing placement was appropriately made during the administrative review is based on the information in the placement notice and any information provided by the incarcerated person.

Within 10 calendar days of an incarcerated person's placement in restricted housing, a prison classification committee must conduct a hearing to more extensively review the placement. The primary purpose of the initial hearing is to determine the need for continued retention in restricted housing by:

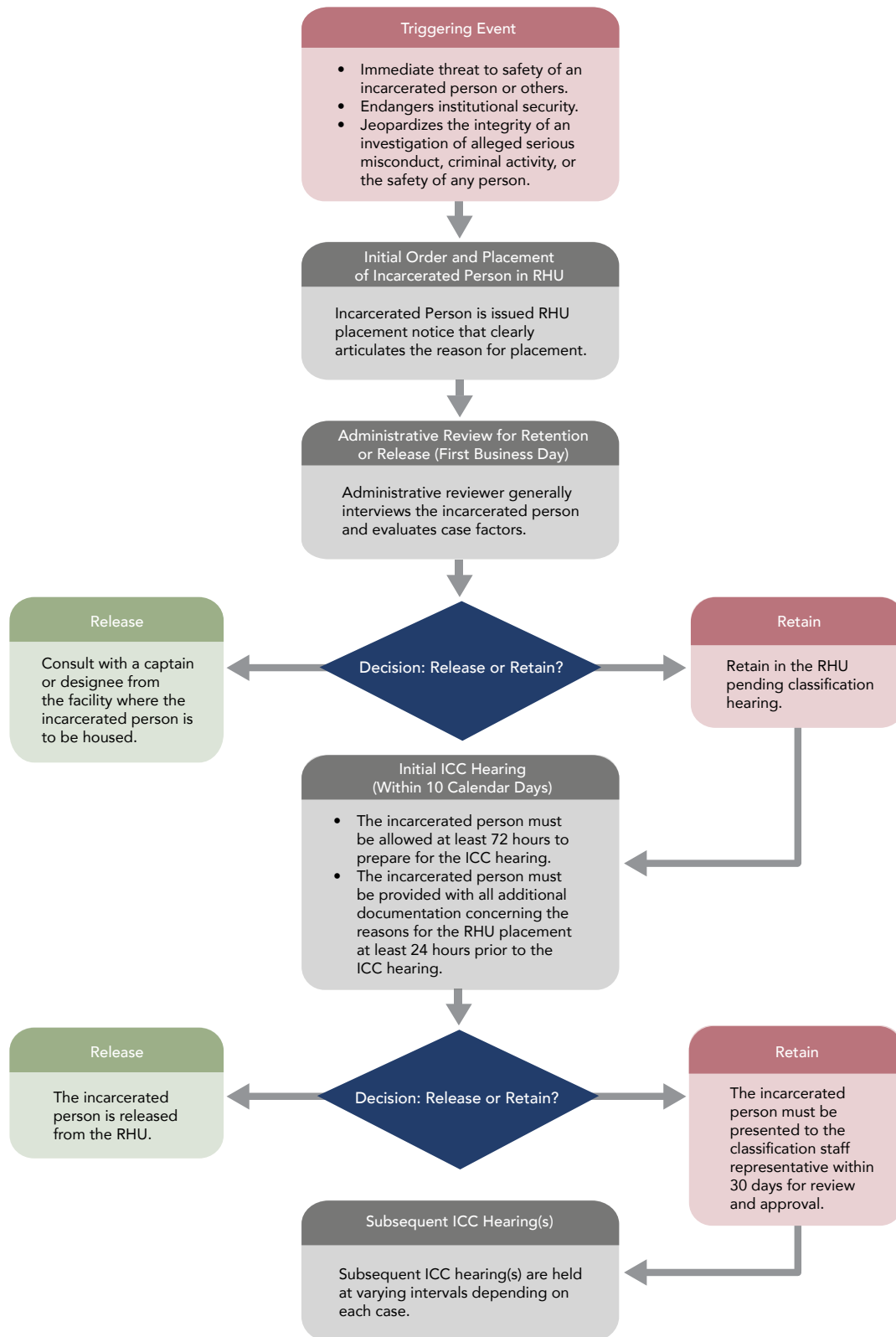
- Reviewing the documented case-specific circumstances of the placement notice and any other disciplinary report, investigative employee report, or other available information that may impact the incarcerated person's placement in restricted housing.
- Considering all available information, including the incarcerated person's comments, when determining the appropriate housing restrictions.
- Ensuring that all applicable procedural safeguards are uniformly applied to each incarcerated person placed in restricted housing.
- Recording the basis of their decision to continue retention in restricted housing.

Classification committees may commute or suspend any portion of a determinate restricted housing term but must clearly articulate the substantive justification for their decisions. However, if a classification committee determines that continued placement of an incarcerated person in restricted housing for a determinate term is appropriate, staff must ensure the term is consistent with the specific disciplinary violation that was charged.

### **Retention in Restricted Housing**

After a classification committee determines an incarcerated person's continued placement in restricted housing is appropriate, regulations generally require frequent periodic hearings to determine whether continued retention is appropriate or should be modified. Each case and classification committee review must also include a psychological assessment and referral to a psychiatrist or psychologist if there is any indication that an incarcerated person has a psychiatric or psychological problem. The case file of each incarcerated person retained in restricted housing must also be continuously reviewed and evaluated by staff assigned to the unit. Staff must generally confer on each incarcerated person's case at least once a week during the first two months of placement.

**Figure 2. General Process for Placement and Retention in Restricted Housing**



Note: RHU stands for restricted housing unit, and ICC stands for Institutional Classification Committee.

Source: The Office of the Inspector General.

According to departmental staff, many incarcerated people are placed in disciplinary restricted housing for rules violations that also constitute criminal offenses. If so, the case may be referred to a district attorney for prosecution that may take years to resolve. However, incarcerated people have the right to postpone adjudication of their alleged rules violations until after a district attorney reviews their case. Consequently, incarcerated people who have postponed their rules violation adjudications pending court proceedings generally cannot be retained in restricted housing past their projected release dates unless there is overwhelming evidence that they are an immediate threat to the security of the prison or the safety of others.

With some exceptions,<sup>2</sup> incarcerated people in the Mental Health Services Delivery System needing an Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP) or a Correctional Clinical Case Management System (CCCMS) level of care who are retained in restricted housing must be transferred to an appropriately designated EOP or CCCMS restricted housing unit within 30 days of their placements. Moreover, incarcerated people who are determined to need either EOP or CCCMS levels of care after they are retained in restricted housing must generally be transferred within 30 days from the date of the determination.

### **Living Conditions: Disciplinary and Nondisciplinary**

One of the department's primary objectives in implementing the revised regulations was to better serve the incarcerated population by improving living conditions in restricted housing. To improve living conditions, the department increased the required number of hours that people in restricted housing must be allowed out of their cells. Previously, incarcerated people in some segregated housing units were generally permitted a minimum of one hour of exercise outside their cells per day, five days a week. Under the new regulations, people incarcerated in restricted housing must be offered a minimum of 20 hours of out-of-cell time weekly, including no less than 10 hours of exercise three days per week. The remaining 10 hours may be a combination of additional exercise periods, mental health individual or group programs, and rehabilitative programs.

The department also standardized access to property and privileges in restricted housing units and provided new access to rehabilitative programs, education, clinical treatment therapies, and skill-building activities. Although the new regulations standardized access to property and privileges, they did not grant unlimited access. In prison, privileges are administratively authorized activities and benefits provided to

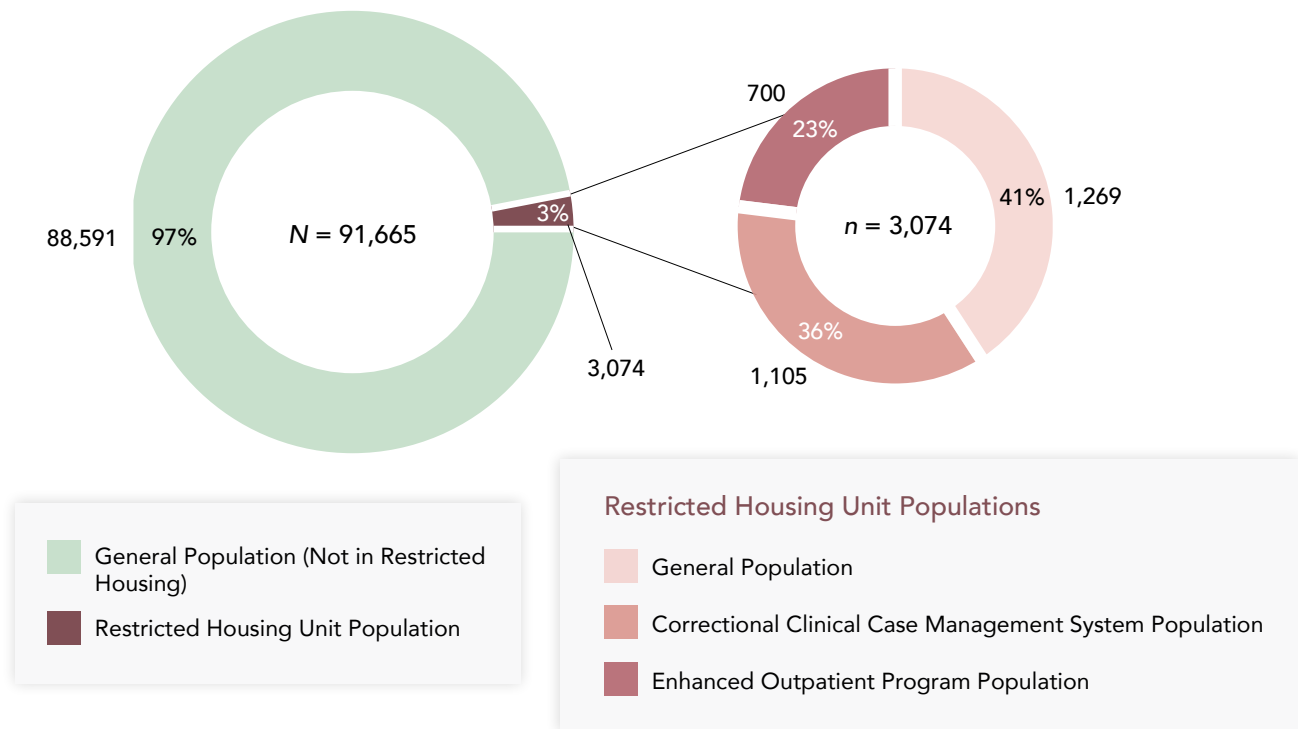
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2. An exception to the 30-day requirement is allowed in the following circumstances: (1) Health care staff determine that a transfer cannot occur and places a medical hold; (2) A delay results from the incarcerated person's refusal to transfer; (3) The incarcerated person is out-to-court; or (4) The incarcerated person is placed in a mental health crisis bed or a higher level of care.

incarcerated people depending on their assigned privilege groups. Generally, those in restricted housing are assigned to one specific privilege group that permits them limited access to privileges such as canteen, appliances, packages, telephone, property, and visiting depending on whether they were placed in restricted housing for disciplinary or nondisciplinary reasons.

