

Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures

17.2 Searching correctional centres

Policy summary

Effective searching of correctional centres and correctional complexes is important in the maintenance of safety, security, good order and discipline. Searching reduces potential threats to staff and other inmates.

Correctional centre searching disrupts and discourages the introduction of contraband, and minimises the amount of property and buy-up goods in cells.

Daily, weekly and monthly searches must be conducted in all correctional centres as well as unannounced cell searches outside of core business hours.

Management of Public Correctional Centres Service Specifications

Service specifications	Safety and security
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Scope

This section applies to all correctional centres and other facilities administered by or on behalf of Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW), and all CSNSW employees and all CSNSW employees.

For Security & Intelligence (S&I) staff, this policy must be read in conjunction with S&I Local Operating Procedures (LOPs).

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1 Searching correctional centres

1.1 Wing officer searches and checks

The Officer in Charge (OIC) of the accommodation area or authorised officer must ensure minimum of six cells or dormitory cubicles (selected at random) are searched each day. It is preferable (but not mandatory) for the inmate to be present during these random cell searches.

The purpose of the search is to detect any items which could pose a threat to the safety of any inmate or staff member or to the security, good order and discipline of the correctional centre. During a search excess or unauthorised property can be identified and confiscated. Staff should also identify and resolve any hygiene, property, or maintenance issues.

Searching also reduces the opportunity for hoarding or trading of medication (**refer to COPP section 6.8 Medications**).

All bars, grilles, bolts, locks, internal fences and gates should be inspected weekly (**refer to COPP section 16.14 Daily security reporting**).

Details of the cell searches must be recorded in the Offender Integrated Management System (OIMS). If OIMS is not accessible, the details of the cells searched must be recorded in the *Inmate accommodation journal*. The information must be updated in OIMS once the system becomes available.

1.2 Procedures for wing officer searches and checks

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Ensure sure a minimum of 6 cells or cubicles are searched every day.	Functional Manager (FM)
2.	Examine all bars and grilles, doors and locks weekly in the wing for signs of tampering, deformity, wear, rust or other defects. Log results in the <i>Inmate accommodation journal</i> and inform the FM immediately any defects are identified.	Searching officer
3.	Identify any sign of interference or damage to a security fixture or electronic security device discovered during the search. Report the issue to the FM immediately.	OIC search
4.	Search common rooms or recreational areas within the wing periodically.	Searching officer
5.	Confiscate any excess medication from an inmate's cell. Forward the medication to the Nursing Unit Manager (NUM) who will advise the Manager of Security (MOS) or FM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if the medication was prescribed to the inmate and• if the quantity found indicates hoarding.	Searching officer

	Procedure	Responsibility
6.	If doubt exists that an inmate is entitled to possess a certain item confiscate it. The item can be returned to the inmate if it is later found they are authorised to be in possession of the item.	Searching officer
7.	Identify any defect or maintenance issue. Submit a <i>Maintenance request sheet</i> to the Facilities Maintenance Officer and report the issue to the FM if the issue could affect the operation of the centre.	FM
8.	Make sure that repairs are carried out within a reasonable period of time.	FM
9.	Note any defect or maintenance issue on the <i>Daily Security Report</i> (DSR).	FM
10.	Identify each cell/cubicle searched in the OIMS <i>Search Module</i> .	FM
11.	Enter the results of the search and record any unauthorised items in the <i>Items Found</i> section of the OIMS <i>Search Module</i> .	Searching officer
12.	Enter the details of any issues into an <i>Incident Reporting Module</i> (IRM).	Searching officer
13.	Submit a written <i>Misconduct Report</i> to the relevant FM.	Searching officer
14.	Note in the <i>Inmate accommodation journal</i> that a random search was conducted including the search number and that the details have been entered in OIMS.	FM

1.3 Procedures for monthly centre search

Each month an area of the correctional centre must be locked down and a targeted search conducted.

The monthly correctional centre search is in addition to the daily routine searching at the centre (which includes cell, wing/accommodation, workshop and other common areas).

