



# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

## U.S. Department of Justice

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### DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Monitoring of Contract Prisons

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) announced today the release of a report examining the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) efforts to monitor the safety and security of privately operated institutions, or "contract prisons." As part of this review, the OIG assessed data from 14 contract prisons and compared it to similar data from BOP-operated institutions from fiscal years (FY) 2011 through 2014. Our review found that, in most key areas, contract prisons incurred more safety and security incidents per capita than comparable BOP institutions, and that the BOP needs to improve how it monitors contract prisons in several areas.



The BOP uses contract prisons primarily to confine low security, criminal alien, adult males. As of December 2015, contract prisons housed roughly 22,660 of these federal inmates, or about 12 percent of the BOP's total inmate population. The BOP's contract prisons, the cost of which grew from approximately \$562 million in FY 2011 to \$639 million in FY 2014, are operated by three private corporations: Corrections Corporation of America (CCA); GEO Group, Inc. (GEO); and Management and Training Corporation (MTC). In recent years, disturbances in several contract prisons have resulted in extensive property damage, bodily injury, and a Correctional Officer's death.

The OIG's specific findings in the report released today include:

- **Contract prisons had more safety and security-related incidents per capita than BOP institutions for most of the indicators we analyzed.** To evaluate how the contract prisons performed relative to BOP institutions, we analyzed data from 14 contract prisons and 14 BOP institutions with similar population sizes, geographical locations, and security levels. We compared data in eight key areas that were relevant to the American Correctional Association's standards and were tracked by both the contract prisons and the BOP. We found that contract prisons had more frequent incidents per

capita of contraband finds, assaults, uses of force, lockdowns, guilty findings on inmate discipline charges, and selected categories of grievances. For example, the contract prisons confiscated eight times as many contraband cell phones annually on average as the BOP institutions, and they had higher rates of assaults, both by inmates on other inmates and by inmates on staff. Contract prisons had fewer incidents per capita of positive drug tests and sexual misconduct. We believe that the BOP needs to examine the reasons behind our findings more thoroughly and identify corrective actions, if necessary.

- **In some instances, the BOP identified serious or systemic safety and security deficiencies at contract prisons.** For example, between FY 2011 and FY 2014, the BOP cited all three of the contract prisons at which we conducted site visits during this review for one or more safety and security deficiencies. Some of these infractions were administrative in nature, but others were serious or systemic, such as one contract prison that, over a 6-month period, failed to initiate discipline in over 50 percent of the incidents reviewed by BOP onsite monitors. In each of these cases, the contractors corrected the deficiencies, and the BOP determined that the prison was sufficiently compliant with the safety and security aspects of its contract to continue operations.
- **Two of our three contract prisons we visited were improperly housing new inmates in segregated Special Housing Units (SHUs).** SHUs are normally used for disciplinary or administrative segregation, yet we found that these two prisons were improperly housing new inmates there until beds became available in general population housing. When the OIG discovered this practice, we brought it to the attention of the BOP Director, who immediately directed all 14 contract prisons to remove from the SHU any inmate not subject to administrative detention or disciplinary segregation, and instead place them in the general population.
- **The BOP's onsite monitoring of contract prisons needs improvement.** We identified two principle areas of concern with the BOP's multilayered approach to monitoring contract prisons. First, the checklist that the BOP's onsite monitors use to monitor day-to-day contract compliance does not sufficiently address some important health services and correctional services requirements, such as whether inmates are receiving certain basic medical services and whether certain areas of the prison are appropriately searched. Second, the onsite monitoring of health services for contract compliance is not well coordinated with BOP staff responsible for health services oversight. The issues we identified make the BOP's day-to-day, onsite monitoring less effective in ensuring that the BOP's contract prisons are meeting the BOP's requirements for health and correctional services.

The report released today makes four recommendations to the BOP to improve monitoring and oversight efforts, and to help ensure contract prisons are, and remain, a safe and secure place to house federal inmates. The BOP agreed with all of the recommendations.

**Report:** Today's report is available on the OIG's website at the following link:  
<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/e1606.pdf>.

**Multimedia:** To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 3-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/>.

**Related OIG Reviews:** The report released today is one of several completed or ongoing audits and reviews that the OIG is conducting of DOJ contract prisons. These include our April 2015 report on the Reeves County Detention Center in Pecos, Texas, which is available [here](#), and our ongoing audits of the Adams County Correctional Center in Natchez, Mississippi (a BOP facility) and the Leavenworth Detention Center (a U.S. Marshal's Service facility), which are described [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.