

DEFINITIONS

15-minute Observation: Physical observation of an individual at staggered intervals not to exceed every 15 minutes.

30-minute Observation: Physical observation of an individual at staggered intervals not to exceed every 30 minutes.

Constant Observation: Continuous physical observation of an individual.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT): A team comprised of the Superintendent or designee, and representatives from casework staff, facility management and security, and the contracted healthcare provider.

Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP): A term defined by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), which includes psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric social worker, psychiatric nurse, and others who, by their education, credentials, and experience, are permitted by law to evaluate and care for the mental health needs of patients.

Qualified Health Care Professional (QHCP): Any person who by virtue of their education, credentials and experience is permitted by law to evaluate and care for patients. This includes physicians, physicians' assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, and mental health professionals.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

There may be situations that require observations of incarcerated individuals to occur at increased intervals. When this occurs, facility staff shall follow the specific procedures, in accordance with this policy.

A. Determining Observation Levels

1. When a security-related situation arises, and facility staff determine that an incarcerated individual requires increased observation, the Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor (CFSS), or designee, shall:
 - a. Determine the appropriate level at which the incarcerated individual is monitored (e.g., 15-minutes, 30-minutes, or constant); and

- b. Assign a facility staff member who shall observe the individual:
 - i. At staggered intervals; or
 - ii. Continuously, if constant observation is required.
 2. When an incarcerated individual presents with a physical health or wellness need, a Qualified Healthcare Professional (QHCP) shall determine:
 - a. If the individual requires increased observation by facility staff; and
 - b. The appropriate level at which the assigned facility staff shall monitor an incarcerated individual (e.g., 15-minute, 30-minute, or constant).
 3. When an incarcerated individual presents with a mental health or wellness need, a Qualified Mental Healthcare Professional (QMHP) shall determine:
 - a. If the individual requires increased observation by facility staff; and
 - b. The appropriate level at which the assigned facility staff shall monitor an incarcerated individual (e.g., 15-minute, 30-minute, or constant), in accordance with the policy on suicide prevention and response to self-injurious incarcerated individuals.
 4. The Living Unit Supervisor (LUS), or assigned facility staff, shall coordinate the incarcerated individual's housing unit placement. The LUS, or assigned facility staff, may consider any recommendations from the QHCP or QMHP when establishing the individual's housing placement.

B. Completing Observations

1. At the start of each shift, the Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor (CFSS) shall:
 - a. Review the list of incarcerated individuals who are placed on observations;
 - b. Review any updates from the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) including anything that may impact the facility staff assigned to complete the observations;
 - c. Ensure that the assigned facility staff complete the observations, and follow the appropriate documenting procedures during their shifts that are described below; and
 - d. Document any concerns regarding the observations, in accordance with the policy on incident reporting.

2. If a language barrier is identified, facility staff shall follow their facilities' local procedures to ensure that the incarcerated individual has access to interpreters, as needed.
3. The assigned facility staff shall complete the following physical observation procedures during their shift:
 - a. Review the list of incarcerated individuals in the unit who are on observations;
 - b. Visually monitor the incarcerated individual's behavior and general condition, in accordance with the observation level determined by the appropriate facility staff, QHCP, or QMHP;
 - i. The assigned facility staff shall:
 - a) Ensure that the incarcerated individual is not under duress, engaging in self-harm, or otherwise unauthorized behavior; and
 - b) Verify signs of life (e.g., rise and fall of the chest, movement of the body).
 - ii. The facility staff may use closed-circuit television monitoring as a supplement to, but never a substitute for, the physical monitoring.
 - iii. When facility staff are a different gender than the incarcerated individual they are assigned to observe at either 15 or 30-minute intervals, they shall confirm that a different gender announcement was documented in the logbook. If the announcement was not documented, the facility staff shall ensure a different gender announcement is made and documented in the logbook.
 - iv. When facility staff are a different gender than an incarcerated individual for whom a QMHP determines constant observation is required they shall, because of the vulnerability of an incarcerated individual who may be in a state of undress (e.g., bathrooming, showering), actively seek an appropriate facility staff member of the same gender as the incarcerated individual to assume responsibility for the monitoring as soon as practicable. Facility staff shall document their efforts to assign a facility staff member of the same gender as the incarcerated individual in the individual's incident report;

- c. Visually inspect the cell walls and window which are visible through the cell door window to ensure that they are intact and appear secure; and
 - d. Document the incarcerated individual's behavior and general condition by tracking their observations.
 - i. When facility staff are conducting constant observations, they shall document their observations, in accordance with the documenting procedures that are used for observations that are conducted at 15-minute staggered intervals.
 - ii. If an incarcerated individual is in a restrictive housing unit, the facility staff shall also make an entry in the post logbook indicating which incarcerated individual in that unit is on observations. When the individual is removed from observations, they shall update the log and sign the updated entry.
 - e. If the incarcerated individual requires increased observation because they are on suicide precautions, the assigned facility staff shall follow the specific observation procedures including offering a meeting with an open ears coach and documenting whether an open ears coach met with the individual, in accordance with the policy on suicide prevention and response to self-injurious incarcerated individuals.
4. Each facility Superintendent, or designee, shall coordinate a meeting each business day with a multidisciplinary team (MDT) comprised of the Superintendent, or designee, and representatives from casework staff, facility security, and the healthcare contractor. The MDT shall use this time to discuss the status of incarcerated individuals who are placed on observations and any situations that may require immediate attention.
5. An incarcerated individual may be removed from observations, or the observation frequency may be decreased, by:
- a. The MDT, Superintendent, or designee, when they determine there is no longer a security reason that requires increased observation;
 - b. The QHCP, when they determine that the incarcerated individual's physical healthcare or wellness needs no longer require increased observation; or
 - c. The QMHP, when they determine that the incarcerated individual's mental healthcare or wellness needs no longer require increased

observation.

6. The assigned facility staff shall document on the appropriate form when an incarcerated individual is removed from observations, or when the observation frequency decreases.

C. Incomplete Observations and Documentation

Facility staff shall not falsify any related document(s) and reporting in OMS.

1. Incomplete Observations – If the assigned facility staff member does not complete an observation, they shall **immediately**:
 - a. Resume and complete the assigned observations;
 - b. Notify a CFSS who shall determine additional directions for the assigned facility staff to complete, as appropriate; and
 - c. Document the disruption to, or incomplete, observations in the unit logbook and on the appropriate form.
2. Incomplete Documentation – When an assigned facility staff member completes an observation, but fails to document the completed observation, they shall **immediately**:
 - a. Notify a CFSS; and
 - b. Note the discrepancy as an entry in the logbook and on the appropriate form.