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Check that the same area is not targeted every month.	MOS/FM
2.	Make sure the method and timing of the search is not predictable.	MOS/FM
3.	Do not give prior notice of the search to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctional centre staff • inmates or • visitors 	MOS/FM

	Procedure	Responsibility
4.	Examine all cell/wing bars and grilles for evidence of tampering or maintenance issues.	Searching officers
5.	Enter search details in the OIMS <i>Search Module</i> and <i>IRM</i> .	OIC search team
6.	Submit a <i>Misconduct Report</i> for any correctional centre offences.	Finding officer
7.	Make an entry in the <i>Inmate accommodation journal</i> confirming the monthly search has been carried out and the details have been recorded in the OIMS <i>Search Module</i> and <i>IRM</i> .	FM
8.	If OIMS is not available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure all details of the search are recorded in the <i>Inmate accommodation journal</i> update the OIMS Search Module with these details when the system becomes operational. 	OIC Accommodation FM

1.4 Use of CSNSW dogs and dog handlers during the monthly correctional centre search

Ordinarily, Security Operations Group (SOG) staff will not be deployed to assist in monthly correctional centre searches. However; the MOS/delegated officer may request the presence of a dog handler and dog to assist with the search.

The role of dog handlers is to:

- search for drugs and unauthorised property in correctional centres and
- search inmates' visitors, other visitors, and CSNSW staff when entering and leaving correctional centres.

1.5 Additional correctional centre searches

Additional correctional centre searches may be carried out at any time particularly if there is intelligence warranting a search, or there has been a change in the operations or routine of the centre (such as major construction activity). The Governor may seek assistance from the SOG to conduct these searches.

1.6 Procedures for perimeter patrols and searching

Electronic security systems alone cannot detect all security breaches, contraband, or unauthorised property on or around correctional centres. Correctional officers therefore must conduct perimeter patrols and searches before and after inmates are admitted to and removed from particular areas.

At maximum and medium correctional centres:

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Conduct random patrols of the external perimeter and adjoining areas each day.	Custodial staff
2.	Undertake internal perimeter patrols and searches as part of the centre's ordinary routine.	Custodial staff
3.	Conduct a search of areas adjoining and of inmate exercise areas/yards prior to inmates being granted access.	Search staff
4.	Complete an entry in the DSR that perimeter checks have been completed.	FM

1.7 Supervising officer's validation of searches and checks

On a monthly basis, the relevant FM or authorised officer as part of their DSR responsibilities must observe staff as they conduct cell/wing searches and security checks.

The authorised officer will record in the *Inmate accommodation journal* and the *Security compliance journal* that they observed and confirmed the searches in line with DSR requirements.

1.8 Targeted Cell Searches

Unless exceptional circumstances exist, the inmate must be present during a targeted or monthly search of their allocated cell.

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Ask the inmate to declare any unauthorised property or contraband.	Searching officer
2.	Refer to the inmate's OIMS property record to assist in the identification of unauthorised property.	Searching officer
3.	If an item, that may result in criminal charges, is located or surrendered during the search by the inmate caution the inmate by saying: <i>"I have found an item of non-prescribed property in your cell/property/other and I must advise that you do not have to answer my questions but that any answers given may be recorded and later relied upon in evidence."</i>	Searching officer
4.	Record any answers or comments in their contemporaneous notebook.	Searching officer
5.	Maintain the continuity of evidence in line with COPP section 13.8 Crime scene preservation if criminal charges are likely.	Searching officer/FM

1.9 Inmates' property not to impede cell searching

Clause 47(1) of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* requires an inmate to keep their property in a tidy and orderly manner so as not to impede a search of their cell.

The inmate may be charged with a correctional centre offence if they do not comply with this requirement. The quantity of property that an inmate keeps in their cell must not exceed such quantity as the Governor may determine. If it does, the Governor may authorise removal of as much property as is necessary to reduce the excess.

