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BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Participation by staff and inmates in operating program
- Training and orientation of inmates and staff involved
- Time limits for response at every level
- Written responses with reasons from each level of response
- Goal of resolution at lowest level
- Independent review from outside facility - Central Office Review Committee

COMPOSITION OF IGRC (DIRECTIVE 4040 SECTION IV)

The Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC) consists of five persons - two voting inmates, two voting staff members and a non-voting chairperson. Inmates are selected by their peers in elections conducted semiannually. Staff are selected by the Superintendent from a list of trained staff.

IGP STRUCTURE

Level I

- Non-calendared Contact
- Grievance
- Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC) Informal Resolution or Hearing

Level II

- Superintendent

Level III

- Central Office Review Committee (CORC)
BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Inmate Grievance Program (IGP) is to provide an orderly, fair, simple and expeditious way of solving problems in accordance with Directive #4040.

The IGP is not intended to replace existing channels for resolving problems, e.g. area sergeant, block officer, correction counselor, etc. It is appropriate to expect inmates to attempt to resolve problems on their own. Likewise the IGP is not intended to be utilized to obtain decisions which are obtainable through other appeal mechanisms.

The IGP does not adjudicate guilt, assign blame or punish. It is not designed to be an adversarial process. The IGP permits all persons including the IGP supervisor, security staff, civilian staff and inmates involved in the grievance an opportunity to participate in a resolution or recommendation for resolution. Hence, the IGP affords both line staff and inmates input into the establishment and/or revision of both institutional and departmental policies and procedures.

Prompt, positive, equitable handling of inmate complaints provides a peaceful avenue of redress and helps dissipate tension in correctional facilities. It provides the department with the opportunity to correct problems internally, identify issues in need of administrative attention, and clarify policies and procedures.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Grievance procedures were established February 5, 1976 by the New York State Legislature in Section 139 of NYS Correction Law. The Law requires:

- A grievance resolution committee in each facility
- The Commissioner promulgates rules and regulations establishing the procedures for a grievance mechanism
- Time limits for response at every level
- An inmate can apply to the Commissioner for review of a decision
- Annual evaluation and assessment of grievance procedures by the Commissioner
Inmate Grievance Program

Inmates are encouraged to attempt to resolve their problems informally.

**Step 1**
IGRC

- Written grievance submitted within 21 Calendar days.*
- IGRC hearing and recommendation within 16 Calendar days
- Informally resolved

**Step 2**
Superintendent

- Superintendent makes decision within 25 Calendar days
- Superintendent makes recommendation within 7 Calendar days
- Grievant has 7 Calendar days to appeal

**Step 3**
CORC

- CORC renders decision within 30 Calendar days
- Superintendent - Grievant has 7 Calendar days to appeal
- Institutional grievance - Superintendent renders decision within 20 Calendar days

* An exception to time limit may not be granted more than 45 days after an alleged occurrence.
ROLE OF THE INMATE GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE (IGRC)

The heart of the grievance program is the inmate/staff committee which provides correctional personnel and inmates the opportunity to jointly participate in the resolution of inmate complaints. While the IGP has a number of review levels, the impact of the process on the facility depends on the success of the problem solving by those closest to the problem. Responsible inmate/staff participation promotes commitment to and trust in the process, while discouraging frivolous complaints or other potential abuses.

The IGRC should help open lines of communication and raise the facility and department administrations' level of awareness of the concerns of the inmate population while providing the inmate population with an understanding and awareness of institutional and departmental policy and procedure.

The goal of the Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC) is grass roots problem resolution.

ON AN INFORMAL LEVEL
- Providing inmates with advice and/or assistance
- Addressing or resolving a question, concern or complaint prior to filing of a grievance

ON A FORMAL LEVEL
- To review/investigate grievances and attempt to resolve the matter informally to the satisfaction of the grievant.
- To hold hearings as necessary to make recommendations for the resolution of grievances.

The successful committee will be one where staff and inmate members are willing to compromise and work toward the goal of a resolution satisfactory to all concerned. This avoids creating an adversarial situation where members become solely advocates for their respective constituents or their own point of view. Staff and inmate members should approach hearings impartially, unemotionally and with an open mind.
IGRC REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES

The IGRC Representatives are required by Directive 4040 to have earned a High School diploma, or GED, or be enrolled in one unpaid module of school until the GED is obtained.

With guidance and direction from the IGP supervisor:

- Become familiar with and knowledgeable of the policies, procedures and operations of the IGP so as to properly advise inmates utilizing the program.

- Provide direction and encouragement to inmates in seeking assistance for problem resolution on their own through existing channels (4040, III-A).

- Inform inmates of non-grievable issues and provide direction on use of the appropriate appeal mechanisms. (4040, III-E).

- Conduct investigations and complete written investigation reports as outlined in Directive 4040.

- Researching prior CORC decisions, department policy, facility procedures and background information as may be needed in responding to grievances.

- To make active efforts to effect informal resolution of grievances after review and investigation.

- To exhibit courtesy, diplomacy, respect and tact at all times when dealing with staff and inmates involved in the processing of grievances.

- To attend and be on time for IGRC hearings.

- To listen attentively and impartially to representations, ask pertinent questions to insure all facts and facets of issues are discussed and help the IGRC formulate a written response to the requested action.

- Abide by the IGRC Code of Ethics as enumerated in Departmental Directive #4040, Inmate Grievance Program.

- Assist with orientation sessions concerning the IGP as directed.

- Assist with clerical duties and maintenance of IGP office.

- Any other IGP related duty as determined necessary by the IGP Supervisor to insure the orderly, fair, and expeditious processing of grievances.
Inmate Grievance Clerk

The IGRC clerk is the first and principle contact for an inmate wishing to file a grievance. The primary responsibility of the clerk is to assist inmates in the utilization of the grievance procedure effectively. The IGRC clerk is responsible for the clerical functions and record keeping for the program within the facility as directed by the IGP supervisor. The Clerk is required by Directive 4040 to have earned a High School diploma, or GED, or be enrolled in one unpaid module of school until the GED is obtained, the same as an IGRC inmate representative.