Incarcerated people can retain the privilege group they were assigned to prior to placement in restricted housing if they are designated as nondisciplinary. The final determination of nondisciplinary status is made by the classification committee upon initial placement in restricted housing. Incarcerated people placed in restricted housing during an investigation into safety concerns may be granted temporary nondisciplinary privileges if their placement in restricted housing does not appear to be based on the incarcerated person's own misconduct. Other reasons incarcerated people in restricted housing may be designated as nondisciplinary include being a relative or an associate of a prison staff member or being a victim of alleged sexual assault while the investigation is ongoing.

**Figure 3. The Department's General Population Compared With Its Restricted Housing Unit Population from January 2024 Through November 2025**



Note: The Office of the Inspector General calculated the restricted housing population by averaging the monthly totals for General Population (i.e., no mental health status), Correctional Clinical Case Management System, and Enhanced Outpatient Program populations. Acute psychiatric, mental health crisis bed, intermediate-level-of-care, and unknown-level-of-care population numbers are not included in this graphic.

Source: The department's Restricted Housing Monthly Profile Reports from January 1, 2024, through November 30, 2025.

## Current Restricted Housing Unit Population and Bed Capacity

As of June 2025, 29 of California's 31 prisons have restricted housing units with a total capacity of just over 7,000 beds. Approximately 3,600 of the 7,000 beds (51 percent) are general population restricted housing for incarcerated people who are not included in the department's Mental Health Services Delivery System; just over 1,400 (20 percent) are EOP beds for those with diagnosed psychiatric disorders who are unable to function in the general population but do not require inpatient hospital care; and just over 2,000 (29 percent) are CCCMS beds for incarcerated people diagnosed with psychiatric disorders who do not require EOP, crisis, or inpatient care.

Of the four prisons we reviewed, California State Prison, Corcoran (Corcoran), has six restricted housing units and the most restricted housing beds. Although Corcoran has the capacity for approximately 900 restricted housing beds, as shown in Table 1 on the next page, the restricted housing units were not filled to this capacity during our review period. California State Prison, Sacramento (CSP-Sacramento), has three EOP and one CCCMS restricted housing unit and the second-most beds with approximately 380. Mule Creek State Prison and Central California Women's Facility have just one restricted housing building each with an approximate restricted-housing-bed capacity of 200 each. The restricted population of these four prisons from November 2021 through October 2025 is outlined in Table 1 on the next page.

**Table 1. Population Data for the Four Selected Prisons Included in This Review**

Population Type	Corcoran	CSP-Sacramento	Mule Creek State Prison	Central California Women's Facility
<b>November 2021 – December 2021</b>				
Prison Population	3,620	1,950	3,793	2,253
Restricted Housing Population	385	323	93	82
<b>January 2022 – December 2022</b>				
Prison Population	3,394	1,905	3,795	2,180
Restricted Housing Population	422	305	98	67
<b>January 2023 – December 2023</b>				
Prison Population	3,429	1,678	3,833	2,332
Restricted Housing Population	387	298	102	65
<b>January 2024 – December 2024</b>				
Prison Population	2,715	1,996	3,950	2,156
Restricted Housing Population	288	263	103	48
<b>January 2025 – October 2025</b>				
Prison Population	2,615	2,132	3,789	2,014
Restricted Housing Population	351	269	102	51

Source: The prison population figures reflected here are a calculated 12-month average of monthly population data from the department's Monthly Report of Population from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025.

The restricted housing population figures from November 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023, are from the department's Office of Research because during that time frame, the department had not yet begun the practice of publishing Restricted Housing Profile Reports. The figures for January 1, 2024, through October 31, 2025, are from Restricted Housing Profile Reports.

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## Results

### Despite Significant Revisions to the Restricted Housing Term Matrix, the Number of Rules Violations, Incidents Requiring the Use of Force, and Incidents of Violence Have Not Decreased

As we described in the background section of this report, the department significantly revised its restricted housing regulations by both reducing the number of prison rules violations that warrant placement into restricted housing and the term lengths associated with those violations. Among other goals, the revisions were intended to reduce the number of incarcerated people entering restricted housing and to reduce violence both against staff and among the prison population.

In order to evaluate the effects these significant revisions had on restricted housing units and the conditions inside, we interviewed both management and line staff working in restricted housing units. We also interviewed 51 incarcerated people housed in restricted housing units at the time of our visits.

Both staff and incarcerated people housed in restricted housing units stated that violence has increased since the department implemented the current restricted housing unit regulations. To provide some context to the claims of increased violence, according to the department, 34 incarcerated people were murdered in California prisons in 2024, and 32 incarcerated people were murdered in 2025.<sup>3</sup> Staff also told us the restricted population committed more assaults and violence against staff including kicking, gassing, and spitting. Staff reasoned that the increase was likely due to the regulatory requirement of increased out-of-cell hours through which incarcerated people had more access to staff and more opportunities for assaults.

Our review of departmental data including incident reports, rules violations, and use-of-force incidents supports our finding that violence in prisons has increased. However, because the current restricted housing regulations had been implemented for only two years at the time of our review, it is difficult to determine whether the increase in prison violence we found will continue.

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3. These numbers are different than those the department publicly reported. However, according to the department, the number of murders publicly reported did not include murders that were pending final legal resolutions or medical determinations of cause of death.

## Assaults Against Staff Increased Following Implementation of the New Regulations

We reviewed select departmental reports and data and found that departmental records supported the opinions of staff and the incarcerated population that violence has increased. Specifically, in response to certain assaults, departmental staff can use reasonable force against the incarcerated population to, among other things, subdue an attacker, overcome resistance, or gain compliance with a lawful order. Therefore, to determine whether the number of staff assaults has increased since implementation of restricted housing regulations, we reviewed departmental records documenting the number of times staff used force against the statewide restricted housing population.<sup>4</sup>

From November 1, 2022,<sup>5</sup> through June 30, 2025, we found that the number of times staff used force increased significantly. As shown in Figure 4 on the next page, each year of our review period saw an overall increase in use-of-force incidents within restricted housing units starting with a low of 86 in November 2022, which more than doubled to 174 by June 2025. Therefore, despite the implementation of restricted housing regulations reducing the number of placements and better conditions in restricted housing, the number of use-of-force incidents has continued to increase as shown in Figure 4.

However, not all assaults against staff result in a use of force. Even if staff did not use force in response to an assault, they may be required to document the incident. Given the number of incident reports departmental staff write, we could not review all incident reports generated during our review period to determine whether the reports showed that assaults against staff have increased. Therefore, we analyzed reports of incidents that occurred from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025, that were categorized as involving force and violence<sup>6</sup> at the four prisons we reviewed and found that the total number increased both inside and outside restricted housing units after the current regulations took effect.

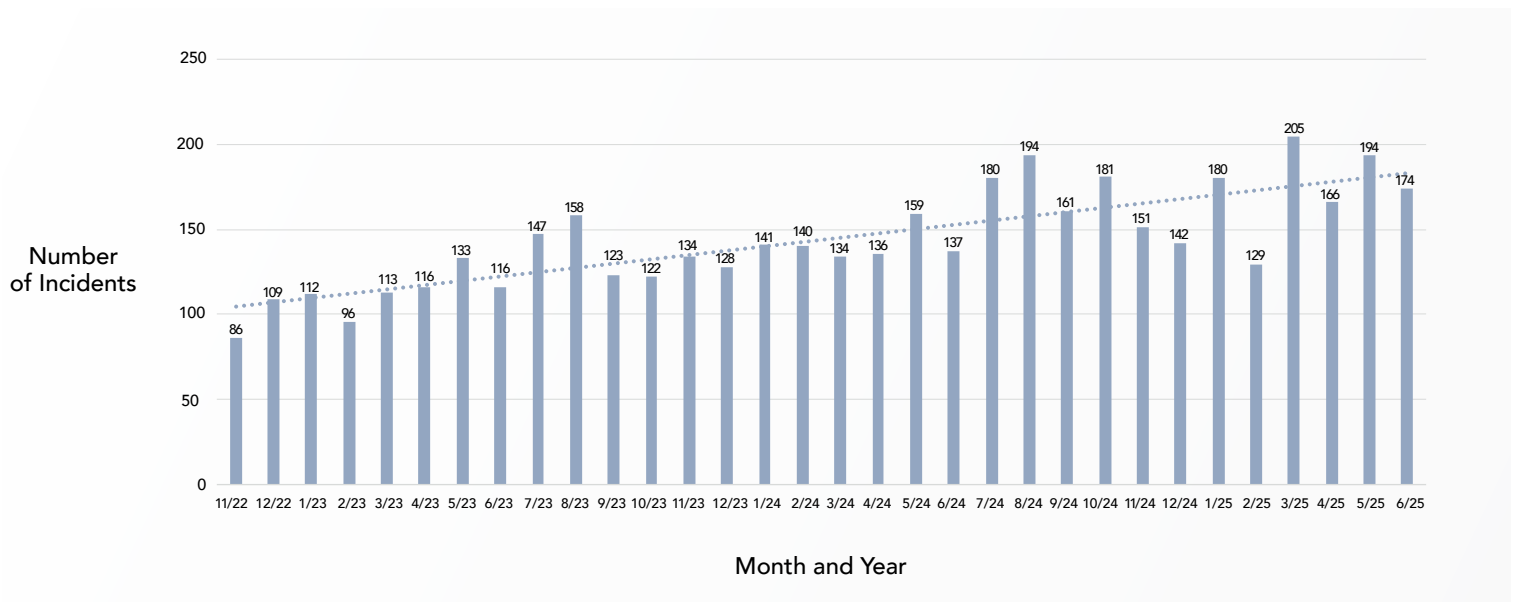
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4. We did not review each report documenting the use of force in restricted housing units to determine whether they all involved a staff response to an assault by an incarcerated person. Therefore, it is possible a small number of incidents involved staff using force in restricted housing units in response to violence between incarcerated people or to prevent an incarcerated person from committing self-harm.

5. The department updated its use-of-force policy effective November 1, 2022.

6. The department categorizes incidents involving force and violence jointly.

**Figure 4. Total Use-of-Force Incidents That Occurred From November 2022 Through June 2025**



Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of the department's statewide use-of-force numbers.

As shown in Table 2 on the next page, from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2023, the four prisons we reviewed generated 3,259 incident reports categorized as force and violence. That number increased to 4,800 incident reports categorized as force and violence from November 1, 2023, through October 31, 2025, the period after restricted housing unit regulations took effect.

We found a similar increase in the total number of force and violence incidents in restricted housing units at the four prisons we reviewed, which included resisting an officer during an escort, gassing an officer, and battery on an officer.

**Table 2. Incidents of Force and Violence Reported in Restricted Housing Units**

Prison	RHU Pre-regulations Total Nov. 2021 – Oct. 2023	Prison-wide Pre-regulations Total Nov. 2021 – Oct. 2023	Percentage of Incidents Occurring in SHU	RHU Post-regulations Total Nov. 2023 – Oct. 2025	Prison-wide Post-regulations Total Nov. 2023 – Oct. 2025	Percentage of Incidents Occurring in RHU
CSP-Sacramento	692	1,554	42%	819	2,153	39%
Corcoran	299	913	32%	545	1,075	50%
Mule Creek State Prison	34	478	7%	103	976	11%
Central California Women's Facility	33	314	11%	49	596	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,058</b>	<b>3,259</b>		<b>1,516</b>	<b>4,800</b>	

Note: SHU stands for segregated housing unit, and RHU stands for restricted housing unit.