1.10 Prohibited or restricted items to be removed during cell searches

The searching officer must remove anything in the cell that, in their view, presents a risk to safety, security, or the good order and discipline of a correctional centre.

Items commonly found in correctional centres that are not permitted in cells and must be removed include:

- skipping ropes
- mops and brooms
- flammable or caustic material or liquid of any kind
- art and craft material (unless authorised in writing)
- empty cordial/soft drink or other similar containers.

Any hoarding of goods in a cell impedes effective searches and is a risk to the security of the correctional centre. The frequency and availability of buy-ups is such that inmates are not permitted to hoard or keep unreasonable amounts of buy-up purchases in their cell (**refer to COPP section 8.14 Buy-ups**).

Any religious or devotional texts found during a cell search must be checked against the list of approved texts (available on Koha via the centre's library) and, if not approved, handed to the centre Chaplain for further processing.

1.11 Discovery of non-prescribed property

	Procedure	Responsibility
1.	Take possession of the article and notify the FM.	Searching officer
2.	If a mobile telephone is found deliver it immediately to the MOS/Delegated officer (refer to COPP section 14.3 Mobile phone offences).	Searching officer
3.	Caution the inmate by saying: <i>"I have found an item of non-prescribed property in your cell/property/other and I must advise that you do not have to answer my questions but that any answers given may be recorded and later relied upon in evidence."</i>	Searching officer

	Procedure	Responsibility
4.	Question the inmate and make note of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exact location of item found including time and date • item(s) description - photograph the contraband in situ if appropriate • inmate's details and • anything said by the inmate in relation to the item(s). 	Searching officer
5.	Hand all confiscated item(s) to a senior officer. If criminal charges are likely maintain continuity of evidence (refer to COPP sections 13.8 Crime scene preservation and 13.11 Discovery and disposal of drugs).	Searching officer
6.	Complete relevant reports including the IRM in OIMS.	Searching officer
7.	Notify the SOG or the Corrections Intelligence Group (CIG) if considered necessary.	MOS/Delegated officer

1.12 Cell searches outside of core business hours

Governors must ensure that cell searching outside of core business hours is conducted. This further minimises opportunities for inmates to be in possession of illicit substances and conduct drug related activities in correctional centres.

The FM Intelligence must maintain a list of targeted inmates known or suspected of drug related activities. A list of randomly selected cells to be searched can be made from within this target group of inmates.

These cell searches must be recorded on the OIMS *Search Module*. Local records must also be updated on any search that is conducted outside of core hours.

Inmate property must be thoroughly searched on reception into custody. During intake all property must be processed in line with procedures **(refer to COPP section 4.1 Property on reception)**. Property must not be left unsupervised if there any inmates are in the reception room. Regular searches should be conducted of inmates employed in reception rooms, including their bags.

2 Quick links

- [Related COPP](#)
- [Forms and annexures](#)
- [Related documents](#)

3 Definitions

Authorised officer	The officer authorised by the Governor to perform the functions prescribed as part of the Custodial Policy and Procedures.
CIG	Corrections Intelligence Group
COPP	Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures
CSI	Corrective Services Industries
CSNSW	Corrective Services NSW
DSR	Daily Security Reporting
Delegated officer	Any officer who occupies or acts in the following positions which the Governor has delegated certain Governor's functions to deal with correctional centre offences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manager of Security• Functional Manager.
FM	Functional Manager
IRM	Incident Reporting Module
LOPs	Local Operating Procedures
MOS	Manager of Security
NUM	Nursing Unit Manager
OIC	Officer in Charge
OIMS	Offender Integrated Management System
S&I	Security and Intelligence, a branch of CSNSW
SOG	Security Operations Group

4 Document information

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Version	Date	Reason for amendment
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1.0		Initial publication (<i>replaces section 12.4 of the superseded Operations Procedures Manual</i>)
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1.1	12/03/20	General formatting update and improvements
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1.2	15/12/20	Addition at 1.10 <i>Prohibited or restricted items to be removed during cell searches</i> to include procedures for religious or devotional texts
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