The specific duties of the IGRC clerk are as follows:

1. The maintenance of an accurate Grievance Clerk's Log (Form #2136) through daily entries.

2. To assist inmates in the preparation of grievances, insuring a clear statement of the problem. Formulate with the grievant an equitable resolution stated as an action request and to prepare the grievance package to include proper forms.

3. If determined by the IGP supervisor, to maintain an IGRC hearings' log to include date, time, names of staff and inmate representatives, grievance number and disposition of the complaint.

4. To process the grievance paperwork through the IGRC hearing and appeal stages.

5. To prepare hearing notices and/or callouts, make certain that all direct parties to the grievance and witnesses, if any, are afforded an opportunity to appear.

6. To record and forward the disposition to the grievant after each level of review.

7. To prepare the appeal package, including the case history and record (CH&R), to be forwarded to the Central Office Review Committee (CORC).
Successful resolution of problems is the goal of the IGRC. This requires accommodation, compromise and an ability by both inmates and staff to recognize each other's interests and needs.

The non-voting chairperson, in the role of mediator, plays a vital part in this process. Having no authority to impose a settlement, the chairperson acts to facilitate agreement. This requires that the chairperson act as the "person in the middle".

The chairpersons shall be selected by the Inmate Grievance Program Supervisor from a list submitted by the IGRC staff/inmate representatives. The chairperson may be an inmate, a member of staff, or a volunteer.

Specific duties of the chairperson of the Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee include:

1. To establish the order of business for the IGRC hearing, convening when necessary, reading the grievance and all investigation reports to the committee, adjourning when necessary and guiding the discussions.

2. To insure that hearings are conducted in a fair manner so that the interests of inmates and staff are protected and all inmates and staff have an opportunity to express their opinions and review the relevant information.

3. To help representatives formulate reasonable recommendations that are responsive to the complaint and acceptable to the parties involved.

4. To assist in developing the response of the IGRC to the grievance and to insure that the grievant fully understands the decision of the IGRC and the reasons behind it.
The IGP is intended to supplement, not replace, existing formal or informal channels of problem resolution. It is appropriate to expect inmates to attempt to resolve their problems on their own. To do this, the inmate should contact or attempt to contact the person or office (i.e., inmate accounts, correspondence, package room, etc.) which could address their problem. Non-calendared contacts are a tool to enable inmates to address their problems at the earliest level of the IGP process.

It is appropriate for the facility IGRC to attempt to address a problem as a non-calendared contact within a reasonable period of time. However, a non-calendared contact is not required and does not preclude the submission of a grievance by an inmate who clearly indicates he or she requests the complaint be processed as a grievance with the IGRC Clerk. Upon this notification, the Clerk shall consecutively number and log the grievance at the time of receipt. Additionally, complaints with serious allegations of staff harassment or discrimination should be logged as grievances and forwarded to the Superintendent in accordance with Directive 4040, VIII and IX.

Non-calendared contacts should be documented in a separate log and, at a minimum, include the date received, inmate’s name and DIN, code reference, and a description of the issue and the action taken. Non-calendared contacts which eventually become logged grievances should not be statistically counted in the monthly totals of non-calendared contacts processed by the facility IGRC during the reporting period.

Finally, any non-calendared contacts provided to an inmate should also advise the inmate how to proceed with the complaint if they are not satisfied with the action taken.

**INVESTIGATIONS**

Ideally, IGRC investigations should be conducted by both a staff and inmate representative. The better informed the IGRC representatives are, the better recommendations they can provide. However, sometimes it is not possible for both inmate and staff representatives to do the investigation due to the security classification of some areas of the facility, the volume of cases to be investigated, facility policy and procedures, etc.
Further, there are certain situations which due to their sensitive nature are best investigated by only a staff member of the IGRC or the grievance supervisor.

In situations where the inmate representatives cannot accompany the staff representatives on an investigation, the inmate representatives may provide the staff representatives with the specific questions that they would like answered. If a simple and expeditious resolution to a grievance can be obtained by a staff phone call or visit to the area in question, there is no real need for both staff and inmate representatives to be present.

The intent of the Inmate Grievance Program is not one of an adversarial process. Further, there is nothing in the Employee's Manual, Directive #4040, or Section 139 of Correction Law which provides an inmate/staff representative with the right to question a state employee or requires that an employee answer the representative's question. Accordingly, courtesy, diplomacy, finesse and respect should be exhibited when contacting anyone for information.

Investigations should be timely and complete in order to provide all levels of the IGP with the necessary facts to render an appropriate recommendation/decision. A complete IGRC investigation should be recorded on the proper forms [#2132-Rev. 2/89] in a legible and orderly manner. Additionally, copies of all relevant supportive documentation, departmental directives, facility policy and procedures, prior CORC decisions, etc., should be included as part of a complete investigation packet.

INFORMAL RESOLUTIONS

If a grievance is resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant, the specific action/information is to be entered on the 2131 form and signed by the grievant giving consent to an informal resolution.

HEARINGS

If a grievance has not been resolved, the full committee conducts a hearing to make a recommendation for the resolution of the grievance. The hearing must take place within seven working days after receipt of the grievance.

The role of a representative is to (1) identify the issue or issues (they may sometimes be obscure), (2) get at the facts, if there is any dispute as to the facts, and (3) hear the positions on all sides.

The form of the hearing has not been specifically spelled out in the procedure. This is because different cases may
require different formats. In some instances, the parties may simply state the problem and their respective positions. In others, there may be factual issues which call for examination.