Source: Auditor-generated data based on departmental reports of incidents of force and violence from the department's offender record system.

As shown in Table 2 above, from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2023, during the two years before restricted housing regulations were implemented, the restricted housing units in the four prisons had a total of 1,058 incidents categorized as force and violence. This number increased to 1,516 incidents for the two years after the regulations took effect, from November 1, 2023, through October 31, 2025.

We compared reported incidents of force and violence in the prisons' restricted housing units to prison-wide incidents for the two years before and after the new regulations were implemented. At two of the prisons—Corcoran and Mule Creek State Prison—the percentage of reported restricted housing unit incidents of force and violence increased compared to prison-wide numbers. At Corcoran, on average, the percentage of incidents reported in restricted housing units compared to prison totals increased from 32 percent (299 of 913 incidents) in the two years before restricted housing regulations were implemented to 50 percent (545 of 1,075 incidents) in the two years after. At Mule Creek State Prison the increase was less drastic; the percentage increased from 7 percent to 11 percent.

At the two other prisons—CSP-Sacramento and Central California Women's Facility—the percentage of reported restricted housing unit incidents of force and violence compared to prison-wide numbers decreased. At CSP-Sacramento, the number of incidents in restricted housing units compared to prison-wide incidents of force and violence decreased from 44 percent to 39 percent. At Central California Women's Facility, the percentage of incidents in its restricted housing unit compared to prison-wide numbers, decreased from 11 percent to 8 percent.

Although it is clear that prison violence has continued to increase since the restricted housing regulations were implemented, the regulations are likely not the sole cause of the increase. Departmental staff largely agreed that reduced penalties for rules violations weakened the deterrent effect of the penalties on the restricted population. However, departmental management, staff, and the incarcerated people we interviewed also agreed that increased violence has been driven by large numbers of EOP and CCCMS patients, drug use and the associated drug trade, and an influx of younger incarcerated individuals who do not respect authority.

Therefore, we believe that although the use of restricted housing to remove violent individuals from the greater prison population<sup>7</sup> is necessary and vital to departmental safety and security, more must be done to effectively reduce violence in prisons. Furthermore, we found no evidence that either reducing restricted housing terms or increasing privileges in restricted housing units reduced violence, as we discuss below.

### **The Number of Rules Violations Committed by Incarcerated People Did Not Decrease Following Implementation of Restricted Housing Regulations**

When an incarcerated person engages in misconduct that is not minor in nature or is believed to be a violation of law, regulation, or institutional policy, a formal report documenting the rules violation is prepared. Each rules violation is classified as either administrative or serious, and certain serious rules violations require the assessment of a determinate restricted housing term. After reviewing departmental data and reports, we found that the number and types of rules violations, like prison violence, have not decreased since implementation of the restricted housing regulations.

As mentioned in the background section of this report, the department reduced the number of offenses that qualify for restricted housing from 32 to 18, eliminating nonviolent offenses such as distribution of controlled substances, escapes, extortion or bribery, and indecent exposure. The department also removed some less-violent offenses related to gang disruptive behavior and relatively minor violence against incarcerated people from the restricted housing term matrix (term matrix). However, violence against nonincarcerated people and more serious acts of physical and sexual violence between incarcerated people were retained on the term matrix.

The department also substantially reduced the term lengths for restricted housing, in some instances by approximately half. For example, the term

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7. The greater prison population includes the general population and the populations of other yards including the sensitive needs yards and nondesignated yards.

length for murder and attempted murder of a nonincarcerated person—an offense with the longest term—ranged from 36 to 60 months under the former security housing unit model but was reduced to 24 months under the current regulations. Possession of a firearm or possession, manufacture, or attempted manufacture of an explosive device had a term of 18 to 42 months and now has a term of 15 months.

To determine the effect the regulatory reform had on the number and types of rules violations committed, we compared four years of statewide data—two years predating restricted housing and two years after restricted housing was implemented. We found that the number of rules violations committed increased each year even though the offenses that qualified for restricted housing decreased by 14 and even though the incarcerated population declined.

As shown in Table 3 below, total rules violations increased each year from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025, for both the 14 offenses removed from the term matrix and the 18 offenses that were retained. The total number of violations for offenses removed from the term matrix increased over the four years, from 8,939 to 14,563, which constituted an increase of 5,624 violations, or 63 percent. Likewise, the violations related to offenses that continued to result in a restricted housing term also increased from 6,885 to 12,130 rules violations, or 76 percent. However, the rate of increase for the 18 offenses retained on the term matrix slowed from the first year after the regulations were implemented (30 percent increase) to the second year (8 percent increase).

**Table 3. Rules Violations – Changes Before and After Restricted Housing Units**

	Pre-Restricted Housing Regulations			Post-Restricted Housing Regulations			
	Nov. 1, 2021, to Oct. 31, 2022 (Period 1)	Nov. 1, 2022, to Oct. 31, 2023 (Period 2)	Rate of Change From Period 1 to Period 2	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2024 (Period 3)	Rate of Change From Period 2 to Period 3	Nov. 1, 2024, to Oct. 31, 2025 (Period 4)	Rate of Change From Period 3 to Period 4
14 Offenses Removed *	8,939	11,678	31%	13,467	15%	14,563	8%
19 Offenses Currently	6,885	8,670	26%	11,243	30%	12,130	8%
Total - 34 offenses	15,824	20,348	29%	24,710	21%	26,693	8%
<b>Total Average Population</b>	<b>92,324</b>	<b>91,557</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>92,486</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>90,879</b>	<b>-2%</b>

\* The removal of 14 offenses from the restricted housing regulations includes the entire sections related to escapes, extortion or bribery, sexual misconduct, and certain offenses from the sections related to gang behavior and violence against people.

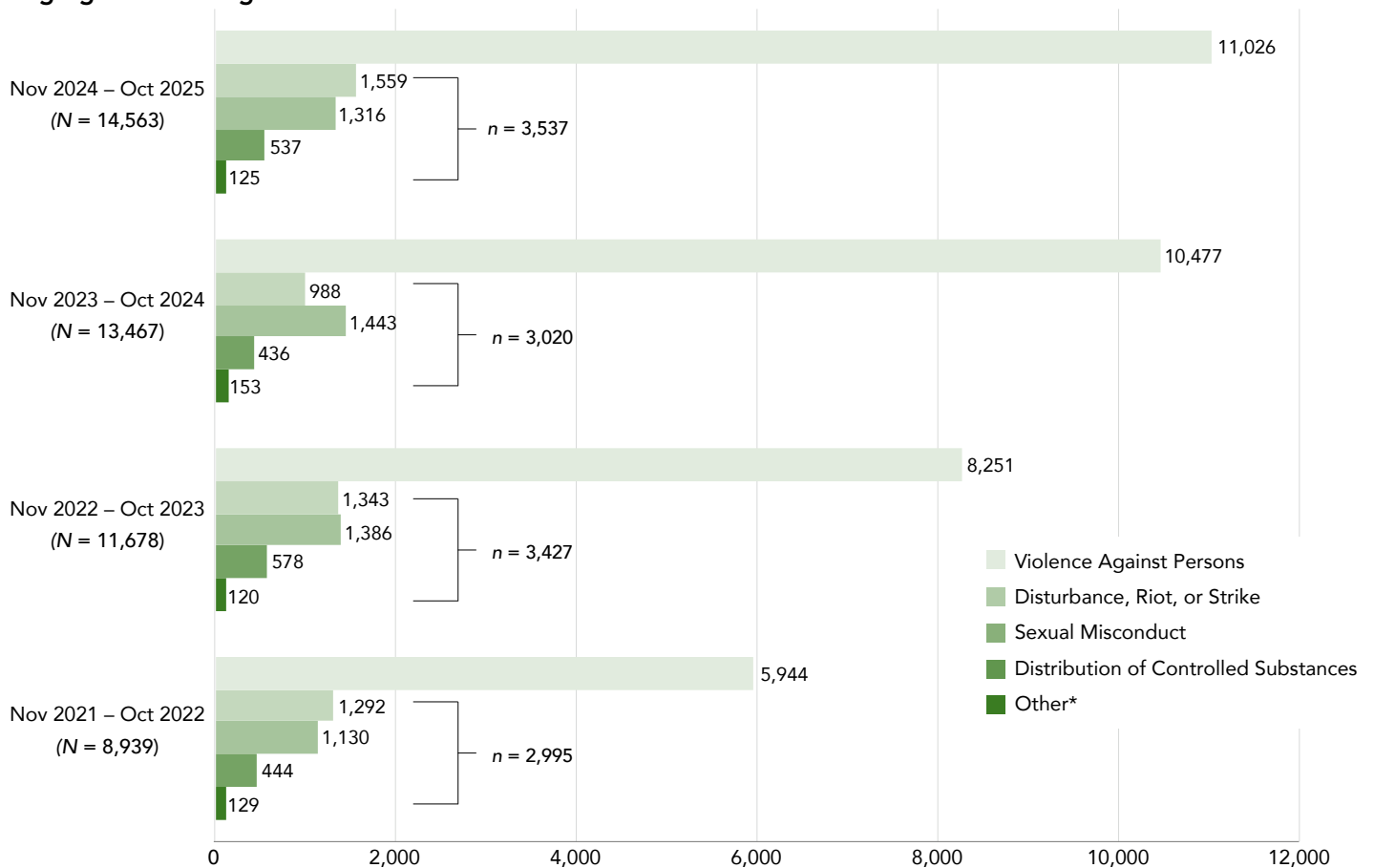
Source: The department's reports on all rule violations issued from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025, for violations associated with the 34 offenses listed in the former segregated housing model. The population figures from November 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023, are from the department's Monthly Report of Population reports because during that time frame, the department had not yet begun the practice of publishing Restricted Housing Profile Reports. The figures for January 1, 2024, through October 31, 2025, are from Restricted Housing Profile Reports.

## The Elimination of Some Violent Offenses From the Restricted Housing Term Matrix Has Likely Contributed to the Increase in Violence in Prisons

Because incarcerated people can no longer be placed in restricted housing for rules violations mainly associated with relatively minor violence against other incarcerated people, the numbers support the conclusion that the regulatory reform factored into the increased violence in the greater prison population. This conclusion also supports the opinions of staff that the level of violence among incarcerated people has intensified because there are fewer consequences for violence.

Figure 5 below shows the number and categories of rules violations that were removed from the restricted housing term matrix. As depicted in Figure 5, violence against incarcerated people made up 76 percent (11,026 out of 14,563) of the violations that were eliminated from the term matrix for the period ending October 31, 2025. These rules violations were for relatively minor acts against other incarcerated people, not against staff.

