



CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Institutional Security Levels



Information contained in this publication or product may be reproduced, in part or in whole, and by any means, for personal or public non-commercial purposes, without charge or further permission, unless otherwise specified.

You are asked to:

- exercise due diligence in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced;
- indicate both the complete title of the materials reproduced, as well as the author organization; and
- indicate that the reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada and that the reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.

Commercial reproduction and distribution is prohibited except with written permission from Correctional Service Canada. For more information, please contact at: canada.ca/correctional-service.

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Public Safety Canada, 2024

Cat. No.

ISBN PS84-237/2024E-PDF

978-0-660-71009-9

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Institutional Security Levels





The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) administers adult sentences of two years or more and manages correctional institutions of various security levels (maximum, medium, minimum, and multi-level).

After being sentenced by a judge, offenders normally transfer from a provincial jail to a federal institution managed by CSC. Offenders then have an intake assessment in a CSC reception centre or an assessment unit. Staff evaluate offenders to determine their risk, security level and needs for intervention. The information and assessments form the offenders' individualized **! correctional plan**. After this, offenders are placed in a federal institution that matches their security level (maximum, medium or minimum). As per the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, CSC takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the penitentiary in which offenders are confined is one that provides them with the least restrictive environment consistent with the protection of society, staff members and offenders.



A correctional plan is the document which outlines what should happen during an offender's sentence. It sets out objectives for the offender's behaviour as well as programs and interventions required to reduce risk. It is also used to continuously assess an offender's progress during their sentence.

An offender's security level is based on three factors:

- behaviour and ability to adjust to a certain institutional setting
- probability of escape
- risk to public safety in the event they escape

CSC regularly reassesses offenders, normally at least once every two years, to ensure they are in institutions of the appropriate security level. CSC can also review an offender's security level outside established timeframes if there is an increase and/or decrease in risk.

To help offenders become law-abiding citizens, CSC gradually moves them from higher to lower security level institutions. This allows offenders to show more responsible behaviour and prepares them for an eventual release to the community.

In all CSC institutions:

- Staff interact and communicate daily with offenders.
- All offenders have access to and are expected to participate in various programs and interventions. This may include correctional programs, educational programs, institutional employment, vocational training, social programs, chaplaincy/spiritual services, cultural interventions, mental health interventions. The needs for such programming and interventions are identified based on the objectives outlined in an offender's correctional plan. These interventions help offenders gain skills, knowledge, and experience, teach accountability and assist in transitioning those offenders who will return to the community.
- Offenders are allowed to have some personal items in their cells and are responsible for keeping their living space clean.

CSC is committed to ensuring that gender-diverse offenders receive gender-appropriate care and supervision regardless of the type of institution in which they are incarcerated. Throughout their sentence, they may be placed in a men's or a women's institution, according to their gender identity or expression, if this is their preference, and there are no overriding health, safety or security concerns.


MEN'S MAXIMUM SECURITY Institutions



Edmonton Institution

Maximum security institutions for men provide a highly structured living environment for offenders who generally have difficulties adjusting to the institutional setting, who require significant interventions, a high degree of control within the institution and direct supervision. The security features of the institution are designed to provide a high degree of safety to the public for offenders who are considered a high risk for escape.

- Very structured living environment with a strict routine.
- Many physical barriers to control offender movement within the institution.
- Fenced perimeter with frequent perimeter patrols outside of the fence.
- Regular security patrols and offender counts.

- Interactions between offenders take place in smaller groups.
- Prepares offenders for medium security.
- Offenders are expected to follow their correctional plan and meet behavioural expectations.
- Offenders who pose an ongoing danger to others and cannot be safely managed in maximum security institutions may be transferred to the  **Special Handling Unit.**



The Special Handling Unit is for those offenders who pose an ongoing danger to staff, other inmates, or the public, and who cannot be safely managed at any other maximum security institution.

