



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD**  
OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE  
3/18/13

PAGE NUMBER  
1 of 5

NUMBER  
**DOC 550.100**

**POLICY**

TITLE  
**OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM**

**REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:**

- Effective: 3/10/83 DOC 700.100
- Revised: 9/1/85
- Revised: 4/15/89 DOC 550.100
- Revised: 12/15/89
- Revised: 12/15/93
- Revised: 10/28/99
- Revised: 3/1/05
- Revised: 9/22/06 AB 06-010
- Revised: 3/15/07
- Revised: 3/4/09
- Revised: 3/1/12
- Revised: 3/18/13

**SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:**


I.B.4. & 6. - Added clarifying language  
 II.D.7. - Removed unnecessary language  
 Added II.E. on grievances alleging sexual misconduct  
 Added III.C.6. regarding new form usage  
 Numerous revisions to Attachment 1

**APPROVED:**

Signature on file

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**BERNARD WARNER**, Secretary  
 Department of Corrections

2/14/13  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Signed

 <p>STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</p> <p><b>POLICY</b></p>	<b>APPLICABILITY</b> <b>PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD</b> <b>OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS</b>		
	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 3/18/13	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b> 2 of 5	<b>NUMBER</b> <b>DOC 550.100</b>
	<b>TITLE</b> <b>OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM</b>		

## REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 9A.44.160](#); [WAC 137-08](#); [ACA 4-4284](#); [ACA 4-4394](#); [ACA 4C-01](#); [ACA 6B-03](#); [DOC 490.800 Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Misconduct](#); Offender Grievance Program Manual

## POLICY:

- I. The Department seeks to reduce tension and provide a stable correctional environment by providing a formal mechanism to address conflict through the administrative resolution of complaints.
- II. The Department has established a structured process for responding to offender grievances which provides efficient and timely resolution of complaints. An effective grievance system is characterized by a large portion of complaints being resolved at the lowest level.
- III. The grievance mechanism will not be used as a disciplinary procedure.
- IV. The Offender Grievance Program Manual provides detailed instructions for use of the process and is the reference for all procedural decisions.

## DIRECTIVE:


- I. Responsibilities
  - A. Each facility will have an employee designated as the Grievance Coordinator who, while in the performance of his/her grievance duties, will be directly responsible to the Superintendent/Community Corrections Supervisor (CCS).
    1. The Superintendent/CCS may delegate direct day to day supervision of a Grievance Coordinator to his/her immediate subordinate. The designee will not hinder the Grievance Coordinator's access to the Superintendent/CCS regarding grievance matters.
  - B. The Grievance Coordinator will:
    1. Ensure grievances are picked up at least twice a week,
    2. Promote informal resolution of complaints, when appropriate,
    3. Complete appropriate grievance forms,
    4. Ensure the offender is interviewed at least once prior to Level III,
    5. Ensure responses are completed within established timeframes, and
    6. Provide orientation to employees/contract staff and offenders.

 <p>STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</p> <p><b>POLICY</b></p>	<b>APPLICABILITY</b> <b>PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD</b> <b>OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS</b>		
	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 3/18/13	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b> 3 of 5	<b>NUMBER</b> <b>DOC 550.100</b>
	<b>TITLE</b> <b>OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM</b>		


- C. CCOs will provide offenders on community supervision with Offender Grievance Program Handout (Attachment 1) during initial intake.
- D. [6B-03] The Grievance Program Manager will evaluate the grievance procedures to ensure they are efficient and effective. The quality and nature of offender grievances are aggregated and analyzed annually. This information will be documented in an annual report.