In such cases where the nature of the issues require a more formal structure as contrasted to a somewhat informal discussion of the problem, the customary order of procedure is:

a. All parties are seated at a table.

b. Each grievance hearing should be properly logged in the Clerk's Log (FORM 2134).

c. The Chairperson convenes the hearing introducing the individuals in attendance.

d. The Chairperson explains the purpose of the hearing and the role of the individuals in attendance.

e. The Chairperson reads aloud the grievance complaint and action requested.

f. Results on all investigation forms should be read, in addition to all supportive documentation provided.

g. Allow some ventilation, but keep hearing focused on the grievance, affording everyone an opportunity to speak.

h. The Chairperson opens the floor for comments or questions. Additional information not already read may be added at this time. Individuals speak after receiving permission from the Chairperson (controlling factor).

i. The Chairperson makes the motion to adjourn the hearing when he/she feels full discussion and questioning have been completed.

j. Thank the grievant for appearing and inform him/her that a copy of the IGRC decision will be communicated to him/her within two working days.

k. The Chairperson closes the hearing, thanking those in attendance for their cooperation and clears the room for the IGRC private caucus. In the IGRC's discretion it may communicate its decision to the grievant orally immediately after its deliberations.

l. The Chairperson assists the committee in preparing the IGRC recommendation or recommendations in a deadlock situation, and records it on the reverse side of form 2131E(5/88). The completed form is then signed by all
members of the IGRC, with a copy then forwarded to the grievant per Directive #4040.

As can be readily perceived from the above, the role of the non-voting Chairperson is of paramount importance in the hearing procedure. It is the Chairperson's responsibility to ensure that the order of decorum is maintained during the hearing.

It is imperative to remember that there is no mandate that an involved party respond to questions; therefore, finesse, diplomacy and respect must be utilized in seeking information if the committee is to be successful. Further, the grievance procedure is a way of solving problems, not of adjudicating guilt. Thus, the hearing should resemble less a courtroom than a negotiation session.

The successful fashioning of solutions to problems requires that IGRC members focus on the following tasks:

a. Get all the facts: Both parties to a grievance will have the issues to discuss and points of view to explain. They should have a full opportunity to do so at the IGRC hearing. It is sometimes difficult, however, in the midst of so much talk to pinpoint the specific problem. Sometimes, moreover, the real problem will be obscure or hidden, and representatives must make sure they understand both the obvious and hidden dimensions of the grievance. By asking questions, representatives should strive for a clear understanding of both the problem and the grievant's suggested remedy. The questions should be more in the form of inquiry than forced interrogation.

b. Keep an open mind: Staff/inmate representatives should try to avoid a fixed, preconceived notion of the merit of the grievance. They must be alert to efforts on the part of the grievant, responding parties or witnesses to misrepresent, exaggerate or obscure the facts.

c. Help make a decision/recommend a solution: A willingness to compromise is essential if decisions are going to be made successfully by the committee. The key to compromise will be the ability of IGRC representatives to devise imaginative solutions. Respond to grievances in a way that is satisfactory both to the grievant and others involved in the grievance.
I. PURPOSE

The CH&R is the primary source of information upon which decisions are based at the CORC level of review. Therefore, its completeness and accuracy is of the utmost importance.

The CH&R should provide a synoptic view of a grievance, including a clear and concise statement of the problem and action requested by the grievant, recommendation(s) by the IGRC, the response of the Superintendent, and the grievant's reasons for appeal to the CORC. The filing date and the dates of the grievance, its assigned calendar number, designation and code should all be indicated, as well as the grievant's name and departmental number.

In general, the CH&R should be an accurate summary of all relevant information available.

II. PROCESS

The grievance clerk shall transmit the signed appeal, and the accompanying grievance papers to the Supervisor of the Inmate Grievance Program within one day after receipt of the signed appeal statement. The Supervisor must forward appeals within five working days to the Central Office Review committee.

The "Process"

a. Prepare CH&R

b. Review IGRC and Superintendent's Response

c. Review investigation materials; supplement if necessary

d. Review Grievant's Appeal Statement; address new information, if necessary

e. Prepare the CH&R Cover Sheet. The cover sheet further simplifies the information contained on the CH&R and is used to enter specific information into the computer. The full grievance # should be used, i.e., "FCF-15208-97". The inmate's name and DIN, and the short title and code are also to be listed on the cover sheet. The dates must be filled in the appropriate
spaces, if applicable. Copies of any relevant facility policies that CORC would not have access to should be included in the appeal packet and noted on the cover sheet. The dates of staff statements should be written in the appropriate spaces. Copies of any prior CORC decisions cited in the grievance should also be included with the appeal packet. Last, the Supervisor signs acknowledging completion. The intent of the cover sheet is to ensure that all information needed for CORC to review the appealed case is included when it is sent. This is critical in expediting CORC responses and minimizing the need for further follow-up to obtain basic components of the appeal.

f. Send appeal package to Director, Inmate Grievance Program within 5 working days.

III. FORMAT

The sample CH&R has been broken down into twelve points for further clarification.

1- The Title "Case History and Record" is necessary so that it is clear to the clerical staff that it is the CH&R;

2- Facility name is important in order for CORC to know exactly what facility is under review;

3- Inmate name, DIN number.

