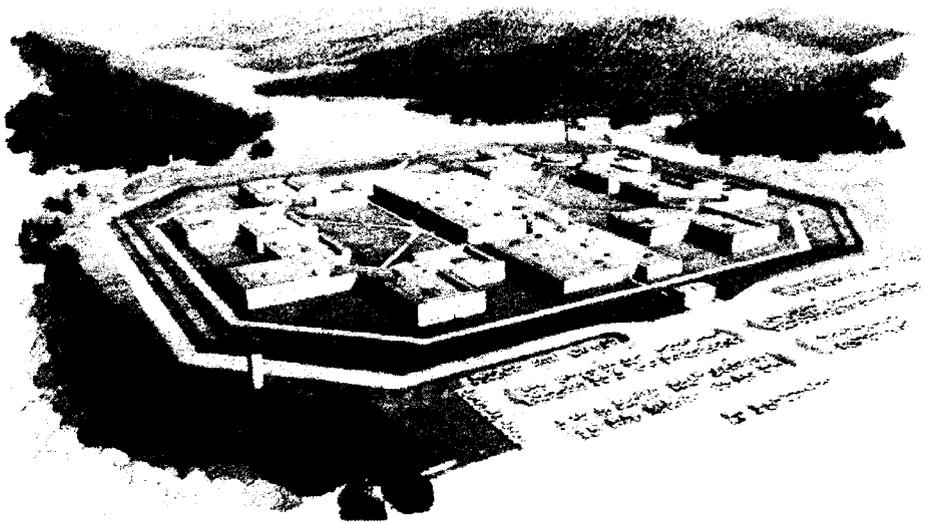


# Virginia Department of Corrections

## Red Onion State Prison



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
RED ONION MOUNTAIN MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON  
FOUND, VIRGINIA



## ***Best Practices in Super Max/Extended Control/Special Management Units***

# **BEST PRACTICES IN SUPER MAXIMUM SECURITY UNITS**

Red Onion State Prison has carefully considered the policies, procedures, and directives which are in place to ensure they are safe, secure and consistent with constitutional standards. Correctional Officers and other staff are feeling the positive impact of Red Onion. Employees report they feel less threatened and more secure in their work environments now that ROSP has become the destination for the more dangerous inmates. The Administration at Red Onion State Prison have developed programs, safety devices, and procedures to ensure we meet our mission, goals and objectives in a safe, secure and productive manner.

The Segregation Population at ROSP are inmates whose behavior in other prisons, regardless of sentence length, has shown them to be assaultive toward staff or other inmates, or who are disruptive to the orderly operation of a prison by habitual failure to follow the rules of the institution.

The impact of removing this type of inmate from the other prisons in the system cannot be overstated. By taking the most disruptive, violent and predatory inmates out of other facilities, the whole demeanor of other prisons has changed. Anecdotal reports have surfaced from inmates who have stated they now feel freer to participate in programs and other activities without the fear of intimidation or harm.

## **PROGRESSIVE HOUSING**

Red Onion State Prison has developed a Progressive Housing Program to transition high security segregation inmates to general population settings. The most critical factor in determining an inmate's readiness to enter Progressive Housing is whether the factors which originally led to the inmate's placement in segregation have been sufficiently mitigated to indicate the inmate can function successfully and safely, and/or function in the unit without posing a threat to the security and orderly operation of the institution.

Progressive Housing is comprised of two phases that offer incremental increases in privileges and opportunities as the inmate advances through the program. Inmates housed in Progressive Housing are double celled. Cell partners are screened by Treatment and Security for compatibility issues that include age, time remaining on sentence and prior institutional behavior.

Phase I: The initial phase of Progressive Housing is ordinarily for three to six months. The primary function of Phase I is to give inmates the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to live with a cell partner. Increases in privileges from segregation status include opportunity for an additional phone call each month, increased commissary privileges including consumable items, access to satellite TV channels, increased property and less restricted movement to showers and recreation.