**Figure 5. Total Rules Violations by Offense Category – 14 Offenses Removed From the Segregated Housing Term List**



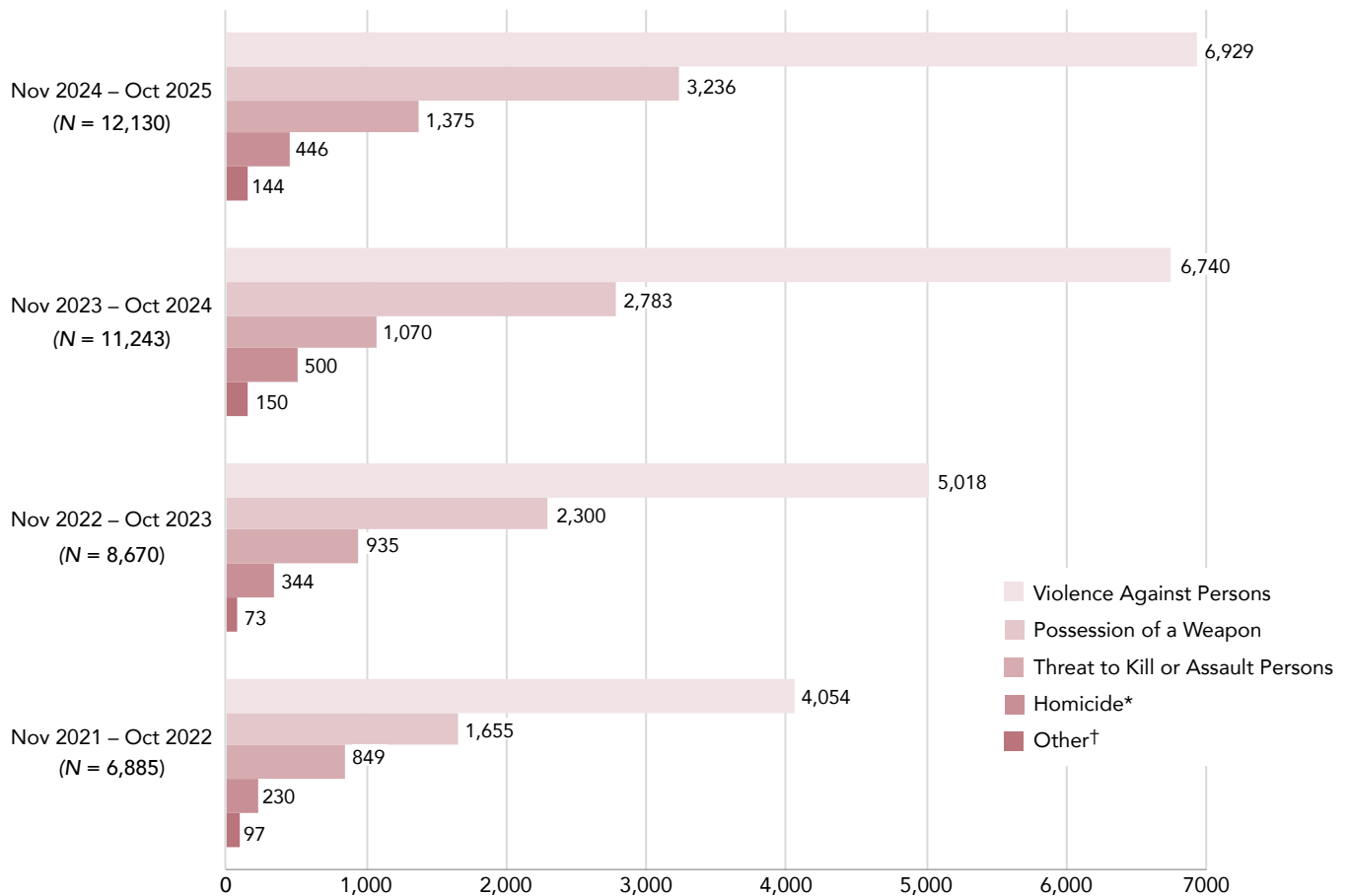
\* Other category includes extortion or bribery, harassment, escape, and gang disruptive behavior.

Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of rules violations data provided by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025.

It should be noted that although the total number of violations for relatively minor violent offenses and nonviolent offenses, excluding the category of violence against persons shown in Figure 5 on the previous page, decreased the first year after implementation of the current regulations, from 3,427 to 3,020, that number rose to 3,537 the year after. Therefore, the increase in relatively minor violent offenses and nonviolent offenses that had been removed from the matrix may be in part attributed to the regulatory reform.

In the current regulations, incarcerated people may receive a determinate restricted housing term if found guilty of committing acts of violence against staff or acts of violence capable of causing serious bodily injury against other incarcerated people. The overwhelming majority of violence occurring in restricted housing units is committed against staff because the restricted population rarely comes into contact with each other, while increased out-of-cell time results in more opportunity to assault escorting custody staff. Frequent out-of-cell movement, combined with limited or inadequate staffing, makes it difficult for officers at prisons with high-occupancy restricted housing units to maintain a safe and controlled environment.

Figure 6 on the next page shows the number and categories of rules violations that remain on the restricted housing matrix. Violations for violent offenses including violent acts against staff and serious acts of physical and sexual violence against incarcerated people made up 57 percent (6,929 out of 12,130) of rules violations during the period ending October 31, 2025. Figure 7 on page 22 shows that within this category, at least 4,180 out of 6,929 (60 percent) were against nonincarcerated people such as staff, visitors, contractors, or stakeholders.

**Figure 6. Total Rules Violations by Offense Category – 18 Offenses on Restricted Housing Term List**

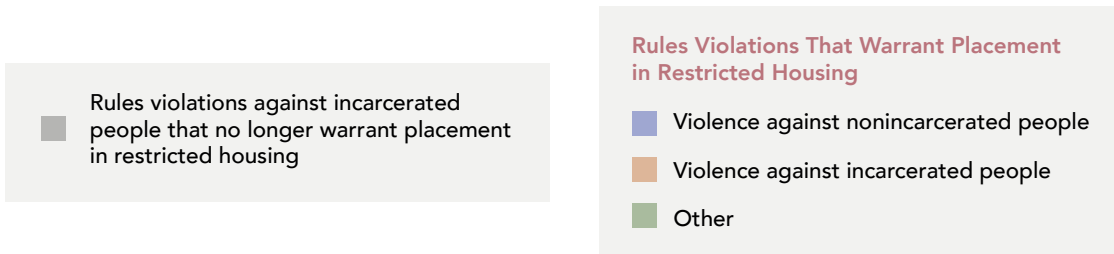
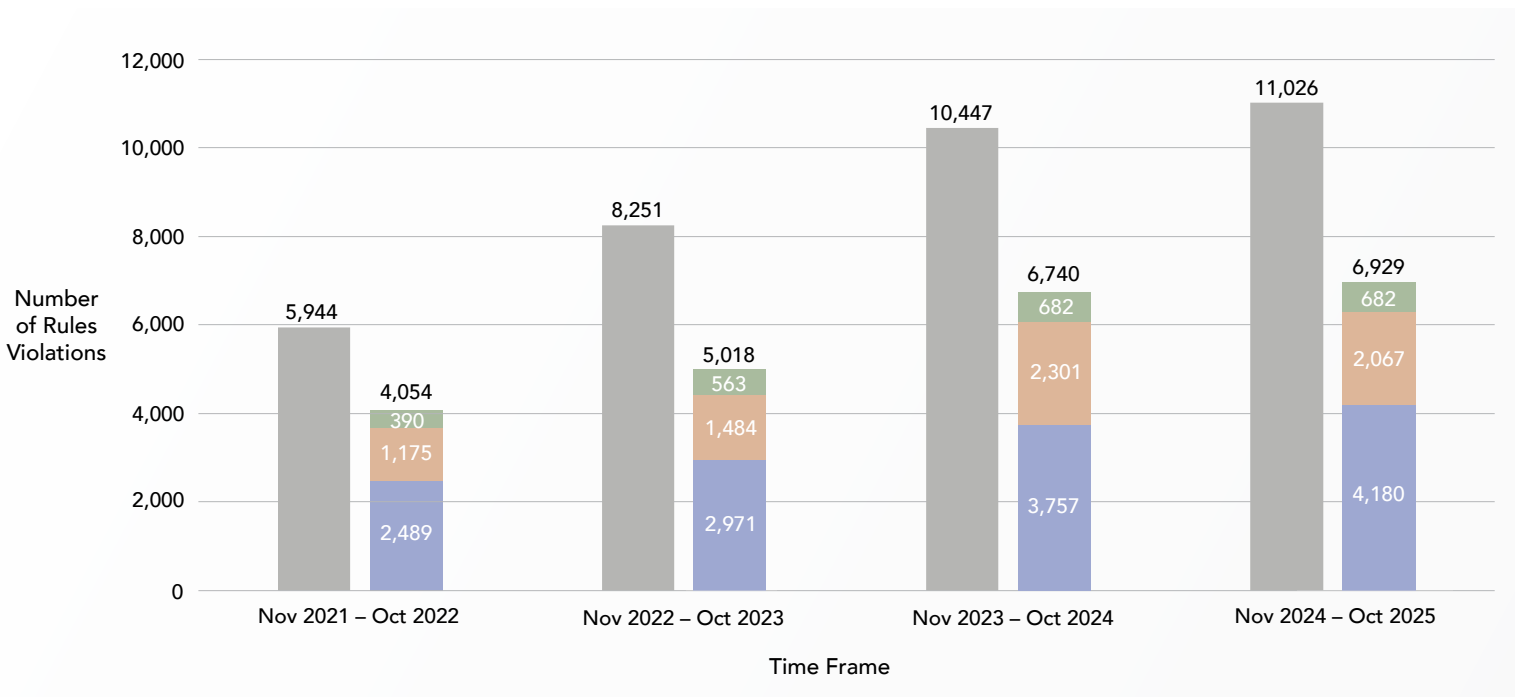
\* Homicide category includes murder, attempted murder, solicitation of murder, or voluntary manslaughter of a nonincarcerated person or incarcerated person.

† Other category includes disturbance, riot or strike, and conspiracy to commit offenses.

Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of rules violations data provided by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025.

Figure 7 below shows a comparison of the number of rules violations for offenses involving violence against people that were removed from the term matrix and those that were retained on the term matrix under the current regulations. The figure also breaks down the violence against people category by those offenses made against incarcerated people resulting in serious injury and against nonincarcerated people or staff. The figure shows that incarcerated people committed more violence among the incarcerated population than they did against staff, both before and after the implementation of the restricted housing regulations.

**Figure 7. Rules Violations Issued Related to Violence Against Persons**



\*Other – Based on the department’s data, we could not determine whether these rules violations were against incarcerated people, nonincarcerated people, or both.

Source: The Office of the Inspector General’s analysis of rules violations data provided by the department from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2025

Likely because of the prevalence of violence on prison yards, of the 51 incarcerated people we spoke with, 19 (37 percent) said they preferred to be housed inside a restricted housing unit. More notably, six of the 51 incarcerated people also admitted having committed an offense such as headbutting a nurse, gassing staff, and hitting another incarcerated person, which led to their removal from the greater prison population and placement in restricted housing. Another three incarcerated people stated they knew of other incarcerated people who had intentionally broken prison rules to be placed in restricted housing. Because current regulations have improved conditions in restricted housing, it is likely that a segment of the incarcerated population deliberately violates prison rules to escape violence that occurs among the general population. This fact unnecessarily increases the workload of staff in restricted housing units and requires the department to devote more extensive resources than it otherwise would.

