FACT SHEET
TIER SEGREGATION SYSTEM

2020

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The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) has one of the largest prison systems in the United States and is responsible for the supervision of 52,000 state prisoners within 34 state prisons, 21 county prisons, and four private prisons. The Tier Segregation System was implemented in August 2013 in order to create a managed and measured stratification oriented pathway for offenders to successfully transition from Administrative Segregation to lower-security levels.

OVERVIEW

- Located at all close security facilities
  - Georgia State, Hancock, Hays, Macon, Smith, Telfair, Valdosta and Ware State Prisons
- Divided into three tiers:
  - Tier I: Disciplinary, Protective Custody and Transient Housing
    - Voluntary/involuntary placement an management of offenders in short-term segregated housing (disciplinary, protective custody, transient housing, pending investigation or pending classification either back to general population or to TIER II)
    - Total capacity 1092 beds
    - Offender time not to exceed 30 days
  - Tier II: Administrative Segregation {Mental Health only, and rHA-Joas (restrictive housing for juvenile offenders)}
    - Long-term administrative segregation that houses offenders
    - 270 days=Three 90-day phases
    - Offender must complete the Offenders Under Transition Program (O.U.T.)
    - Total capacity 1378 beds
  - Tier III: Special Management Unit (SMU) located at Georgia Diagnostic & Classification Prison (GDCP)
    - Incentive based long-term segregation program based on an increased level of privileges for demonstrated appropriate behavior and program compliance
    - Total capacity 192 beds
    - GDCP Hi-Max

PURPOSE

- Provides greater management and implementation of programming of long-term Administrative Segregation offenders

TIER I: DISCIPLINARY, PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AND TRANSIENT HOUSING

Criteria

The Warden or designee may place an offender in Tier I, when an offender is:

- Noted as a threat to the safe and secure operation of the facility's offender management system
- Awaiting disciplinary hearing for violation of facility rules
- Subject of an investigation regarding a serious violation of facilities rules and regulations
- Involved in incidents involving excessive destruction of state property
- Subject of a pending criminal investigation or has a pending criminal charge and is awaiting trial in the state or federal criminal court
- Awaiting pending transfer or is on holdover status during the transfer process
- Has not been classified

The Warden or designee my request admission of an offender in Tier I for Protective Custody:

- Admission to or continuation in the Tier Segregation Program is necessary for the offender's own protection

Process for Assignment to Segregation

- Classification Committee holds formal hearing within 96 hours after offender is placed in Tier I
- Classification Committee - consists of Tier Unit Manager, Counselor and Sergeant or above
- Offender provided with copy of Tier I Assignment Memo stating reason(s) why offender is being placed in Tier I
- In absence of the Warden or designee, the senior officer (with the notification and approval of the facility duty officer) may place an offender in Tier I
- Period not to exceed 72 hours
- Warden shall be notified as soon as he/she returns to facility

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Program Progression

- Completion is dependent upon:
  - Offender's ability to abide by all of the rules and regulations in the Inmate Disciplinary policy
  - Be inspection ready during Warden's rounds
  - Be courteous and respectful of all facility staff
  - Cease all disruptive behaviors including verbal threats and gestures toward staff and other offenders
  - Fulfill/complete all instructions issued by staff
- Classification Committee shall review the status of all offenders in Tier I once every 30 days
  - Assignment cannot exceed 30 days with exception of involuntary/voluntary protective custody status
  - Committee considers original reason(s) for segregation and offender's behavior during segregation

Appeal Process

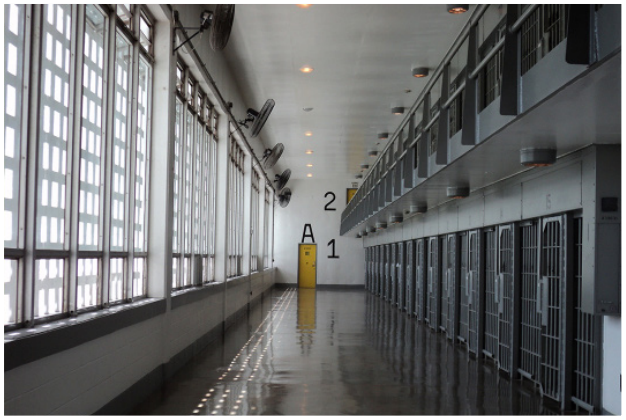
- Offender can pursue due process rights by appealing the assignment (or 30-day review) by submitting a written objection to the Warden within three business days from the receipt of the notice
- Objection must include detailed information appealing
- assignment
- Appeal must be submitted to assigned Counselor
- Review must be completed within ten business days of receipt of appeal

TIER II: ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION

Criteria

Placement in the Tier II is the result of a Classification Committee decision, which is approved by the Warden. To be eligible for placement, an offender must have at least one of the following:

- Noted as a threat to the safe and secure operation of the facility's offender management system
- Escaped involving violence or serious threat of violence during the previous five years
- Multiple escapes and escape attempts from a secure facility during the previous three years
- Lead or participate in major disturbance or riot during the previous five years involving:
  - 10 or more offenders
  - Serious threat of loss of life or actual major property damage
- Failure in Tier I program or refusal to participate
- Leader in major disruptive event, major disturbance or directing the assault or homicide of other offender(s) during the previous five years
- Possession of a firearm or an explosive device during the previous five years
- Two or more disciplinary infractions for possession of a weapon within the past year
- Three or more disciplinary charges within the previous 12 months that involve assaultive or excessive disruptive behavior of either great or high severity level as defined in the Inmate Discipline Standard Operating Procedures
  - (SOP) - IIB02-0001



- Assaultive histories
- Excessive destruction of state property
- Transfer from Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison (GDCP) SMU - Tier III
- Attempting to introduce or trafficking of cellular devices, drugs, tobacco or other illegal contraband

Criteria applies to:

- All offenders in General Population (GP) status
- Mental Health (MH) Level II offenders
- MH Level III offenders must be screened and recommended by MH staff before consideration for placement

PROCESS FOR ASSIGNMENT TO TIER II

- Classification Committee will review all recommendations for assignments and submit recommendations based on eligibility criteria
  - Recommendations submitted directly to Warden or designee for approval or denial
  - Approval or denial must be completed within seven business days
  - Upon approval, the Warden will notify (via electronic copy) the respective Regional Director of the offender's assignment in Tier II.
  - Offender will be served with a copy and it will be documented in SCRIBE.
- When offender is assigned, the committee will hold an Administrative Segregation hearing within 96 hours

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

- Offender is given the opportunity to progress through Phases I, II and III based upon his behavior and ability to adjust
- Movement between the Phases is based upon the offender meeting or failing to meet the expectations outlines in the offender's individualized case plan
- Counselor will conduct informal 30-day contacts with offender
- At end of initial 90-day review, a formal meeting between offender and Classification Committee is completed
- Offender recommendations determine if the offender will:
  - Transition from current Phase to the next

- Remain in current Phase or reassigned to previous phase until next 90-day review
- Be assigned to Tier I program or GP upon completion of Tier II
- Be reassigned in the current Phase at another Level V facility or GDCP SMU (Tier III)

PHASE III +

- An additional phase for offenders who have completed phase III of the program
- Assists with the housing stratification for offenders who cannot return to general population because they pose a serious threat to the safety and security of institutional operations
- Offenders within this phase will be reviewed every 90 days to determine assignment status

APPEAL PROCESS

- Offenders can pursue due process rights by appealing the assignement (or 90-day review) to Tier II and submit written objections to Warden within three business days from receipt of notice
  - Must include detailed information appealing assignment
- Appeal must be submitted to assigned Counselor
- Facilities Director or designee will complete the review
  - Review must be completed within 14 business days upon receipt of appeal
- 90-day review appeal is in-house and Warden makes final decision

TIER III: SPECIAL MANAGEMENT UNIT (SMU)

Program Progression

- At least every 90 days the SMU Review Committee must review an offender's status and formulate a recommendation to the Warden.
- Recommendation determines if the offender will be:
  - Transitioned to next Phase
  - Retained in current Phase
  - Reassigned to previous Phase
  - Transferred to Level V facility (Tier II program)
  - Assigned to GP
  - Assigned to the Segregation Transition Education Program (STEP)
- If circumstances warrant, the Unit Manager may convene the Classification Committee at an earlier time.
  - Cirumstances include exemplary behavior and significant misbehavior

OFFENDERS UNDER TRANSITION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Offenders Under Transition (O.U.T) is a cognitive-behavioral program utilized in TIER facilities. It is designed to enhance an offenders' motivation to change problem behaviors, criminal thinking and positive pro-social skills. O.U.T is a 200-hour program curriculum structures into three modules tailored to meet specific need of GDC. The O.U.T. program is 40 weeks that begins after the offender is in the fifth week of assignment in TIER II. The program has three phases that each offender has to transition through. Offenders assigned to TIER II have to complete the O.U.T program prior to them being considered for release from TIER II. The phases are a minimum of 90 days. The phases are:

- **Phase 1: Self-Discovery - In-cell programming**
  - Approximately 40 hours of intervention
  - Designed to increase the offender's level of motivation and commitment to successfully completing the Tier program
- **Phase 2: Choices and Changes - In-cell and modular units**
  - Approximately 80 hours of intervention
  - Designed to help the offender identify faulty beliefs and thinking
  - Includes 25 ours of Substance Abuse programming
- **Phase 3: Turning Point - In-cell and program chairs**
  - Approximately 80 hours of intervention
  - Designed to assist offenders in identifying and practicing new behaviors
  - Prepare offenders for reintegration into the community or general population