Phase II: The final phase of Progressive Housing allows for a less restricted operation and increased privileges. Inmates who complete Phase II will be eligible for consideration for reduced Security Levels and transfer. As a general rule, inmates in Phase II ordinarily maintain charge free conduct for three to six months before being eligible for transfer. Increases in privileges from Phase I include pod recreation, gym recreation, meals in dining hall setting, access to phones and showers during pod recreation time, availability of board games and TV privileges during pod recreation time, and access to additional programs including a vocational program in custodial maintenance.

Due to the very serious nature of the original segregation placement factor, which is frequently complicated by the inmate's crime and adjustment history, or involvement with criminal organizations, it may be appropriate for some inmates to be deferred from Phase II or transfer for longer periods of time.

Inmates who pose disciplinary problems in the Progressive Housing Units will be dealt with by established inmate discipline policies that may include housing in segregation status.

### **LONG DISTANCE LEARNING**

In order to provide educational services to the Segregation and Progressive Housing inmates at Red Onion State Prison, the Department of Correctional Education has established long distance learning. Two television channels are dedicated to the long distance program.

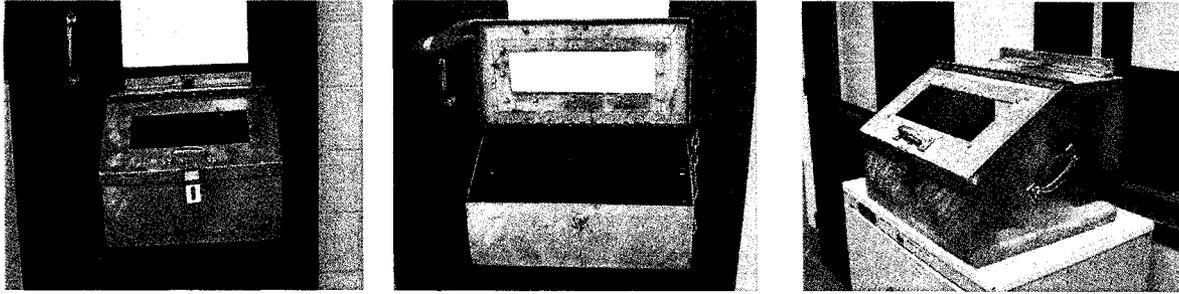
The educational channel at ROSP features programming for the Functional Literacy Program, the pre-GED Program, the GED Program and the cognitive based Problem Solving Skills Programs. DCE instructors prepare video programs utilizing an on-site studio. The instructors have a variety of components available to enhance the videos, such as Smart Boards, power point presentations, and video clips. DCE also provides standard educational programs for GED students prepared by public television stations and other sources. Teachers supplement videos with homework assignments sent to the inmate through institutional mail.

The auxiliary channel features announcements and special programming. This channel enables the staff to provide inmates with up-to-date information such as daily food menus, policy changes and announcements of special events. It is also utilized for religious programming, mental health programming, wellness programming and Treatment Programs.

The long distance learning programming at ROSP gives inmates the opportunity to participate in and complete educational requirements. 93.7% of students who have taken the GED test at ROSP have successfully met the requirements and received their GED.

### **STAFF AND INMATE SAFETY AT RED ONION STATE PRISON**

Red Onion State Prison strives to take any and all steps necessary to ensure safety of staff and inmates from aggressive and assaultive actions by inmates. ROSP Staff have developed several safety devices to assist in maintaining a safe and secure environment. In addition, ROSP has routine mock drills simulating emergency situations, practiced cell entries, and daily review of security practices.



### **Tray Slot Box**

Red Onion State Prison has developed a tray slot box as an added safety precaution against inmates who would try to assault staff after the tray slot is opened. Since implementing this device, staff assaults have dropped considerably.