As we stated on page 17, according to both staff and incarcerated people, drug transactions and drug use contribute greatly to violence on prison yards. Therefore, the department should consider returning drug-related rules violations to the term matrix.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The department should determine how the transition to the new restricted housing policy, particularly the removal of specific disciplinary categories and the reduction of disciplinary terms, has affected the number of disciplinary incidents and incidents of violence within restricted housing units and among the general population.
2. The department should consider returning drug-related rules violations to the term matrix.

## The Department Did Not Ensure Staff Offered the Minimum Required Out-of-Cell Time to the Restricted Housing Population

Because restricted housing units are designated as maximum-custody facilities, incarcerated people are subject to greater restrictions than those in the general population, including spending most of their time in-cell. Incarcerated people in restricted housing can be refused any usually authorized item or activity for safety and security reasons, but all significant information such as the disallowance action and the reason for the action must be documented and maintained in restricted housing records. If the action was not documented, staff must report it to the unit administrator as soon as possible.

Incarcerated people in the Mental Health Services Delivery System who are housed in restricted housing must also be offered structured therapeutic activities. Those at the CCCMS level of care must be offered at least 1.5 therapeutic-activity hours per week, and those at the EOP level of care must generally be offered at least 10 hours per week that may be counted towards the minimum out-of-cell requirement.

Out-of-cell time for the restricted population that is not at the EOP or CCCMS level of care consists primarily of exercise periods, also known as *yard time*. Prisons with restrictive housing units generally manage exercise periods with a rotating weekly schedule using self-contained individual-yard modular units, called *small management yards*, as depicted in Photo 1 above. A small management yard is an outdoor enclosure, usually about 150 square feet in size, that is designed to increase safety and security by reducing the amount of contact those housed in the restricted housing unit have with each other and with staff while exercising.



Photo 1. Mule Creek State Prison's restricted housing units' small management yards.

Source: Photo taken by Office of the Inspector General staff.

Similarly, the restricted population attending group therapy or mental health appointments are also placed in temporary holding cells in individual treatment rooms or in a group room with multiple individual holding cells grouped together. Photo 2 below shows a group treatment room used for the restricted population.

Designated custody staff assigned to work in restricted housing units are required to document unit activity and medical and mental health appointments offered to the restricted population in the Automated Restricted Housing Records (ARHR), the department's electronic record system application for restricted housing units. The application tracks activities such as exercise periods, group recreational therapy, mental health appointments, meals, showers offered, phone calls offered, and whether any of the offered services were refused. The department implemented the ARHR application to streamline staff's recording of daily activities offered and provide real-time reports of activities offered and provided to the restricted population. In addition to the ARHR, the department maintains a dashboard that summarizes weekly ARHR

records to allow for oversight and monitoring of these activities.

Mental health staff also record daily rounds, group treatment, and mental health appointments on the department's medical and mental health reporting systems, which are separate from custody records. Mental health staff stated they routinely meet to monitor the treatment or therapy services offered, but mental health records are not included in the ARHR or weekly dashboard reports for restricted housing units. Nevertheless, custody staff are required to document that information in the ARHR. We reviewed ARHR reports for the four prisons we reviewed and found that not all prisons complied with regulatory requirements.



Photo 2. One of Corcoran's mental health group treatment rooms with temporary holding cells used for restricted housing units.

Source: Photo taken by Office of the Inspector General staff.

### **Some Prisons Could Not Show Compliance With the Regulatory Requirement of 20 Hours of Out-of-Cell Time, Including at Least 10 Hours of Exercise Weekly**

We analyzed records of 12 restricted housing units for the week of June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025, in the four prisons included in our review for compliance with the weekly requirement of 20 out-of-cell hours. We found that Mule Creek State Prison, Central California Women’s Facility, and five out of six units at Corcoran generally offered their restricted populations exercise time of at least 10 hours per week, and 20 hours total of out-of-cell time per week. However, Corcoran’s EOP restricted housing unit and all four of CSP-Sacramento’s EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units lacked adequate documentation of compliance with out-of-cell time, particularly the 20-hour weekly requirement.

Table 4 on the next page provides the results of our review of out-of-cell time requirements. The highest noncompliance rate for yard time was 59 percent at Corcoran’s EOP restricted housing unit and approximately 61 percent at one of CSP-Sacramento’s EOP restricted housing units. The highest noncompliance rate for total out-of-cell time was 67.5 percent at Corcoran’s same EOP unit and 91 percent at CSP-Sacramento’s CCCMS unit.

Because we found a high rate of noncompliance, we reviewed four additional weeks at the five restricted housing units that had out-of-cell time noncompliance rates of above 10 percent. Based on our additional review, we found that noncompliance in Corcoran’s EOP restricted housing unit and in all four of CSP-Sacramento’s EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units was not an anomaly, and the prisons did not consistently offer or at least did not document the out-of-cell time required by regulations and departmental policy.

**Table 4. Out-of-Cell Time for the Week From June 23, 2025, Through June 29, 2025**

Prison	Restricted Housing Unit	Number of Incarcerated People Reviewed	Number of People Not Offered at Least 10 Hours of Yard Time	Number of People Not Offered at Least 20 Hours of Out-of-Cell Time	Noncompliance Rate for Yard Time	Noncompliance Rate for Out-of-Cell Time
Mule Creek	EOP	125	0	0	0	0
Corcoran	EOP	83	49	56	59%	67.5%
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 1	36	0	0	0	0
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 2	56	0	2	0	3.6%
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 3	70	0	1	0	1.4%
Corcoran	GP Unit 1	67	0	0	0	0
Corcoran	GP Unit 2	44	0	0	0	0
Central California Women's Facility	GP, CCCMS, EOP	35	0	1	0	2.9%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 1	59	0	8	0	13.6%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 2	59	2	24	3.4%	40.7%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 3	57	35	45	61.4%	78.9%
CSP-Sacramento	CCCMS	89	1	81	1.1%	91.0%

Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of restricted housing unit records for the week from June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025.

Table 5 below summarizes records for restricted housing unit out-of-cell time for the four additional weeks we reviewed.

**Table 5. Out-of-Cell Time for the Four Additional Weeks We Reviewed**

Prison	Restricted Housing Unit	Week	Number of Incarcerated People Reviewed	Number of People Not Offered at Least 10 Hours of Yard Time	Number of People Not Offered at Least 20 Hours of Out-of-Cell Time	Noncompliance Rate for Yard Time	Noncompliance Rate for Out-of-Cell Time
Corcoran	EOP	May 5–11, 2025	76	3	7	3.9%	9.2%
		June 2–8, 2025	85	34	44	40.0%	51.8%
		November 10–16, 2025	82	6	8	7.3%	9.8%
		December 1–7, 2025	67	33	13	49.3%	19.4%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 1	May 5–11, 2025	54	2	13	3.7%	24.1%
		June 2–8, 2025	55	2	8	3.6%	14.5%
		November 10–16, 2025	56	3	16	5.4%	28.6%
		December 1–7, 2025	58	0	5	0	8.6%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 2	May 5–11, 2025	54	1	15	1.9%	27.8%
		June 2–8, 2025	55	39	46	70.9%	83.6%
		November 10–16, 2025	58	2	14	3.4%	24.1%
		December 1–7, 2025	60	4	11	6.7%	18.3%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP Unit 3	May 5–11, 2025	63	12	21	19.0%	33.3%
		June 2–8, 2025	56	27	30	48.2%	53.6%
		November 10–16, 2025	49	5	46	10.2%	93.9%
		December 1–7, 2025	57	9	21	15.8%	36.8%
CSP-Sacramento	CCCMS	May 5–11, 2025	99	2	9	2.0%	9.1%
		June 2–8, 2025	92	1	10	1.1%	10.9%
		November 10–16, 2025	69	2	41	2.9%	59.4%
		December 1-7, 2025	89	9	82	10.1%	92.1%

Note: Corcoran's EOP restricted housing unit sustained major water damage and had to undergo significant repairs. The population was temporarily relocated to a different unit through June 27, 2025. The records we reviewed are from the temporary location at which the incarcerated people resided during these weeks.

Source: The Office of the Inspector General's analysis of the department's restricted housing unit records for the four weeks shown in the table above.

We asked prison management at CSP-Sacramento about repeated failure to document compliance with required out-of-cell time. In response, managers stated that operational challenges, that is, reduced staffing, crisis calls, and medical emergencies (e.g., chest pains and suicidal ideations), contributed to disruptions in scheduled programming. Prison management also stated that staff did not always document unit activity to reflect programming that was offered.

In addition, management at CSP-Sacramento stated supervisory continuity in restricted housing was adversely affected because a third-watch lieutenant was not regularly assigned to the units in June 2025. During that time, the prison was transitioning to the ARHR and dashboard reporting systems, which presented significant data entry and tracking challenges. However, as recently as January 2026, staff at CSP-Sacramento did not consistently document all out-of-cell program activities in the ARHR, thereby resulting in incomplete departmental data.

According to management at CSP-Sacramento, the prison recorded 65 reportable incidents such as violence or other security concerns, and 609 suicidal ideations within its restricted housing units in June 2025. These types of incidents strain staffing resources because they require immediate response, including continuous observation of incarcerated people at cell doors. The incidents also typically require a two-staff escort of incarcerated people to triage and treatment areas, which further hinders staffing availability and program continuity by disrupting scheduled out-of-cell activities. According to prison management, staff continue to offer out-of-cell services and yard time to the extent operationally feasible, but those efforts are not always documented.

Another challenge for CSP-Sacramento is that it houses a high percentage of the State's restricted housing population, many of which are at the EOP level of care and require the highest level of mental health treatment short of crisis or inpatient hospital care. Likely because of this, staff interact more with incarcerated people in the EOP restricted housing units, which leads to more incidents of violence, such as staff assaults and gassings. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the prison's mental health treatment areas are not located in or near its EOP restricted housing units. Therefore, custody staff in one unit must escort incarcerated people in restraints using golf carts to travel through a sallyport to transport them to the treatment area. Custody staff in two other units must also escort people in restraints across the prison yard when the prison's general population is present. These challenges add to the operational strain on restricted housing units and reduce staff's ability to comply with regulatory requirements and departmental policy.

Like CSP-Sacramento's management, Corcoran's management stated that staff did not always accurately enter out-of-cell activities in the

ARHR. For example, Corcoran’s staff reportedly offered yard time on December 3, 2025, and December 5, 2025, but failed to document doing so in the ARHR because they were responding to medical emergencies in restricted housing units. Furthermore, Corcoran staff reportedly offered all eligible incarcerated people in restricted housing units the required minimum 10 hours of yard time during the week of November 10, 2025, but we identified in ARHR records that staff failed to offer the required 10 hours of yard time to six incarcerated people. The prison also did not report whether it complied with the regulatory requirement to offer 20 total hours of out-of-cell time during this same week. Finally, Corcoran had no explanation as to why 10 hours of yard time and 20 hours of out-of-cell time were not offered to multiple incarcerated people for the week of May 5, 2025, through May 11, 2025, and the week of June 2, 2025, through June 8, 2025, as shown in Table 5 on page 28.



Photo 3. Temporary holding cells at California State Prison, Sacramento.

Source: Photo taken by Office of the Inspector General staff.