## II. Grievable and Non-Grievable Items

- A. All offenders are expected to attempt informal resolution prior to filing a complaint and to participate in the resolution of their individual grievances.
- B. [4-4284] [4-4394] [4C-01] [6B-03] An offender confined in a Department facility or on active community supervision status may grieve his/her place of confinement or conditions of supervision when it relates to:
  - 1. Policies.
  - 2. Application of policies.
  - 3. Lack of policies, rules, or procedures that directly affect his/her living conditions.
  - 4. Actions of employees, contract staff, or volunteers over whom the facility or supervising office has jurisdiction, including retaliation against the offender for his/her good faith participation in the grievance program.
  - 5. Actions of other offenders.
- C. Only incidents, policies, or practices that affect the offender personally and over which the Department has jurisdiction, including health related issues, are grievable. [4-4394] [4C-01]
- D. The following items are not grievable:
  - 1. State and federal law, including Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
  - 2. Court decisions.
  - 3. Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) decisions.
  - 4. Court ordered Pre-sentence Investigation (PSI) reports.

 <p>STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</p> <p><b>POLICY</b></p>	<b>APPLICABILITY</b> <b>PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD</b> <b>OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS</b>		
	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 3/18/13	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b> 4 of 5	<b>NUMBER</b> <b>DOC 550.100</b>
	<b>TITLE</b> <b>OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM</b>		

5. Community Corrections Officer (CCO) recommendations/testimony to a Department Hearing Officer, court, and/or the ISRB.
  6. Special conditions imposed by a CCO per Department policy.
  7. Any Department approved procedure that has a formal appeal process.
- E. Grievances alleging sexual misconduct will be forwarded to the PREA Coordinator per DOC 490.800 Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Misconduct and will not be reviewed through the grievance process.
- F. The Offender Grievance Program Manual contains in-depth definitions of what is and is not grievable, as well as the process for filing complaints and appealing responses.
1. In Prisons and Work Releases, an Offender Grievance Program Manual will be kept in an area accessible to offenders.
  2. In Field Offices, the Offender Grievance Program Manual will be available for review in the lobby, upon request.
- III. Process [4-4284] [6B-03]
- A. To file a complaint:
1. Offenders in Prison and Work Release will complete and submit DOC 05-165 Offender Complaint to the Grievance Coordinator, along with documentation demonstrating an attempt to informally resolve the issue.
    - a. This form is available in the living units, other designated locations, or from employees.
  2. Offenders on community supervision will complete the form(s) at the local Field Office and forward to the Grievance Program Manager at Headquarters, along with documentation demonstrating an attempt to informally resolve the issue.
- B. The grievance mechanism contains an appeal system that allows an offender to request review at a higher level if s/he is not satisfied with a response. The offender is entitled to a final review by an employee not assigned to the facility or office.
- C. The following forms may also be used in the grievance process:
1. DOC 05-166 Level I - Initial Grievance,

 <p>STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</p> <p><b>POLICY</b></p>	<b>APPLICABILITY</b> <b>PRISON/WORK RELEASE/FIELD</b> <b>OFFENDER/SPANISH MANUALS</b>		
	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 3/18/13	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b> 5 of 5	<b>NUMBER</b> <b>DOC 550.100</b>
	<b>TITLE</b> <b>OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROGRAM</b>		

2. DOC 05-168 Appeal to Level II,
3. DOC 05-169 Appeal to Level III,
4. DOC 05-170 Employee Conduct Grievance,
5. DOC 05-171 Notification of Time Extension,
6. DOC 05-311 Grievance Investigator Report, and
7. DOC 20-303 Notification of Employee Conduct/Reprisal Grievance.

#### IV. Confidentiality

- A. Disclosure of grievance documents, records, reports, and other information will be subject to the provisions of WAC 137-08.

#### DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

[Offender Grievance Program Handout \(Attachment 1\)](#)

#### DOC FORMS:

[DOC 05-165 Offender Complaint](#)

[DOC 05-166 Level I - Initial Grievance](#)

[DOC 05-168 Appeal to Level II](#)

[DOC 05-169 Appeal to Level III](#)

[DOC 05-170 Employee Conduct Grievance](#)

[DOC 05-171 Notification of Time Extension](#)

[DOC 05-311 Grievance Investigator Report](#)

[DOC 20-303 Notification of Employee Conduct/Reprisal Grievance](#)