MEN'S MEDIUM SECURITY Institutions



Grande Cache Institution

Medium security institutions for men have similar security features as maximum. While some offenders may still pose a moderate or high risk to the safety of the public, they generally present a lower probability of escape and they have demonstrated the capacity to interact effectively with others. They can be managed with fewer restrictions on their daily movements, interactions, activities, and require a moderate degree of supervision and control within the institution.

- Structured environment with similar security safeguards as maximum security.
- Some physical barriers within the institution to limit movement, and offender association between institutional buildings.
- Fenced perimeter on the outside.

- Regular security patrols and offender counts.
- Correctional Officers have access to security equipment which can be used at the institution and when escorting offenders outside the institution, to ensure everyone's safety.
- Offenders are expected to co-operate with others and demonstrate responsible behaviour.
- Offenders are expected to interact regularly with their Parole Officer and follow their correctional plan.
- Offenders who are eligible can prepare for **structured releases** that support rehabilitation and help prepare for a transfer to a minimum security institution.



Examples of structured releases are Escorted Temporary Absences, Unescorted Temporary Absences, Work Releases, Day Parole, Full Parole and Statutory Release.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RELEASES, VISIT:



canada.ca/correctional-service-victims



In maximum and medium security institutions for men, offenders normally have a single cell with a bed, desk, shelves, sink and toilet. When single cell accommodation is not possible, offenders can share a cell. Their cells are on a range (corridor), and multiple ranges are in a living unit/building. Living units have a shared kitchenette, showers, telephones, washers/dryers and common rooms (for meals and/or free time). Living units have central areas where Correctional Officers monitor activity to ensure safe and controlled movements at all times.





MEN'S MINIMUM SECURITY Institutions



Minimum security institutions for men provide a lower degree of supervision and control within the institution as offenders need less structure and monitoring due to low security concerns and escape risk, and as they move towards community reintegration, if applicable.

- A responsibility-based environment with fewer physical restrictions, which supports the safe reintegration of offenders back into the community.
- Ability to move within the institution and between institutional buildings.
- Open environment unfenced but clearly defined, which is monitored but not directly controlled by correctional staff.
- Regular security patrols and offender counts.
- Correctional Officers have access to security equipment, which they can use as needed.
- Offenders are expected to interact regularly with their Parole Officer and follow their correctional plan in order to continue preparing for different forms of structured releases, if applicable.

Most offenders living in minimum security institutions for men share a housing unit with several others. They normally have single rooms with shared bathrooms and kitchens. This shared and independent living space helps them budget and plan. They are given a weekly food budget (per diem allocation) to choose their foods from the institutional grocery list. They are responsible for purchasing and preparing their own meals.



WOMEN'S Institutions



Women's institutions are multi-level (maximum, medium and minimum security). Women offenders assessed as maximum security live in a traditional single cell/room. Women offenders assessed as medium or minimum security live in housing units, with separate bedrooms and shared living spaces. They can also live in a Structured Living Environment, which is a specialized mental health support unit. Women's needs are addressed in a **!** gender and **!** trauma-informed way.



Gender-informed: Women offenders have unique needs and considerations that impact their response to corrections. Accordingly, CSC developed and implemented gender-responsive/informed programs, interventions and practices that acknowledge the social, economic, and cultural situation women face.



Trauma-informed: Trauma and abuse are significant factors in the life histories of federally sentenced women. While all programs do not necessarily need to address history of abuse, women-focused specialists recommend that gender-responsive programs provide women with an opportunity to acknowledge the impact of trauma. Trauma-informed services require knowledge about violence against women and its impact. Trauma-informed services take trauma into account, avoid retriggering trauma reactions, adjust the behaviour of counsellors and other staff to support the women offender's coping capacity, and allow survivors to manage their trauma symptoms so that they can benefit from these services.



Nova Institution for Women

Women institutions offer the Mother-Child Program, which, if eligible, allows children to stay with their mothers while they are serving their sentence. At women's institutions, specialized staff provide **!** **holistic** correctional programs, interventions, services, support, and supervision that is specific to the needs of women. Correctional Officers (known as Primary Workers in women's institutions) have access to many types of security equipment.