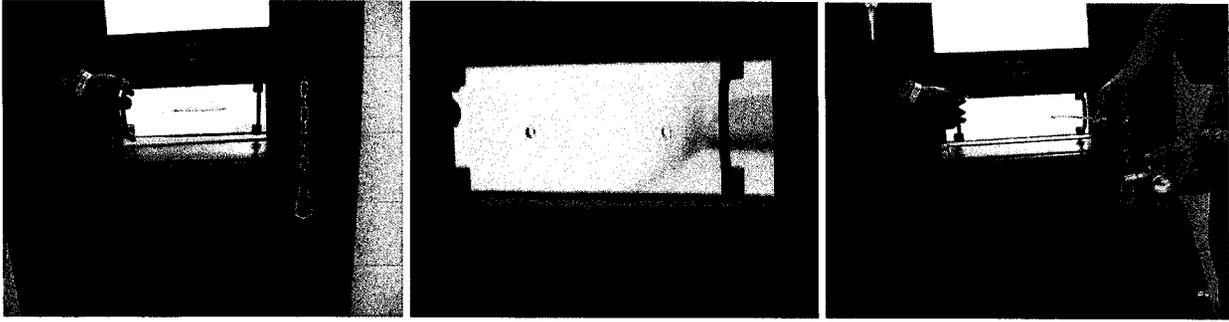
The inmate will be ordered to the rear of his cell and the tray slot box used in the following manner:

**Serving of Meals:** Food and drink will be placed inside the tray slot box, the box will be placed on the tray slot, the tray slot latch will be raised, and the inmate will be allowed to take his food from the box. After the inmate has taken his food, the Officer will remove the box by lifting upwards, closing the tray slot as the box is removed.

**Collection of Trash and Food Trays:** Tray slot box will be placed on the tray slot and the latch raised. The inmate will place his tray and/or trash in the box. After the trash and trays have been picked up, the Officer will remove the box by lifting upwards, closing the tray slot as the box is removed.

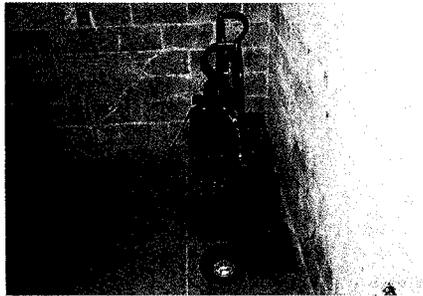
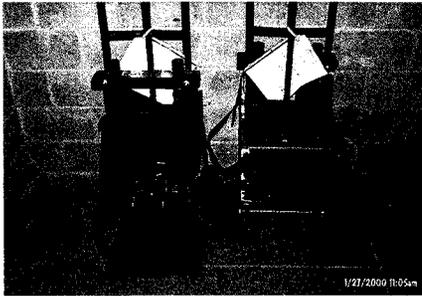
**Pill Pass:** Tray slot box will be placed on the slot and the latch raised. The Nurse will place a cup in the tray slot box. The inmate will fill the cup with water and place it in the tray slot box. The Nurse will place the medication in the cup of water or in a separate cup, per Medical Policy, and the tray slot box cover will be closed. After the inmate takes his medication and places the cup(s) back into the box, the inmate will be ordered to the rear of his cell. The Officer will remove the box by lifting upwards, closing the tray slot as the box is removed.

**Telephone Calls:** Tray slot box will be placed on the slot, telephone placed in the box, lid closed and latch raised. Inmate will then be allowed to dial his number. After confirmation of a connection, the Officer will take the phone out of the tray slot box, close the tray slot box lid with the phone cord run through the tray slot lid. After the phone call is complete, the Officer will remove the box by lifting upwards, closing the tray slot.



### **Tray Slot Shield**

Whenever the tray slot is opened to the cell of a disruptive inmate, there is always a danger that staff could be assaulted. Red Onion State Prison has designed a tray slot shield with two handles, and access ports for delivery of OC Spray, which fits the tray slot opening in such a manner that the inmate is unable to throw anything or assault staff. This device has been used on numerous occasions at ROSP and has proven to be very safe and effective.



### **Disturbance Control Cart**

Red Onion State Prison has designed a push cart with items which may be needed in the event of large scale disruptive behavior in a pod or building. Two of these carts are maintained, each containing two 37 mm Multi Gas Guns, two MK-21 "OC" Pepper Projectors and twenty-four 28B Stinger Rounds.