4- Grievance calendar number - must include facility name abbreviation;

5- Short title of grievance from the Clerk's Log. This title should be no more than 5-6 words due to the fact that these titles are listed on the computer. The short title should not reiterate the Code Classification (i.e., Code 16 - "Religion", should be "Denied Taubush" or "Congregate services in yard"; Code 24 - "Special Housing", should be "Outdoor exercise/inclement weather"). The title should be specific enough to facilitate research in the Monthly Index of Written Opinions. The title does not have to be a complete sentence;

6- Classification-Institutional or Departmental/Code;
7- References are listed for the benefit of CORC in the event they have questions on how a decision was made. Copies of referenced documentation (Directives, Policy and Procedure, Investigations, etc.) must be included with the case materials;

8- Grievance and date filed - this date is the date that the Clerk receives the form, signs the form, and logs the form. The dates must be consistent. If the body of the grievance is clear and concise, the only change necessary would be to write the CH&R in the third person. Of course, if the body of the grievance is a 3-4 page narrative, it is necessary to synopsize while being sure to clearly state the problem as the grievant presented it;

9- Action Requested - is to be typed verbatim (word for word) with any references to the Grievant to be merely put in the third person;

10- The IGRC Recommendation and date - is the actual date the IGRC held the hearing. The recommendation is to be typed verbatim;

11- Superintendent's response and date - is the date on the Superintendent's written response. The response is to be typed verbatim; and

12- Appeal to CORC and the date - is the date the Clerk receives/signs the appeal. The appeal is to be typed verbatim in the third person. Unless, of course, the appeal is quite lengthy then it should be synopsized in the third person.

All grievance supervisors are to insure that this format is followed and no other information is added. Obviously the Investigation Report(s) should be included in the case materials. It should be stressed that all CH&R's should be proofread and especially those typed by inmate clerks. However, under no circumstances should the CH&R state "see attached". The information must appear on the CH&R as indicated point by point. The grievance supervisor is ultimately responsible for the quality of any materials submitted to CORC.
The Inmate Grievance Program Monthly Index of Written Opinions (CORC Index) is a compilation of CORC dispositions indexed by subject. The CORC index is a valuable tool in assisting the facility IGRC with their grievance investigations. CORC decisions have the effect of directives since CORC functions on behalf of the Commissioner and under his authority. Consequently, prior CORC decisions can strongly advance current IGRC investigations which have similar issues pending review.

The IGP Supervisor is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date set of the Inmate Grievance Program Monthly Index of Written Opinions in the IGRC office for staff use and in the facility law library for general population use. The IGP Supervisor may delegate this responsibility. It is appropriate for inmates to access this CORC Index in the law library in order for them to research their own complaints before submitting them to the facility IGRC.

The Inmate Grievance Program Monthly Index of Written Opinions should be maintained in an organized manner, e.g., binders, files and updated upon receipt. The dispositions are to be maintained as listed in the index.
MEMORANDUM

TO: All Superintendents
FROM: Lucien J. Leclaire, Jr., Deputy Commissioner
DATE: April 14, 2009
SUBJECT: Grievance Designations

Per Directive #4040, "Inmate Grievance Program," grievances are designated either "D" for Departmental or "I" for Institutional. These designations are made at the facility level by the superintendent or their designee.

A Central Office Review Committee (CORC) decision coding of "I" for Institutional means that the grievance concerns an institutional issue (i.e., callout schedules, package room hours, visit termination policy, etc.). Institutional grievances affect the particular facility in question. However, this does not mean that an "I" designation would not be applicable at another facility. An "I" decision allows other facilities to see practice/policy that could apply to them, as well as, the reasoning behind the CORC to uphold or deny the grievance, (i.e., Timberland boots are denied. However, the real issue is that they are denied for security reasons, due to the metal and/or fiberglass shanks inside of them). A facility could reasonably apply that logic to another brand of boots that presents the same type of security concern.

Some facilities have variances that allow them to operate a certain way that would not be appropriate or valid at another facility. (An "I" decision concerning a facility policy to suspend out-going packages for the month of December to concentrate on the processing incoming packages that the inmates felt were more important). This reasoning could be applied to similarly situated facilities.

A CORC decision coding of "D" for Departmental means that the grievance concerns an altering or revision of Departmental policy/directive (i.e., allowing sneakers over $50.00, specific property limits, etc.) A "D" grievance would apply to all facilities, regardless of where the grievance was filed.

Lucien J. Leclaire, Jr.
Deputy Commissioner
MEMORANDUM

TO: All Superintendents
FROM: Stephen M. Bernardi, Deputy Commissioner
DATE: February 11, 1998
SUBJ: Harassment/Unlawful Discrimination Grievances

Grievance allegations of harassment or unlawful discrimination are forwarded directly to the superintendent as outlined in Directive #4040, Section VIII and Section IX. It is important that the superintendent or his/her designee (limited to the first deputy superintendent or deputy superintendent level) review these complaints within 24 hours of receipt. This review is to determine the severity of the allegations, the area where the complaint originated, or ongoing trends which are indicative of potential problems requiring immediate executive attention.

The present system gives the superintendent the responsibility to monitor these grievances and designate appropriate staff to investigate the grievances and take appropriate or necessary corrective action. This should continue. The following guidelines should be used to help you and your supervisory staff whenever you conduct in-house investigations of harassment/unlawful discrimination grievances in accordance with the provisions of Directive #4040.

Investigations of such grievances should not be conducted by the Inmate Grievance Program Supervisor or staff representatives of the Inmate Grievance Review Committee (IGRC), and under no circumstance should inmate representatives of the IGRC be involved in conducting such investigations. In all such cases, higher ranking supervisory personnel should conduct these investigations, i.e., a sergeant investigates allegations against a correction officer; a lieutenant investigates allegations against a sergeant; a senior correction counselor investigates allegations against a counselor, etc. In assigning the investigations, discretion should be exercised in determining whether or not the immediate supervisor of the employee involved can satisfactorily and impartially respond to the allegation. A few facilities have this coordinated by an upper level supervisor to avoid duplication of investigations, i.e., inmate letters to the superintendent and grievances on the same topic.

An investigation must include, but not be limited to, a written report by the higher ranking supervisory personnel who evaluates the findings. This report must include:
1) A written statement from the employee against whom the grievance was filed offering his/her version of what occurred in response to the specific allegation. (This is for the employee's own protection because it eliminates any possibility of misinterpretation of his/her response to the allegation);

2) A statement confirming an interview with the grievant, witness/witnesses and any party/parties directly involved in the incident;

3) Copies of any pertinent documentation in instances where a direct correlation is established between the grievance complaint and a disciplinary proceeding, and;

4) A statement from the supervisor concerning any evidence given or that no evidence exists to support the allegation.