Holistic: A culturally sensitive, gender- and trauma-informed approach to address the specific needs of women.

All women's institutions are multi-level. This approach stems from specific recommendations of the 1990 Creating Choices task force pertaining to women's facilities.



EXAMPLE OF A DAILY ROUTINE



MORNING/ AFTERNOON

- Offenders may participate in programs (e.g., correctional, education, social or Indigenous programs) or work. They are encouraged to participate in programs to gain the knowledge, skills and training needed to maintain a crime-free lifestyle upon release.
- Offenders may have scheduled visits with family or friends (in person or by video), meet with their Parole Officers, participate in recreational activities, visit the library, attend chaplaincy/spiritual services or the Indigenous centre.
- Offenders may have scheduled appointments with institutional health care staff.
- Offenders may participate in specialized training and certification programs (e.g., Forklift Trainer, Heavy Equipment Operator Training) or apprenticeship programs to help them obtain employment upon release. This is available based the offender's needs and security considerations.

AN OFFENDER'S SCHEDULE IS BASED ON THE INSTITUTION'S OPERATIONAL ROUTINE AND THE LEVEL OF SECURITY



EVENING/ WEEKEND

- Offenders have time for personal development workshops, social programs, hobby craft activities, or self-help groups with volunteers from the community (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous).
- Offenders also have access to the common rooms, gymnasium, and yard as well as Indigenous or ethnocultural activities.
- Offenders may have scheduled visits with family or friends (in person or by video), participate in leisure activities, visit the library, attend chaplaincy/spiritual services or the Indigenous centre.

Correctional Programs are structured interventions that target risk factors directly linked to criminal behaviour to reduce reoffending. CSC offers different correctional programs for men, women, and Indigenous offenders.

Social programs are structured and unstructured interventions and activities that help offenders learn important skills, make positive social connections and healthy life choices, and address issues related to community living and employment.

Unstructured activities include, but are not limited to, leisure and recreational activities, hobby craft, cultural activities, sports, and library services. These are important activities for offenders to make constructive use of their time and maintain a balanced and productive lifestyle during their sentence, which in turn makes the correctional environment safer for all.

HEALING Lodges



Willow Cree Healing Lodge

Healing Lodges are Indigenous-centric facilities designed specifically for offenders following an Indigenous path with culturally responsive services and programs based on Indigenous values, traditions, beliefs, with a focus on healing and connection with Indigenous culture and ceremony. Healing lodges provide offenders with a holistic environment to address the factors that led to their incarceration and assist in preparing them to transition back into society by connecting them to nature, participating in cultural ceremonies, spiritual teachings, spiritual guidance from Elders and maintaining connections with families and communities.

There are two ways healing lodges operate: either as a facility funded and operated by CSC or funded by CSC and managed by a community partners organization through agreements under Section 81 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. There are healing lodges specific to men and separate healing lodges for women.

TREATMENT Centres



Ontario Regional Treatment Centre

Treatment Centres are multi-level security institutions in each of CSC's five regions that operate as accredited psychiatric facilities. Offenders living in these institutions need specialized services due to a mental disorder, cognitive impairment and/or physical disability, or require specialized assessments.



For more information, visit:
canada.ca/correctional-service-victims

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
canada.ca/correctional-service



Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

Search Canada.ca

English

MENU

Canada.ca

Correctional Service Canada

The Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is responsible for managing institutions of various security levels and supervising offenders under conditional release in the community.

Read the latest news

Most requested

- Work at Correctional Service Canada
- Find information about institutions

- Communicate with an inmate
- Situational Judgement Test preparation guide

Information for victims

Register as a victim, visit the Victims Portal, learn about victim statements, notification and how to file a complaint.

Information for friends and families of offenders

Learn about the correctional process, visit an offender, resources for families of offenders through the Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN)

Facilities and security

Addresses and contact information for CSC facilities. Learn about security classifications and security measures which keep staff and visitors safe.