The day-to-day tasks for staff assigned to restricted housing units can be more complex and demanding than for staff assigned to other yards. Because all restricted housing units are designated as maximum-custody, incarcerated people must always be secured, and all out-of-cell time has to be managed and scheduled by staff. Unit staff must also escort incarcerated people in restraints any time they are removed from their cells. Usually, only one staff escort is required for movement within a restricted housing unit, but at least two custody staff escorts are required for movement outside the unit.

Before incarcerated people are escorted out of their restricted housing units, staff must first conduct an unclothed body search, remove the person from their cell, and if necessary, place them in a separate holding cell—as depicted in Photo 3 above—to change into a jumpsuit. Upon return, incarcerated people are generally placed in a temporary holding cell, searched, and required to change back into their unit-issued clothing before being returned to their cell. The demands placed on restricted housing unit staff combined with the requirement of providing

20 hours of out-of-cell time per week has placed a heavy logistical burden on custody staff, which is further compounded by the need to enter all relevant data into the ARHR system. Prison management reported it has become increasingly difficult to complete these responsibilities within a standard eight-hour shift.

Managing restricted housing units at Corcoran and CSP-Sacramento is particularly challenging because of the number and types of restricted housing units at those prisons. Most prisons operate one or two restricted housing units. Corcoran operates six, including one EOP, three CCCMS, and two general population restricted housing units. Because Corcoran operates all three types of restricted housing units, the prison receives many transfers from other prisons. Corcoran's management estimates that only about 10 to 20 percent of its restricted population comes from the prison itself, while most of its restricted population is transferred from other prisons.

CSP-Sacramento operates four restricted housing units, including three EOP and one CCCMS unit; both the EOP and CCCMS populations require a higher level of mental health care. According to prison management, EOP and CCCMS units also require more of staff's time because these populations commit more rules violations while in restricted housing and cause staff to use force more frequently to maintain safety and security of the housing unit.

However, it is important to recognize that access to out-of-cell time for exercise and programming activities in restricted housing units can provide incarcerated people with physical and mental health benefits that can affect their behavior. Failure to provide these individuals with yard time and fresh open air to de-stress from being in an enclosed cell most of the time, can cause negative behavior and increased violence. One prison manager acknowledged that yard time positively impacts daily operations.

Although 20 hours of out-of-cell time improves conditions in restricted housing, at times, this privilege may exceed what the greater prison population receives if the prison is under a lockdown order. Therefore, with respect to time out-of-cell, the current regulations have resulted in situations in which restricted populations have a greater privilege than those who have not been placed in restricted housing units.

## **Incarcerated People at the EOP and CCCMS Levels of Care Are Not Always Offered the Required Weekly Hours for Structured Therapeutic Activity**

We reviewed selected mental health records of 100 incarcerated people placed in EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units from June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025, and December 1, 2025, through December 7, 2025. We found that 31 of the 100 incarcerated people whose records we reviewed were not offered the minimum weekly therapeutic treatment hours for their designated level of care.

Much like the noncompliance with yard time and total weekly out-of-cell hours, we found that Corcoran's EOP unit and all four of CSP-Sacramento's EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units did not always offer the required therapeutic treatment hours to its restricted population. While Mule Creek State Prison and Central California Women's Facility had some deficiencies in the two weeks we reviewed, Corcoran's three CCCMS restricted housing units complied with all required mental health group therapy hours we reviewed. Table 6, on the next page, summarizes the results of our review of mental health records.

We found that when therapy sessions were cancelled, mental health staff did not always reschedule incarcerated people for group therapy within the week to ensure that a minimum of 1.5 hours were offered to CCCMS incarcerated people, and 10 hours were offered to EOP incarcerated people in restricted housing units.

For example, at CSP-Sacramento, group therapy sessions were cancelled and not rescheduled within the week to ensure incarcerated people were offered the required number of therapeutic hours. For the week beginning on June 23, 2025, CSP-Sacramento's mental health staff cancelled group sessions one day because the prison had an institutional down day for required staff trainings. On another day during the week of December 1, 2025, mental health staff cancelled all group therapy sessions due to a staff death at the prison. Mental health staff did not offer EOP or CCCMS patients treatment on these days and did not appear to make any attempt to reschedule the cancelled sessions for another day.

Although we recognize that CSP-Sacramento may need to cancel programming and services for emergencies due to security and safety concerns, mental health staff did not provide evidence to either support the rationale for scheduling therapeutic activities for fewer than the required hours or support that the reduced hours had been approved as policy requires. CSP-Sacramento management also acknowledged that mental health staff struggle to operate enough groups and one-on-one therapy sessions because of limited staffing and inadequate treatment space.

In another instance at Corcoran, an incarcerated person was placed in the EOP restricted housing unit on Monday, June 23, 2025. According

to Corcoran’s mental health supervisor, staff who schedule group therapy sessions need one business day from the day the incarcerated person is placed in restricted housing to schedule a session, and the individual was scheduled on June 25 but only received a total of six therapeutic hours that week. Because the incarcerated person arrived on Monday, we believe mental health staff had enough time in the week to schedule sessions to ensure compliance with departmental regulations, including the option of scheduling two sessions in one day to catch up on time.

**Table 6. Summary of Results for Mental Health Therapeutic Group Hours Reviewed**

Prison	Restricted Housing Unit	Dates	Number of Incarcerated People Reviewed	Number of People Not Offered Required Group Therapeutic Hours	Noncompliance Rate
Mule Creek State Prison	EOP	June 23–29, 2025	5	1	20%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	2	40%
Corcoran	EOP	June 23–29, 2025	5	1	20%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	0	0
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 1	June 23–29, 2025	5	0	0
		December 1–7, 2025	5	0	0
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 2	June 23–29, 2025	5	0	0
		December 1–7, 2025	5	0	0
Corcoran	CCCMS Unit 3	June 23–29, 2025	5	0	0
		December 1–7, 2025	5	0	0
Central California Women's Facility	GP, CCCMS, EOP	June 23–29, 2025	5	3	60%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	0	0
CSP-Sacramento	EOP-Unit 1	June 23–29, 2025	5	3	60%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	4	80%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP-Unit 2	June 23–29, 2025	5	3	60%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	4	80%
CSP-Sacramento	EOP-Unit 3	June 23–29, 2025	5	3	60%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	2	40%
CSP-Sacramento	CCCMS	June 23–29, 2025	5	3	40%
		December 1–7, 2025	5	1	60%
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31%</b>

Source: The Office of the Inspector General’s analysis of mental health records for the two weeks shown in the table above.

When asked why CCCMS patients were not provided with group treatment, Mule Creek State Prison's mental health manager stated the prison is a designated EOP restricted housing unit, and within 30 days of placement in restricted housing, CCCMS patients should be transferred to another prison's CCCMS restricted housing unit where their group treatment should be scheduled. The manager also stated that the prison's group treatment space is limited, and they prioritize the EOP population because they are the most vulnerable group in the restricted housing unit setting. The prison's mental health manager added that they see CCCMS restricted housing unit patients weekly and can elevate their level of care if the patients have concerns prior to transferring to another prison.

In three of the five cases we reviewed at Central California Women's Facility, incarcerated people were not offered the required 1.5 hours of group therapy treatment during the week of June 23, 2025. A prison manager stated the oversight likely occurred because the staff member who was responsible for scheduling treatment was on leave but added that a request had been made to update restricted housing unit scheduling procedures to prevent similar future oversights. Moreover, a prison manager stated that one of the three incarcerated people refused 1.5 hours of group treatment, but our review of the ARHR records did not show that this refusal had been documented. Although mental health records show that the incarcerated person's session had been cancelled, we could not determine whether it was cancelled because treatment had been refused. Notably, mental health records from other prisons we reviewed typically recorded cancelled appointments and the reasons for the cancellation, including refusals.

Because EOP and CCCMS incarcerated people have identified mental health needs, it is imperative that they be offered routine therapeutic services mandated by departmental policy so they can function adequately and avoid decompensation. Therapeutic services typically include, but are not limited to, daily living skills, social skills, mental health, anger management, and stress management. These therapeutic sessions teach the population appropriate ways of handling anger and expressing feelings to foster self-control skills and ultimately reduce aggressive behavior towards staff and others. Therapeutic treatment is also intended to facilitate EOP and CCCMS patients' transition from restricted housing back to the general population.

### **Restricted Housing Records are Incomplete and Inaccurate**

We found that the four prisons we reviewed maintained incomplete and inconsistent records on restricted housing unit activities, including out-of-cell time. We compared group therapy treatment hours recorded by custody staff in the ARHR application to mental health records and found inconsistencies in 69 of 100 group therapeutic treatment records we reviewed. Specifically, custody staff did not document in the ARHR all EOP and CCCMS group therapy sessions that mental health staff offered. Although incarcerated people may refuse services, staff are

required to record the scheduled sessions and corresponding refusals, if applicable. Moreover, the ARHR did not match the total number of offered treatment hours documented in mental health records. Because group therapy treatment may be counted toward weekly out-of-cell time, the prisons underreported the restricted population's out-of-cell time by failing to accurately record offered hours. These oversights may have contributed to the high rates of noncompliance with the requirements for out-of-cell time.

Prisons have the necessary reporting tools available to properly oversee and monitor restricted housing unit activities. Moreover, when the current regulations were being implemented, the department mandated staff training on restricted housing unit policies and procedures, which included ARHR reporting. However, the department seemingly does not verify that prison staff offer the restricted population the required out-of-cell time, or the EOP and CCCMS restricted populations the required therapeutic hours in compliance with regulations and departmental policy.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Departmental and prison-level management should routinely review the unit report summaries available to them in the ARHR system and require corrective action when units do not comply with out-of-cell-time requirements.
2. Prison management should document reasons for not meeting weekly out-of-cell-time requirements and discuss those reasons with staff to identify learning opportunities and address future needs.
3. Prison management should ensure that EOP and CCCMS patients in restricted housing are offered the minimum therapeutic services required by departmental policy.
4. Prison management should document their reviews of weekly ARHR activity to ensure accountability, routine monitoring, and corrective actions.
5. Custody and mental health staff should also conduct routine reconciliations of their records for CCCMS and EOP restricted housing units to ensure accurate reporting and improve monitoring and oversight.

## **In Some Cases, Administrative Reviews and Classification Committee Hearings for Incarcerated People Placed in Restricted Housing Were Not Conducted Timely or Documented Consistently**

As we explained above, specific departmental staff must review placements in restricted housing to ensure the placement is appropriate and determine whether continued retention in restricted housing is necessary. The administrative review is a critical administrative oversight process that must be completed on the first business day following an incarcerated person's placement, and the official who authorized the initial placement cannot conduct this review.

During the review process the reviewer must consider the reasons for placement in restricted housing, examine each incarcerated person's case file and interview, and initiate procedural safeguards for the upcoming classification committee hearing. Staff must also determine whether incarcerated people need an investigative employee or staff assistant to help with their case because of difficulty reading, writing, or speaking English. The review must be documented using the automated Restricted Housing Unit Placement Notice, which must include a written justification detailing the evidence used to retain the individual in restricted housing.

