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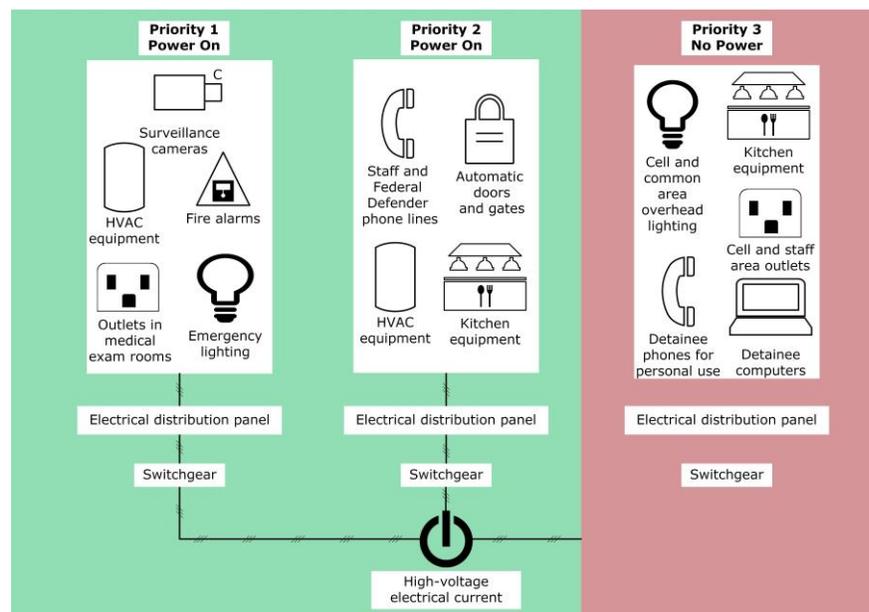
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DOJ OIG Releases Review and Inspection of Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Brooklyn Facilities Issues and Related Impacts on Inmates

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) announced today the release of a report assessing issues at the Bureau of Prison's (BOP) Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Brooklyn and the related impacts on inmates. On January 27, 2019, MDC Brooklyn experienced an electrical fire that caused a partial power outage in its West Building, which houses male inmates. Although the fire was contained soon after it began, the partial power outage lasted a full week—until Sunday, February 3. After the fire and during the power outage, there were widespread concerns about heating in the facility and the overall conditions of confinement for inmates. On February 7, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated this inspection of the effects of the fire and partial power outage at MDC Brooklyn. The OIG found:

- **The partial power outage did not affect the institution's ability to generate heat, but long-standing temperature regulation issues caused temperatures to drop below the BOP target of 68 degrees Fahrenheit before, during, and after the power outage.**

The partial power outage affected certain utilities such as kitchen equipment, cell and common area overhead lighting, and detainee phones and computers. However, it did not affect priority utilities including the HVAC system, heat, automatic doors and gates, surveillance cameras, emergency lights, and fire alarms.



Nevertheless, the OIG determined that MDC Brooklyn lacks the proper equipment to continuously monitor temperatures throughout the building. As a result, MDC Brooklyn facilities staff cannot make timely adjustments to the facility's heating and cooling system. BOP records indicate that temperatures in one housing unit were as low as 59 degrees the week before the power outage

and as low as 64 degrees during the power outage. We also found that temperatures in certain housing units exceeded 80 degrees after the power outage.

- **MDC Brooklyn and BOP management took steps to ensure the safety and security of inmates during the power outage.** The Warden secured inmates in cells for extended periods to maintain safety and appropriately notified BOP regional and headquarters management about the situation at the facility.
- **MDC Brooklyn and BOP management inadequately managed other aspects of the situation.** First, while medical rounds continued during the week of the power outage, MDC Brooklyn and the BOP did not effectively address two medical issues.

Second, prison officials did not effectively communicate with stakeholders their decision to suspend legal and social visiting during the power outage. This was particularly problematic in view of the facility's population of pretrial detainees, some of whom may require daily access to counsel to prepare for trial. Similarly, prison officials did not effectively communicate the conditions of confinement at the facility in the aftermath of the fire. This contributed to confusion about the nature of the situation at the facility, which in turn, contributed to inmate disruptions inside the prison, protests outside the prison, multiple judicial actions, congressional scrutiny, and rumors and speculation about the seriousness of conditions at the facility.

The report released today makes nine recommendations to ensure that the BOP is better able to minimize the effect that future facilities issues and disruptive events have on inmates at MDC Brooklyn and other BOP institutions. BOP agreed with all of these recommendations.

Report: Today's report is available on the OIG's website at the following link:
<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2019/e1904.pdf>.

Video: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 2-minute video featuring the Inspector General summarizing the report's findings. The video and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/video-09-26-19.htm>.

Related OIG Work: Today's report is among several other OIG reviews and investigations related to MDC Brooklyn, including a 2015 report on [MDC Brooklyn's management of its Special Programs Unit](#), a 2018 report on [BOP's management of its female inmate population](#), and a recent [criminal investigation into sexual assaults](#) by two lieutenants and one correctional officer against female inmates between 2013 and 2016. As of September 2019, all three of these former employees have been convicted.

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