



ARIZONA STATE SENATE

Forty-ninth Legislature, First Regular Session

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Arizona Department of Corrections: Correctional Officer Ratios

Background

Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) is charged with preserving the safety of communities and crime victims by maintaining and securing the state's ten non-private correctional facilities. In addition, ADC provides programming that aims to reintegrate offenders in preparation for their release while reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

Correctional Officer (Officer) positions are divided into four categories:

- CO I – These are Officers in the Correctional Officer Training Academy (COTA). They do not supervise inmates.
- CO II – Upon graduation from COTA, an Officer becomes a CO II and directly supervises inmates.
- CO III – These Officers can be referred to as "case workers." They are responsible for managing release packets, classification hearings, inmate grievances, visitation packets, legal visits/calls, etc.
- CO IV – These Officers supervise the CO III's.
- Sergeant – These Officers are the first line supervisors/shift commanders. They supervise the on-duty Officers.

Ratios may vary as the staffing of posts is determined according to the design of each facility as well as the inmate population at a given time. Factors considered by ADC in determining the staffing levels for its facilities are:

- Security risks.
- Impact on the surrounding community.
- Prison infrastructure, such as the number of beds, the local water supply and sewer capabilities, the adequacy of kitchen equipment for feeding the population in shifts, and how easily the design of the complex permits the secure movement of inmate groups and staff.
- Medical, mental health, and special education requirements of the population.
- Custody level of each inmate (i.e., minimum, medium, close and maximum).

Other factors

As part of the ADC Healthcare Program, if an inmate is in need of a hospital visit, an Officer is provided for treatment supervision. However, the number of Officers depends on the security level of the inmate. For instance, inmates classified as Level 5 (maximum security) require two armed officers posted at all times. As inmate populations age, more emergency transports are needed, as well as more staffing at hospitals.

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Additional considerations in Officer staffing that affect ratios are leave hours taken (annual, sick, military, etc.), pre-service training and temporary absences for in-service and other types of training.

Fiscal Information

A January 2009 Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) Fiscal Highlights report notes that the ADC inmate population increased by an average of 69 inmates per month between October and December 2008. ADC now has an average population of 39,495 inmates, or 1,828 more inmates than in the same period last year. (This includes inmates incarcerated in facilities not operated by ADC, such as county jails and private prisons.) As of February 5, 2009, the total inmate population in state-operated prisons was 31,273. This constitutes a ratio of Correctional Officer II positions to inmates at 1 to 5.95.

Committee Activity

The Judiciary Committee met on February 9, 2009, and heard two presentations on Correctional Officer Ratios: 1) an overview of the Chairmen's Options for ADC's FY 2009-2010 budget from JLBC and 2) a program presentation from ADC, including the factors that determine ratios in ADC-operated facilities.

There was no public testimony and no Committee recommendations.

Prepared by Senate Research

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DPH/jas