We examined 65 cases from November 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, to determine whether incarcerated people were properly placed and retained in restricted housing. We reviewed the standardized placement notices, which include a section with checkboxes to be completed during administrative reviews, and found that three of the 65 cases lacked documented evidence that the required administrative review had been completed. The absence of this documentation indicates that either the mandatory review was not conducted or that the results were not properly recorded. Furthermore, a fourth case did not include information about the official who conducted the review, making it difficult to confirm whether the review had been completed by a staff member of the rank required by regulations.

In addition, in six of the 65 placements we reviewed, or 9 percent, the administrative review was not completed on the first business day after the incarcerated person was placed in restricted housing, as required by regulations. In one of these cases, the review was delayed for nine business days and three weekends after the incarcerated person was placed in restricted housing.

Regulations require the classification committee to hold a hearing no more than 10 calendar days after an incarcerated person is first placed in a restricted housing unit to decide whether the individual should

remain in restricted housing. The committee's decision is recorded in the department's classification committee records.

We reviewed the classification committee records of 65 incarcerated people to determine whether the department conducted an initial classification hearing within 10 days of the incarcerated person's placement in restricted housing. We identified only two cases in which the initial classification hearing occurred more than 10 days after the individuals were first placed in a restricted housing unit; both occurred 16 days after initial placement. In one case, the committee's notes indicated the hearing was delayed because it was not held before the incarcerated person was transferred to another prison for a court proceeding.

Failure to conduct or document administrative reviews and classification hearings is significant for many reasons. Without a signed notice and clear justification for placement in restricted housing, due process is weakened because the department cannot confirm that required staff reviewed and approved proper placements. Moreover, procedural safeguards may be delayed, leaving incarcerated people without necessary support, and some remaining in restrictive housing for more than 10 calendar days even if they could have been approved for immediate release. Consistent completion and documentation of administrative reviews are essential to ensure fairness, accountability, and adherence to departmental policies and regulations. The current gaps in compliance present significant risks to both individual rights and prison oversight, highlighting the need for strengthened procedures and improved monitoring of placements in restricted housing units.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The department should ensure an administrative review is conducted for every restricted housing placement on the first business day following placement and retain documentation of the review.
2. The department should implement enhanced monitoring controls to verify consistent and accurate use of the automated restricted housing unit placement notice to document the following:
  - a. The date and time of the administrative review and incarcerated person interview.
  - b. The name and rank of the administrative reviewer.
  - c. The rationale and supporting evidence for the decision to retain the incarcerated person in restricted housing or release the incarcerated person from restricted housing.
  - d. The review of every restricted housing placement for continued retention within 10 days of initial placement.

## The Department Has Struggled to Achieve Two Objectives of the Revised Regulations: Reducing the Number of Transfers and Increasing Participation in Rehabilitation Programming

The current regulations organize restricted housing based on the mental health care needs of the incarcerated population. When proposing the current regulations, the department identified one of the changes it intended to make, which was to improve how restricted housing is managed by establishing consistent operating practices, supporting movement to less-restrictive housing, and reducing staff workload by limiting unnecessary transfers between restricted housing units.

Likely in an effort to prioritize mental health treatment, current regulations generally require the department to transfer EOP or CCCMS incarcerated people to designated specialized restricted housing within 30 calendar days of their initial placement. At four specific prisons—Calipatria State Prison, Centinela State Prison, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison,<sup>8</sup> and Ironwood State Prison—incarcerated people whose mental health level of care changes require inclusion at the EOP or CCCMS level of care, must generally be transferred to an appropriate restricted housing unit within 14 calendar days of the date their mental health level of care change was reflected in the electronic health records system. Timelines are even more compressed for incarcerated people who are already included in the Mental Health Services Delivery System prisons because they must be transferred within 72 hours from the date of arrival.

Of the 65 restricted housing placements we reviewed, 35 involved transfers to other prisons following each incarcerated person's initial placement. Twenty-two of the 35 cases involved transfers of individuals requiring mental health treatment—eight at the EOP level of care and 14 at the CCCMS level of care—after their initial placement in restricted housing. Sixteen, or 73 percent of the 22 transfers occurred only because the regulations required transfer to a designated restricted housing prison based on the individual's level of care. Of the 16 required transfers, 14 occurred within the required 30-day time frame; however, two transfers did not meet the required timeline.

In both cases the incarcerated people had been receiving mental health services at the CCCMS level of care at the time they were placed in restricted housing. Nevertheless, both incarcerated people were placed in general population restricted housing units, and neither was transferred until 33 days after initial placement despite regulations generally requiring a transfer within 30 days of initial placement. Incarcerated people in the department's Mental Health Services Delivery System, particularly those in restricted housing, require enhanced mental health treatment to prevent decompensation.

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8. Chuckawalla Valley State Prison closed in March 2025.

Even though the department generally met transfer timelines, we question whether transferring EOP and CCCMS patients to restricted housing at different prisons is either necessary or the best use of departmental resources. A goal of the new regulations was to reduce transfers between prisons. However, the 16 required transfers we reviewed resulted in moves from 14 prisons statewide. For example, according to prison management, after the regulations were enacted, CSP-Sacramento's restricted housing units quickly began receiving more incarcerated people transferring from other prisons, especially those at the EOP level of care. Consequently, according to prison management, CSP-Sacramento's restricted housing unit had been overcrowded for at least six months as of October 2025.

While all incarcerated people may be transferred to another prison's restricted housing unit depending on capacity or treatment needs, the transfer of EOP and CCCMS patients may be particularly destabilizing given their need for enhanced mental health treatment. EOP and CCCMS patients generally have established treatment regimens and relationships with clinicians at the prison in which they are housed. Disrupting those regimens by transferring EOP and CCCMS patients to new regimens in restricted housing at different prisons may be counterproductive and lead to decompensation and increasingly maladaptive behavior. Doing so also creates a huge and disproportionate strain on staff at CSP-Sacramento and other prisons with EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units.

Furthermore, the benefits of transferring EOP and CCCMS patients is questionable because approximately 50 percent of the incarcerated population spends less than three weeks in restricted housing, and 75 percent spends six weeks or less in restricted housing. In total, the incarcerated population only spends an average of 10 weeks in restricted housing.

Given the high costs associated with transferring incarcerated people to restricted housing, the disruption to ongoing mental health treatment, and the department's goal of reducing movement, the department should consider designating cells for EOP and CCCMS patients in restricted housing units where they are already housed. If the prison where they are housed does not have a restricted housing unit, the department should consider placing EOP and CCCMS patients at the closest prison that has both a restricted housing unit and mental health staff available to provide necessary treatment.

### **Forced Removals and Transfer Refusals**

When an incarcerated person refuses to participate in a regulatory required transfer, the situation often escalates to a controlled use of force in order to remove the person from their cell. If an incarcerated person at the CCCMS or EOP level of care refuses to vacate their cell for a transfer

occurring in the final five days of the mandatory 30-day window, custody staff are required to initiate force procedures within 48 hours. These planned cell extractions are inherently high-risk events for staff involved, yet they are a direct consequence of the need to meet strict regulatory transfer deadlines. In turn, the resulting high-volume movement provides more opportunities for injuries to both staff and incarcerated people.

### **Restricted Housing Unit Programming Credits and the Shift to Behavior-Based Release**

To meet the goal of reducing the amount of time incarcerated people spend in restricted housing, the department shifted away from its old system of managing restricted housing through set punishment ranges and toward a model that rewards positive behavior. A part of this reform is the restricted housing unit programming credit, a process that allows individuals serving set terms in restricted housing to earn their way back to the general population sooner through a voluntary rehabilitative programming reward system.

For every 20 hours of voluntary participation in department-approved rehabilitative programs, activity groups, or mental health treatment programs completed while housed in a restricted housing unit, eligible incarcerated people may receive five days of credit toward their restricted housing unit release date. However, these credits may not exceed 25 percent of the imposed restricted housing term.

The department has the ability to electronically track credit hours recorded on the restricted population's tablets, and the hours can have a direct effect on the timing of classification committee reviews. These reviews occur 90 days before an individual's projected release date from restricted housing. Classification committee documentation typically includes information about program participation, the number of hours an incarcerated person has completed, and the adjusted release date from restricted housing.

To determine whether incarcerated people earned credits through this system to reduce their terms, we reviewed classification committee records for 65 people in restricted housing from November 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025. Of these 65 cases, 41 involved individuals with determinate restricted housing terms. Only 20 of these cases contained evidence that the incarcerated person participated in rehabilitative programs and earned enough credits to reduce their restricted housing unit term.

In 20 other cases, we did not find any evidence in classification committee records that the incarcerated individuals participated in rehabilitative programs, even though available information indicated they were eligible to participate. Although we did not identify any documentation explaining why 20 of 41 eligible individuals we reviewed

did not participate in the credit-earning program, we believe the department could encourage greater participation by prorating or reducing the number of programming hours required before individuals receive credit toward reducing their restricted housing terms.

In the final case, records show some participation in the programming credit system, but the hours completed did not reduce the restricted housing unit term. In this instance, the incarcerated person completed 9.33 hours of programming by the hearing date but did not receive any credit because the hours did not meet the department's minimum requirement of 20 hours.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The department should consider designating cells for EOP and CCCMS patients in restricted housing units where they are already housed.
  - a. If the prison where they are housed does not have a restricted housing unit, the department should consider placing EOP and CCCMS patients at the closest prison that has both a restricted housing unit and mental health staff available to provide necessary treatment.
2. The department should consider changing the programming credit system to allow for prorated credits and explore ways to encourage increased participation in the rehabilitative programming reward system for early release from restricted housing.

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# Appendix A

## Scope and Methodology

California Penal Code sections 6126(b) and (c) authorize the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to initiate audits and reviews of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (the department) policies, practices, and procedures. The Inspector General initiated this special review focused on the department's restricted housing units.

Specifically, the special review focused on compliance with restricted housing regulations and departmental policy at four prisons: California State Prison, Sacramento (CSP-Sacramento); California State Prison, Corcoran (Corcoran); Mule Creek State Prison; and Central California Women's Facility. CSP-Sacramento and Corcoran operate the highest number of restricted housing units and have the highest restricted population within the department. Mule Creek State Prison's restricted population falls on average with the State's restricted housing population. Central California Women's Facility was selected to include one women's prison in our review. In our prison-selection criteria, we also considered reported incidents of violence during the OIG's routine monitoring of the prisons.

The table on the following pages presents the objectives of our special review and the methods we used to fulfill them.