Supervisors conducting such investigations should be made aware that their investigation is the basis for the superintendent's response to the harassment grievance and possibly, upon appeal, the basis for the CORC decision. It also establishes the credibility of the facility administration's and the Department's procedures for addressing such complaints. In all cases, the report of investigation which is submitted to the superintendent or designee becomes a matter of record that the superintendent may use as documentation for any further inquiries if litigation is pursued by the grievant.

In many cases, it may be found that the matter consists of an inmate's word against an employee's word, thus, the allegations cannot be substantiated by fact. In such cases, if properly documented investigations are conducted, the facility administration will have the ability to demonstrate that a good-faith effort was made and that a proper investigation was conducted.

Under no circumstances should investigation reports be accessible to inmates. These reports should be kept by the Inmate Grievance Program Supervisor in separate files from those used by inmate members of the IGRC. It is recommended that every precaution be taken to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of these files.

The expeditious investigation of and response to allegations is in the best interest of the employees involved and the good order of the facility. Consequently, you are encouraged to make every effort to comply with the 12-working-day time frame for your response. Employee leave and the complexity of some cases may preclude an appropriate response within 12 days; however, the majority of cases can be addressed within this time frame.

Copies of this memorandum are to be disseminated to all uniformed and non-uniformed supervisors.

Your cooperation is appreciated.
## CASE HISTORY AND RECORD

### COVER SHEET

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### INVESTIGATION

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IGP SUPERVISOR’S SIGNATURE: ___________________________
CASE HISTORY & RECORD

(3) Doe, J. 96-A-xxxx
(4) ONI-3233-95
(5) Allowed In Yard W/ Photos/Legal Work
(6) I-7-R
(7) References:

1) Supt.: ONI-3133-95
2) Sgt./Response to ONI-3133-95
3) Memo - (5/22/89) From: Capt.
4) OCF Rec Manual

(8) Grievance: 8/18/95 - On August 6, 1995 at the 7 pm movement, the grievant went to take pictures at Building #9. Once click-click was over, the grievant then proceeded to go to the large yard. Officer P. Smith stopped grievant in the process and instructed him that he could not go to the yard because he had pictures on him. Also on August 10, 1995 after the grievant left the Law Library, he proceeded to go to the large yard. Officer P. Smith stopped the grievant and informed the grievant that he could not go to the yard with his legal work. At both times, the grievant had signed out at his housing unit for both places. He feels that Officer P. Smith has something personal against him.

(9) Action Requested: That once grievant is finished with either click-click or the Law Library, he is allowed to enter the large yard/gym area with the materials from click-click/Law Library without any problems from Officer P. Smith or any other Officer or any other Officer assigned to the large yard/gym area.

(10) IGRC Recommendation: 8/23/95 - IGRC Unanimously Agrees with Clarification. Currently the Supt. is reviewing this issue to possibly revise the policy of allowing legal materials only in addition to allowable items, into the large yard from 6-9 pm per ONI-3133-95, dated 6/29/95.

(11) Superintendent’s Response: 9/7/95 - Grievance Accepted in Part: Facility policy and procedure will be reviewed to decide if inmates may be allowed to bring legal materials to the recreation yard from the Law Library during evening program movement only. Further, since legal materials are presently allowed in the recreation yard during the day program movement only, a revised policy shall also be considered for legal materials to be brought into the large yard after 6 pm. Grievant is advised current policy permits for a small amount of legal book/materials to be allowed into large yard, from 6 pm to 9 pm. This issue is currently under review by the Executive Team to possibly revise the policy.

(12) Appeal to CORC: 9/13/95 - To exhaust grievance process and to further clarify the policy and procedure of the allowance of legal materials/books into the large yard from 6-9 pm.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Glenn S. Goord, Commissioner

FROM: Stephen M. Bernardi, Deputy Commissioner

DATE: February 8, 1999

SUBJ: Inmate Grievance Program

As we have discussed in the past, the Inmate Grievance Program (IGP) has exhibited an increasing trend in grievances filed. The Inmate Grievance Program has reported 42,350 grievances for the year 1998, an increase of 5,937, or a 16.3% increase from 1997. A preliminary analysis reveals that this increase is directly attributable to the Department’s 1998 increase of 1,800 SHU inmates housed in the S-Blocks.

The total of 42,350 grievances is misleading, however, by the fact that the 1,800 SHU inmate increase was staggered throughout the year, with Marcy Correctional Facility opening its S-Block in January 1998 and the other eight units opening between May and August 1998. If all S-Blocks were in operation for the entire year, the projected grievances would have been closer to approximately 46,000.

Exceeding expectations, during January 1999, there were 4,109 grievances reported statewide, the highest single month total reported by the IGP. If such pattern continues, the 1999 projected total will be approximately 49,000 grievances without considering Upstate Correctional Facility.

On January 29, 1999, Mr. Eagen and Ms. Bellamy made a site visit to Mid-State Correctional Facility and toured the S-Block. The reason for the visit was to ascertain the reason 232 grievances reported in 1998 from Mid-State’s S-Block is the lowest total of the nine S-Block facilities. Additionally, the facility total of 613 (including S-Block) grievances is low for a medium security facility of this size.
The findings during this tour were as follows:

1) A good, experienced staff was drawn to work in the S-Block through the facility Executive Team, and;

2) The facility conducts quality team meetings consisting of security (captain, unit sergeant), guidance staff and the IGP supervisor. This group meets weekly and rotates between day and evening shifts.

