



Issue Brief - 2008

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Inmate Classification System

Overview

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) implemented a revised Classification System and a new automated Work Housing Assignment Level Evaluation (WHALE). These two systems provide an accurate profile of the Department's inmate population and help determine work crew eligibility and housing placement.

These systems will decrease staff workload and increase statewide consistency and reliability of offender information. The systems will promote effective resource management by placing the right inmate in the right bed in the least restrictive and subsequently less costly environment necessary for safe inmate management.

Revised Classification System

In June 2006, DOC implemented a five level numeric classification system for all inmates. Each classification system score is determined using scientifically-based data to measure the inmate's policy elements and their risk. Policy elements include: detainers, escape history, institutional behavior and the length of time left in their sentence. Risk is measured using a Violence Predictor Score (VPS), which determines an inmate's risk for violence in an institutional setting.

The classification level is determined by using the higher of the two scores, VPS and policy elements. Inmates with higher scores will be managed in more secure institutions.

The VPS formula is accurate only for the first year of incarceration. Predictability significantly

decreases after the first year. At that time, use of the VPS is discontinued and classification levels are determined by use of the institutional policy elements listed above.

36 Months to 48 Months

Since 1990, DOC determined that inmates were eligible for minimum facility placement once they had reached 36 months or less remaining on their sentence. To provide inmates with enhanced opportunities to participate in additional transitional programming, DOC changed the minimum placement eligibility to 48 months or less.

In keeping with the Oregon Accountability Model, this change will allocate additional time in minimum facilities for inmates to complete programming and training opportunities necessary for successful re-entry into the community after release,

Work Housing Assignment Levels Evaluation System

Once an inmate is classified at custody level 1 or 2, he or she is eligible for minimum facility placement and a WHALE evaluation will be completed. The evaluation will provide DOC with an accurate profile of inmates eligible for assignment to community work crews or placement in an unfenced minimum facility. Inmates who fail to meet eligibility criteria for community work crews or unfenced housing will be assigned to inside work assignments at minimum facilities. ■

**The mission of the
Oregon Department of Corrections
is to promote public safety by holding
offenders accountable for their actions and
reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.**



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