



NOV 14 2017

MR. KIERON TESTART
MLA, KAM LAKE

Oral Question 24-18(3): North Slave Correctional Complex Security Concerns

On October 18, 2017 you asked questions in the Legislative Assembly regarding the training officer position within the Corrections Service, safety issues and the management of overtime at North Slave Correctional Center (NSCC).

I committed to confirm that there are sufficient resources to coordinate, plan and execute training for the Corrections Service. There is currently one full time indeterminate Training Officer Position. The responsibilities of this position are to establish and coordinate training and activities for Corrections and Probation Officers in partnership with Wardens and Regional Community Corrections Managers. At times, the Training Officer also facilitates training delivery. The Training Officer has access to and utilizes numerous Corrections staff that are qualified to provide training across the NWT. These trainers facilitate the Corrections Northern Recruitment Training Program, self-defense/arrest and control, first aid/CPR as well as numerous other training initiatives. Outside contractors are also utilized to meet the Division's training needs. I am confident that with these measures in place, the Correctional Service is sufficiently able to meet its training requirements.

I also committed to looking into whether the use of Correctional Officers in the supervision of inmates during recreation time is compromising officer safety. At the NSCC, there are two staff assigned to a living unit. Staff from the units can be utilized at any time to provide relief, emergency response, escort duties and supervision for any activity outside the unit. Furthermore, adequate backup, provided by security staff and any other available staff, is readily available in the facility 24/7 for any unsafe or emergency situations. Correctional Officers are equipped with a radio and have been trained in self-defense, arrest and control. The facility is also equipped with a central control post to monitor all inmate and staff movement through rotating cameras on the compound including living units. The unit officer can transmit the need for assistance at any time via radio communication. With these resource levels and backup measures in place, I am confident that officer safety is not being compromised.

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You had inquired about the existence of a dedicated emergency response team. All Corrections Officers are trained to use a wide variety of intervention options to deal with incidents and emergencies as they occur. This includes violence prevention and de-escalation training, which is ongoing at NSCC. The Correctional Centre has sufficient staff trained for safe removal of inmates and incident response. Furthermore, trained negotiators are also utilized to defuse and de-escalate incidents, when and if required. While a dedicated emergency response team does not exist, NSCC staff are always available to respond to emergency situations and incidents safely and effectively.

Finally, I committed to looking into the concerns you raised regarding officers being sent home to avoid overtime. I can assure you there are adequate staffing levels in the facility during each shift. The supervisor on each shift ensures adequate staff coverage is maintained and may need to use overtime to ensure this happens. However, depending on the circumstances, the overtime requirement might not be for an entire shift and therefore the individual would be sent home.

I appreciate the questions you have raised. The Department of Justice takes employee safety and financial stewardship seriously. If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. In a more confidential setting, I would be pleased to provide you with further information detailing operational procedures and security measures in place to ensure the safe custody of inmates and the safety of staff.



Louis Sebert
Minister of Justice

c. Mr. Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Martin Goldney, Deputy Minister, Justice

Mr. David Hastings, Legislative Coordinator