One staff suggestion made during this tour was to reduce the PIMS level from three steps to a two step system. It was indicated that although the difference of inmate privileges between Level 2 and Level 3 is minimal, staff work time increases substantially between the two levels. Staff also stated that one inmate being changed from one level to another can cause a domino effect and could result in up to 10 inmate moves.

Another item addressed dealt with the number of inmates received who have disciplinary dispositions of long-term keeplock, i.e., 365 days. We had discussed this in a previous meeting and there was some thought to directing hearing officers that serious misbehaviors with confinement over 90 days, should warrant SHU time rather than keeplock. SHU time can be reduced to keeplock time, if necessary, through discretionary review.

Hub meetings are scheduled for IGP supervisors February 11 through March 5, 1999. The primary purpose of these meetings was the dissemination and review of the Inmate Grievance Program Training Manual. However, based on the above, other pertinent information has been earmarked. The sessions will include:

1) Reinforcement that correction sergeants are expected to be present for Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC) hearings;

2) Suggestion to increase inmate staffing of clerks assigned to the program, if needed, as outlined in Directive #4040, Section IV, I.;

3) The procedures utilized for non-calendared contacts to resolve problems before they are filed as grievances, and;

4) Information on Mid-State's quality team meetings to bring back to their facilities as a proposal for the executive teams to consider in any facility, not only S-Blocks.

We recognize that the IGRC gains credibility and the ability to resolve problems when there is active security supervisor participation in the process. Staff need to learn that we are trying to resolve the problem rather than just making a decision at the various levels of the IGP. Review of the IGRC inmate staffing may find that additional clerks can be assigned to not only process the increased grievance workload, but to get out into the facility and resolve inmate issues without the filing of a grievance. This, of course, will require superintendents to review their pass systems to achieve this possibility.
Although the grievance increase is directly attributed to the change in the inmate SHU population, positive action such as this is recommended to avoid an unmanageable number of grievances at both the facility and Central Office Review Committee (CORC) levels. I am forwarding this information for your consideration to be reinforced during the scheduled Hub Superintendents meetings.

cc: George J. Bartlett, Deputy Commissioner
§ 139. Grievance procedures

1. The commissioner shall establish, in each correctional institution under his jurisdiction, grievance resolution committees to resolve grievances of persons within such correctional institution. Such grievance resolution committees shall consist of five persons four of whom shall be entitled to vote, two of whom shall be inmates of such correctional institution, and a non-voting chairman.

2. The commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations establishing such procedures for the fair, simple and expeditious resolution of grievances as shall be deemed appropriate, having due regard for the constitutions and laws of the United States and of the state of New York. Such procedures shall include but not be limited to setting time limitations for the filing of complaints and replies thereto and for each stage of the grievance resolution process.

Historical Note

1975 Amendment. Subd. 1. L.1975, c. 867, § 1, eff. Feb. 5, 1976, enlarged the grievance committee from 3 to 5 persons, entitled 4 members to vote, increased the number of inmates on the committee from one to 2, and provided for a non-voting chairman.

Effective Date. Section effective Feb. 5, 1976, pursuant to L.1975, c. 866, § 2.

Former Section 139. Section, which related to prison punishment, was added L.1929, c. 243; repealed L.1970, c. 476, § 31; and is now covered in part by section 137.

Cross References

Grievance procedures at hospitals for mentally ill inmates, see section 405.

New York Codes, Rules and Regulations

Inmate grievance program, see 7 NYCRR Part 701.

Library References

Prisons ⇔ 12, 13.
C.J.S. Prisons and Rights of Prisoners
§§ 6, 20 to 25, 50 to 59.
§ 139. Grievance procedures

[See main volume for text of 1 and 2]

3. A person aggrieved by the decision of a grievance resolution committee may apply to the commissioner for review of the decision. The commissioner or his deputy may take such action as he deems appropriate to fairly and expeditiously resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of all parties.

4. The commission shall annually evaluate and assess the grievance procedures in correctional facilities, and make any recommendations with respect to the proper operation or improvement of the grievance procedures and provide such report to the commissioner and the chairmen of the senate codes and crime and corrections and assembly codes and correction committees.

5. The commissioner shall semi-annually report to the chairmen of the senate codes and crime and corrections committees and the assembly codes and correction committees on the nature and type of inmate grievances and unusual incidents, by facility.

6. The commissioner shall, upon request, provide the commission with any information or data necessary for the commission to carry out the mandates of this section.

(Amended L.1990, c. 373, § 1, 2.)

Historical and Statutory Notes

1990 Amendment. Subd. 3. L.1990, c. 373, § 1, eff. July 7, 1990, omitted provisions which authorized the commissioner to refer matters deemed unsatisfactorily resolved to the state commission of correction for review, allowed the commission to refer the matter to an independent arbitrator, and required that a copy of recommendation be sent to parties and that commissioner to respond in writing and make public his reasons for rejecting recommendations.


Practice Commentary

by William F. Pelgrin

This section requires the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services to establish a grievance mechanism in each correctional facility under the jurisdiction of the Department. The grievance procedure must be "fair, simple and expeditious." It is generally recognized that an effective and impartial grievance system for the timely resolution of inmate complaints is important for the safety, security and good order of the facility. The McKay Commission, appointed to investigate the causes of the Attica uprising, concluded that a major contributor to inmate tension was the lack of procedures to resolve inmate complaints in a non-violent manner. Section 139 was enacted as "an alternative to burdening the courts with matters which can and should be resolved administratively" and a way to "place the responsibility where it ought to be" by giving the Department an "opportunity to correct [a department procedure or practice] before the grievance is referred for outside review." Memorandum of State Executive Department, McKinney's Session Laws of N.Y., 1976, pp. 1705-1706.