**Table A-1. Review Objectives and Methodology**

Review Objectives	Method
<p>1. Review and evaluate the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures significant to the special review objectives.</p>	<p>A. We obtained and analyzed laws, regulations, and policies related to restricted housing units pre- and post-regulatory reform.</p> <p>B. We obtained and analyzed departmental policies and guidance related to restricted housing units as well as the Mental Health Services policy effective August 1, 2024.</p> <p>C. We compared current regulations and policy to the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures in effect prior to November 1, 2023, the date the restricted housing unit regulations and policy were first implemented.</p> <p>D. We interviewed pertinent staff at the departmental level, regional associate directors, and prison management at the four selected prisons to understand the local operational procedures, guidelines, and the environment in which they operate their restricted housing units.</p>
<p>2. Determine whether the department complies with regulations and policy regarding placement and retention in restricted housing units by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Properly placing incarcerated people in restricted housing units</li> <li>b. Properly evaluating and reviewing continued restricted housing placement</li> <li>c. Properly calculating restricted housing unit programming credit</li> </ul>	<p>A. We obtained a general understanding of the department's restricted housing unit placement and retention, policies, procedures, and operations through inquiries, observations, and inspection of documents and records.</p> <p>B. We selected a sample of 65 incarcerated people placed in restricted housing units from November 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, at the four selected prisons.</p> <p>C. We conducted compliance testing to determine whether the department and prisons are properly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placing incarcerated people in restricted housing units.</li> <li>• Evaluating and reviewing continued restricted housing placement.</li> <li>• Calculating restricted housing unit programming credit.</li> </ul>

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Table A-1. Review Objectives and Methodology (continued)

Review Objectives	Method
<p>3. Determine whether the department complies with regulations and policy regarding conditions within restricted housing units by requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Minimum out-of-cell time</li> <li>b. Mental health monitoring and services</li> <li>c. Access to property</li> <li>d. Access to tablets</li> <li>e. Visitation</li> <li>f. Staffing levels and required training</li> <li>g. Programming</li> <li>h. Medical services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. We obtained and reviewed relevant prison policies, procedures, and guidelines related to minimum-out-of-cell time, mental health monitoring services, access to property, access to tablets, visitation, staffing levels, required training, programming, and medical services, herein collectively referred to as restricted housing unit living conditions, at the four selected prisons.</li> <li>B. We interviewed pertinent staff at the departmental level, and at the four selected prisons, to obtain an understanding of how the prisons manage the daily operations of restricted housing unit living conditions, and any differences in the general population (GP), Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP), and Correctional Clinical Case Management System (CCCMS) restricted housing units.</li> <li>C. We conducted site visits of the four selected prisons' restricted housing units and spoke with staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand daily custody staff tasks, schedules, and routines for managing the GP, EOP and CCCMS restricted population.</li> <li>• Observe restricted housing units, intake cells, housing cells, exercise yards, and mental health facilities.</li> <li>• Understand mental health staff's daily responsibilities, how group therapy is scheduled, and how mental health group sessions are documented.</li> </ul> </li> <li>D. We conducted interviews of 51 incarcerated people in the restricted housing units at the four selected prisons regarding living conditions and any significant areas of concern pertaining to the restricted housing unit reforms that became effective on November 1, 2023.</li> <li>E. We reviewed restricted housing unit records from the Automated Restricted Housing Records system and the Power BI dashboard reports of the four selected prisons to determine whether the restricted population was offered a minimum of 10 hours for exercise and a minimum of 20 hours of total out-of-cell time weekly, for the week from June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025. We reviewed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each individual offender record to confirm that the incarcerated person was housed in the unit for the entire week reviewed.</li> <li>• Total yard and total out-of-cell hours reported for each incarcerated person confirmed to be in the unit the entire week.</li> <li>• The Automated Restricted Housing Records' Unit Reporting files for reports on incarcerated people who were not offered yard, and if documented reasons were based on security and safety pursuant to regulations and policy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

(Continued on next page.)

Table A-1. Review Objectives and Methodology (continued)

Review Objectives	Method
	<p>F. For those restricted housing units that had exercise or out-of-cell time noncompliance rates above 10 percent for the week from June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025, we conducted a limited review of the restricted housing unit records for four additional weeks to include: May 5, 2025, through May 11, 2025; June 2, 2025, through June 8, 2025; November 10, 2025, through November 16, 2025; and December 1, 2025, through December 7, 2025. We reviewed the weekly restricted housing unit reports for total yard time and out-of-cell time.</p> <p>G. We reviewed mental health records of 100 incarcerated people placed in 10 EOP and CCCMS restricted housing units at the four selected prisons from June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025, and December 1, 2025, through December 7, 2025, to determine whether the incarcerated people were offered the minimum structured therapeutic hours as required by policy. Incarcerated people at the EOP level of care shall be offered 10 hours and people at the CCCMS level of care shall be offered 1.5 hours of treatment weekly.</p>
<p>4. Identify and evaluate any effects of the updated restricted housing unit regulations and policy on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Violence among the incarcerated population</li> <li>b. Violence against departmental staff</li> <li>c. Use-of-force incidents</li> <li>d. Number and type of offenses committed in prisons</li> </ul>	<p>A. We reviewed relevant regulations, policies, and procedures and compared the type of offenses that were subject to the former segregated housing unit terms to the current restricted housing unit terms.</p> <p>B. We interviewed staff on the effects of regulatory reform for restricted housing units compared to the former segregated housing units in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules violations and disciplinary actions</li> <li>• Changes in violence (increase or decrease) against incarcerated people in the general population and in restricted housing units</li> <li>• Changes in violence (increase or decrease) against staff by the general population and the restricted housing unit population</li> <li>• Use of force</li> </ul> <p>C. We interviewed 51 incarcerated people in restricted housing units at the four selected prisons regarding their perception on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes with the current restricted housing unit rules</li> <li>• Committing qualifying violations that either placed them in the former segregated housing units or current restricted housing units</li> <li>• Changes in violence against incarcerated people and against staff, if any</li> <li>• Changes in use of force, if any</li> </ul>

(Continued on next page.)

**Table A-1. Review Objectives and Methodology (continued)**

Review Objectives	Method
	<p>D. We obtained departmental data to evaluate the effects of the restricted housing unit regulations and policy statewide and for the four selected prisons. We reviewed data across a two-year period under the former segregated housing unit model from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2023, and a two-year period from November 1, 2023, through November 1, 2025, under the current restricted housing unit regulations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compared the change in number of offenses, by type, that resulted in segregated housing unit terms</li> <li>• Identified any significant increases or decreases in rules violations for offenses that were on the former segregated housing unit term list that are no longer included on the restricted housing unit term list</li> <li>• Identified any changes in use-of-force incidents</li> <li>• Identified changes in violence against incarcerated people and staff under the former segregated housing and current restricted housing unit model</li> </ul>
<p>5. Review and evaluate any other issues that are related to the special review</p>	<p>We did not identify any other issues during the course of our review.</p>

Source: Compiled by Office of the Inspector General auditing staff.

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## Appendix B

### Term Matrix Comparison

Table B-1. SHU and RHU Term Matrix Comparison

Offense	Former SHU Term Matrix			RHU Term Matrix
	Low Term (Months)	Expected Term (Months)	High Term (Months)	Set Term (Months/Days)
<b>Homicide</b>				
Murder, attempted murder, solicitation of murder, or voluntary manslaughter of a non-incarcerated person.	12	20	28	10
Murder, attempted murder, solicitation of murder, or voluntary manslaughter of an incarcerated person.	8	12	16	6
<b>Violence Against Persons</b>				
Battery on a non-incarcerated person with a weapon capable of causing serious or mortal injury; caustic substance or other fluids capable of causing serious or mortal injury; or physical force causing serious injury.	18	30	42	15
Assault on a non-incarcerated person with a weapon, capable of causing serious or mortal injury; caustic substance or other fluids capable of causing serious or mortal injury.	9	15	21	7/15
Rape, sodomy, or oral copulation on a nonincarcerated person, or any attempt.	18	30	42	15
Battery on an incarcerated person with a weapon capable of causing serious or mortal injury; caustic substance or other fluids capable of causing serious or mortal injury or physical force causing serious injury.	12	18	24	9
Assault on an incarcerated person with a weapon capable of causing serious or mortal injury; caustic substance or other fluids capable of causing serious or mortal injury.	6	9	12	4/15
Rape, sodomy, or oral copulation on an incarcerated person accomplished against the incarcerated person's will, or any attempt.	12	18	24	9
Battery on a nonincarcerated person without serious injury.	6	12	18	6
Assault on a nonincarcerated person.	3	6	9	3
Battery on an incarcerated person without serious injury. (2 or more offenses within a 12 month period-the initial offense may be an offense listed within the subsection 3341.9(e)(1)-(2) or 1 with direct STG nexus).	2	4	6	Removed
Aggravated battery by means of gassing intentionally placing or throwing, or causing to be placed or thrown upon the person of a nonincarcerated person, any human excrement or bodily fluids or bodily substances, or any mixture containing human excrement or other bodily fluids or bodily substances, which results in actual contact with the person's skin or membranes.	12	20	28	10
Battery on an incarcerated person by means of gassing intentionally placing or throwing, or causing to be placed or thrown upon the person of an incarcerated person, any human excrement or bodily fluids or bodily substances, or any mixture containing human excrement or other bodily fluids or bodily substances, which results in actual contact with the person's skin or membranes.	8	12	16	6

(Continued on next page.)

**Table B-1. SHU and RHU Term Matrix Comparison (continued)**

Offense	Former SHU Term Matrix			RHU Term Matrix
	Low Term (Months)	Expected Term (Months)	High Term (Months)	Set Term (Months/Days)
<b>Extortion or Bribery</b>				
Extortion or bribery of a nonincarcerated person	4	8	12	Removed
Extortion or bribery of an incarcerated person	2	3	4	Removed
<b>Sexual Misconduct</b>				
Indecent exposure	3	6	9	Removed
Sexual disorderly conduct (2 or more offenses within a 12-month period. The initial offense may be any offense listed within the subsection 3341.9(e)(12))	3	6	9	Removed

Note: SHU stands for security housing unit. RHU stands for restricted housing unit.

Source: Office-of-the-Inspector-General-generated comparison of the relevant regulations in effect before November 1, 2023; California Code of Regulations title 15, section 3341.9, subdivision (e) and after November 1, 2023; California Code of Regulations title 15, section 3337, subdivision (g).

# The Department's Response to Our Report

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PO Box 942883  
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001



5/8/2026

Ms. Amarik Singh  
Office of the Inspector General  
10111 Old Placerville Road, Suite 110  
Sacramento, CA 95827

Dear Ms. Singh:

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) would like to thank the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for the opportunity to review the draft report titled *Special Review: The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Implementation and Compliance With Reforms Governing Restricted Housing Units*. CDCR is committed to operating Restricted Housing Units (RHU) in a manner that is safe, humane, and aligned with the Department's rehabilitative mission. Many of the recommendations included in the report are reflected in the Department's newly approved RHU regulations that incorporate key reforms.

While the RHU's primary focus is establishing safety and stability, we are equally dedicated to providing ongoing structured therapeutic activities and mental health support. This approach keeps restricted housing centered on immediate risk while supporting a timely return to rehabilitative programming and institutional routines.

CDCR will continue to provide transparent monthly updates as these newly approved regulations take effect and shape our evolving RHU practices. The Department remains committed to operating RHU in a manner that promotes rehabilitation, dignity, and safety for both the incarcerated population and staff. CDCR values the partnership of oversight bodies, community organizations, and advocates who share the goal of a correctional system that is transparent, accountable, and focused on positive outcomes.

If you have any questions, contact me at (916) 323-6001.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
**Jeffrey Macomber**  
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JEFF MACOMBER  
Secretary

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**Special Review: The California Department of  
Corrections and Rehabilitation's Implementation  
and Compliance With Reforms Governing  
Restricted Housing Units**

*OIG Report N<sup>o</sup> SR-25-01*

**OFFICE of the  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

*Amarik K. Singh*  
Inspector General

*Shaun Spillane*  
Chief Deputy Inspector General

STATE of CALIFORNIA  
May 2026

**OIG**