Chapter 373 of the Laws of 1990 amends section 139 by deleting the requirement that the Commission of Correction review and make recommendations on individual grievances. This amendment requires the
§ 139  CORRECTION LAW

Commission on an annual basis to review and assess the grievance process and make any recommendations regarding its proper operation or improvement. Prior to this amendment, the Commission's role was to render advisory recommendations concerning each grievance referred to it by the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services. The elimination of this advisory step ensures that the grievance process is more expeditious and at the same time provides for oversight.

Notes of Decisions

4. Exhaustion of administrative remedies

Inmates seeking expunction from their records of all references to dismissed charges had exhausted administrative remedies attendant to process which led to entries in their files, and were not required to address problem through inmate grievance program. Garrett v. Coughlin, 1986, 133 Misc.2d 938, 509 N.Y.S.2d 232, affirmed 128 A.D.2d 210, 516 N.Y.S.2d 796.
MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES

Art. 6

Notes of Decisions

§ 139

Note 5

Purpose 1
Class action 3
Exhaustion of administrative remedies 4
Grievances within section 2
Transfer of inmate committee member 5

1. Purpose

Purpose of this section is to provide a means to fairly, simply and expeditiously resolve prisoner grievances. Johnson v. Ward, 1978, 64 A.D.2d 186, 409 N.Y.S.2d 670.

2. Grievances within section

In view of broad definition of "grievance" and power of Grievance Resolution Committee to determine what falls within definition of grievance, prisoner's complaint that file notation, regarding escape plan prisoner allegedly took part in, was made although prisoner had no opportunity to confront his accuser and that due to such notation prisoner was transferred from one prison to another was cognizable under grievance program. Patterson v. Smith, 1981, 53 N.Y.2d 98, 440 N.Y.S.2d 600, 423 N.E.2d 23.

3. Class action

Prisoner was not denied due process or equal protection of the law because his grievance as to prison rule requiring the cutting of all inmates hair was not treated as class action. Solomon v. Coughlin, 1982, 89 A.D.2d 1045, 456 N.Y.S.2d 125.

4. Exhaustion of administrative remedies

See, also, Notes of Decisions under CPLR 7801.

Where inmate, who brought Article 78 proceeding seeking to expunge from his records all reference to escape plan inmate was allegedly involved in, failed to pursue administrative remedy available to him through grievance procedure, proceedings should have been dismissed without prejudice to further proceedings under grievance procedure. Patterson v. Smith, 1981, 53 N.Y.2d 98, 440 N.Y.S.2d 600, 423 N.E.2d 23.

Prisoner who was found guilty, after superintendent's proceeding, of violating disciplinary rule was not entitled to challenge determination of guilt by filing grievance, where written appeal mechanism was available. Adorno v. Jones, 1985, 113 A.D.2d 973, 493 N.Y.S.2d 644.

Where an inmate bringing an Article 78 proceeding has failed to pursue an administrative remedy available to him through grievance procedure, the proceeding should be dismissed without prejudice to further proceedings under the grievance procedure. Davidson v. Scully, 1985, 110 A.D.2d 836, 488 N.Y.S.2d 243.

Prisoner could not maintain action to compel correspondence department of prison to accept certain letters for mailing where prisoner failed to pursue administrative remedy available to him under this section. King v. Correspondence Dept. of Clinton Correctional Facility, 1982, 89 A.D.2d 1043, 455 N.Y.S.2d 898, appeal denied 58 N.Y.2d 601, 458 N.Y.S.2d 1025, 444 N.E.2d 1012.

Where this section had provided for establishment of grievance procedures through which persons within correctional institutions could resolve their grievances and procedures had been implemented by facility superintendent to deal with complaints sought to be reviewed in court, and petitioning prisoner had failed to utilize such procedures, petitions were properly dismissed for failure to exhaust available administrative remedies. Hall v. Lefevre, 1981, 84 A.D.2d 622, 444 N.Y.S.2d 230, appeal denied 55 N.Y.2d 603, 447 N.Y.S.2d 1025, 431 N.E.2d 643.

5. Transfer of inmate committee member

Article 78 petition filed by prisoner, who sought to be transferred back to correctional facility, failed to state claim for relief on theory that his transfer from that facility to another had been related to his membership in the inmate liaison committee of the transferor facility. Sebastiano v. Harris, 1980, 76 A.D.2d 1004, 429 N.Y.S.2d 288, affirmed 54 N.Y.2d 1014, 446 N.Y.S.2d 261, 430 N.E.2d 1314.

This section, setting up an inmate grievance procedure imposes a limitation on exercise of discretion by commissioner of correction with respect to transfer of inmates within system to extent that an inmate member of an inmate grievance resolution committee may not be
§ 139
Note 5

transferred without a prior hearing, rules of which must embrace protection provided for in Wolff, unless inmate member's presence or conduct at institution or facility creates an emergency and transfer is immediately necessary or protect facility or its personnel, in which event hearing on the transfer must be held as soon as practicable at receiving facility. Johnson v. Ward, 1978, 64 A.D.2d 186, 409 N.Y.S.2d 670.
I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to modify the instructions contained in Directive #4040, "Inmate Grievance Program," and to assist facilities specifically approved by the Director, Inmate Grievance Program, in implementing the program at those facilities.

II. GENERAL

A. This plan recognizes that there are certain unique factors present in some facilities' operations which are not present in general confinement facilities. This plan addresses itself to the following factors which limit the availability of inmates to function as inmate representatives or to participate in the Inmate Grievance Program:

1. Inmates transferred to some facilities generally are within six months of meeting the parole board; and

2. Inmates at some facilities are involved in temporary release programs spending from six (6) to fourteen (14) hours daily in pursuit of employment or education, and have regular weekend furloughs as well as daily family visits.

B. Facilities authorized to implement this modification plan shall comply with Directive #4040, "Inmate Grievance Program," except as specified below.

III. STAFF COORDINATION

The superintendent shall designate a staff member to be responsible for coordinating grievance activities within the facility, recording and processing grievances through each step, and reporting monthly grievance activity to the Director, Inmate Grievance Program.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. First Step

1. Inmate grievance forms shall be made available to any inmate through the facility's duty office within twenty-four (24) hours of a request.

2. An inmate may seek assistance from any other inmate or staff member of the inmate's choice.

3. The completed grievance form shall be transmitted to the designated staff person who shall attempt to help resolve the grievance informally. At Shock Incarceration Facilities an inmate may, if appropriate, air his or her grievance during a scheduled evening Network Community Meeting in an attempt to resolve it informally.

4. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally within four (4) working days, the designated staff shall convene an IGRC hearing within seven (7) working days from the date the grievance was received by that staff person. The IGRC shall be composed of two staff representatives appointed by the superintendent, two inmates selected by the grievant, and a non-voting chairperson designated by the superintendent or designee.

5. At the IGRC hearing, the inmate, the advisor, and the other parties shall hear the grievance, and the IGRC shall render a decision/recommendation.
B. Second Step

1. Within four (4) working days of receiving the written decision/recommendation by the IGRC on the grievance complaint form, the inmate or any direct party to the grievance may appeal the IGRC decision/recommendation to the superintendent by filing an appeal form with the person designated by the superintendent. If no appeal is filed, it will be presumed that the inmate or direct party accepts the committee's decision/recommendation.

2. The normal procedure for step two (Directive 4040, "Inmate Grievance Program," Section V-B) shall then be followed.

C. Third Step

1. Within four (4) working days after receipt of the superintendent's written response to the grievance, the inmate or any direct party to the grievance may appeal the superintendent's action to the Central Office Review Committee (CORC) by completing the Notice of Decision to Appeal and returning it to the person designated by the superintendent.

2. The normal procedure for step three (Directive 4040, "Inmate Grievance Program," Section V-C) shall then be followed.
APPENDIX I I - IGP FORMS
STATE OF NEW YORK - DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
INMATE GRIEVANCE COMPLAINT

Grievance No.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Date

Name ___________________________ Dept.No. ____________ Housing Unit ____________

Program ____________ AM ____________ PM

(Please Print or Type - This form must be filed within 14 days of Grievance Incident)

Description of Problem: (Please make as brief as possible)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

___________________________
Grievant Signature

Date: ______________

Grievance Clerk

Date: ______________

Advisor Requested □ YES □ NO Who: __________________________________________

Action requested by inmate:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

This Grievance has been informally resolved as follows:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

This Informal Resolution is accepted:
(To be completed only if resolved prior to hearing)

___________________________
Grievant Signature

Date: ______________

If unresolved, you are entitled to a hearing by the Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC).
Date Returned to Inmate __________________________ IGRC Members __________________________

Chairperson __________________________

Return within 4 days and check appropriate boxes.

☐ I disagree with IGRC response.

☐ I agree with the IGRC response.

☐ I have reviewed deadlocked responses. Pass-Thru to Superintendent

☐ I wish to appeal to the Superintendent.

Signed __________________________

Grievant __________________________ Date __________________________

Grievance Clerk's Receipt __________________________ Date __________________________

To be completed by Grievance Clerk.

Grievance Appealed to the Superintendent __________________________ Date __________________________

Grievance forwarded to the Superintendent for action __________________________ Date __________________________
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<th>GRIEVANCE NO.</th>
<th>DATE FILED</th>
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<td>FACILITY</td>
<td>DATE DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRIEVANT NAME</td>
<td>DIV. NO.</td>
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<td>SIGNATURE OF REPORT WRITER</td>
<td>DATE</td>
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</table>

NAME OF PERSON(S)/TITLE AND/OR DEPARTMENT INVOLVED:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

(Please specify name of person(s) whom you have received the various facts from.)

RELEVANT DOCS/FACILITY POLICY - CORC/COMMISSIONER DECISION

ADDITIONAL PERTINENT STATEMENT BY GRIEVANT:
### APPEAL STATEMENT

If you wish to refer the above decision of the Superintendent please sign below and return this copy to your Inmate Grievance Clerk. You have four (4) working days from receipt of this notice to file your appeal. Please state why you are appealing this decision to C.O.R.C.

---

**GRIEVANT SIGNATURE**  
**DATE**

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**GRIEVANCE CLERK'S SIGNATURE**  
**DATE**

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<td>CLASS CODE</td>
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<td>DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE</td>
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**REFERRAL STATEMENT**

If you wish to refer the above decision of the Central Office Review Committee, please sign below and return this copy to your Inmate Grievance Clerk. You have four (4) working days from receipt of this notice to file your referral. Please state why you are referring this decision to the State Commission.

 signature

__

GRIEVANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

GRIEVANCE CLERK'S SIGNATURE

DATE

FORM 2134 (6/88)
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<th>Inmate Name, Number, Unit</th>
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<th>Class Code</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>ON-HAND BEGINNING OF MONTH - PENDING ACTION AT COMMITTEE LEVEL (no action taken; pending hearing, decision, etc.) From Line 14 of Last Report</td>
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<td>WITHDRAWN (grievances withdrawn by grievant prior to a formal decision from the IGRC)</td>
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<td>NOT HEARD BY COMMITTEE - PASSED THROUGH TO SUPERINTENDENT (Harassment, emergencies, untimely action by committee)</td>
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<td>HEARD BY COMMITTEE - RESOLVED FAVORABLE TO GRIEVANT and Closed - No Appeal Necessary</td>
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<td>HEARD BY COMMITTEE - Dismissed and Closed In Accord with Dr. #4040 III-A, 8, E; V-A-3 and 5; and V-H-2.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>PASSED THROUGH TO CORC (Departmental)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>NUMBER OF INFORMAL NON-CALENDED INMATE CONTACTS WITH THE GRIEVANCE OFFICE</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>NUMBER OF GRIEVANCES FILED FROM SPECIAL HOUSING UNITS</td>
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