

Chester County Prison Security Improvement and Enhancements
Update for Pocopson Township – 1/22/2024

Acting Warden Holland has provided the updates below to the Pocopson Township Board of Supervisors.

It is important to keep in mind that the number of concurrent projects needs to be carefully managed and scheduled in order to comply with prison procedures. Security improvement projects are prioritized for funding and implementation.

1. Exercise area enclosure is still under design and consideration of other options
2. Basketball hoops may remain in the exercise yard once the enclosure coverings are completed
3. All Sally port gates for vehicular traffic on the exterior of the facility have been updated to enhance reliability.
4. Removal of shed roofs is underway to either put metal underneath or dismantle the roofs completely.
5. The area above the entrance door to the exercise yard has been closed off with small link security fencing.
6. GPS ankle bracelets are in progress and will be used for inmates in the work release program.
7. Uniforms are delivered and are being stenciled with Chester County Prison
8. Staffing update: As of 12/14/23, 100% of counselors are onboard, maintenance is down by 4, and CO's are down by 47. However, these numbers fluctuate with attrition and hiring occurring every day. 16 applications have been processed and are vetting out the potential hires.
9. The resident exercise yard and observation tower with supervisors is in place with 1 in the tower and 1 on the ground.
10. Razor wire installation project for prison enhancements for 2023 is completed. More razor wire is planned as we continue to review our possible area of improvement. This is not a once and done project.

11. An additional 30 security cameras will be installed over the next 6 months.
12. Hiring is underway for 7/24 security camera operators/monitors. In addition, a backup control room will be added for redundancy.
13. Regular drills and exercises with staff are underway with 1 conducted in December across the 2nd shift and night shifts. These drills included the Chester County Dept of Emergency Services.
14. Department of Corrections inspection will be conducted in May.
15. Alarm system at 3600 square ft of prison exterior fence will be installed within 3 months
16. Drone program for aerial observation is pending presentation to the Prison Board.
17. Outside accreditation from national source or organization will be applied for after review of policies and procedures.
18. The canine program should be operational in March. Vehicles are ready and 3 canine vendors are under review. The two canines are assigned only to the prison but will be available as a County resource. When deployed as a county resource they will fall under the Sheriffs jurisdiction.
19. High caliber training programs for staff has started. POSIT and NJSACOP Command & Leadership Academy. 10 in POSIT and 2 in NJSACOP Command & Leadership Academy. See below for descriptions of both courses.

POSIT Course Description

The Penn State Justice and Safety Institute (JASI) is pleased to partner with our co-sponsor to present this intensive and innovative program designed to provide a better understanding of the roles, duties, and functions of a first-line supervisor. This highly interactive four-and-a-half-day program is designed for first-line supervisors and those under consideration for promotion.

There are many challenges to becoming an effective first-line law enforcement supervisor. The Police Supervisor In-Service Training (POSIT) program provides first-line supervisors with the

necessary tools to be strong leaders within their organizations and communities. Specifically, POSIT can help prepare first-line supervisors to meet the challenge of “critical shift” into a supervisory position. The transition from being a line officer to a supervisor requires a specific mindset and skill set to be an integral part of the management team.

POSIT examines leadership principles, specifically situational leadership. The course focuses on the legal aspects of supervision, examines the importance of policy for effective management of personnel, and identifies liability issues that can arise if policies are not followed.

Managing employees is critical at the first-line supervisor level. Subordinates are reacting to rapidly unfolding situations and are in direct view of the public 24 hours a day. POSIT provides first-line supervisors with concepts and practices for effective performance evaluations, coaching programs, and motivational strategies. The course also covers hostile work environments and discipline as a supervisory tool. All the concepts in the course are reinforced through group activities and scenarios to develop the critical thinking skills of the attendees.

NJSACOP

In recognizing the challenges in law enforcement during the upcoming decades, the NJSACOP has made a commitment to be in the forefront of innovation and change. The primary component of that commitment is the development of future leaders.

In 1993, NJSACOP officials traveled to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to work with the Academy's Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership to adapt the fabled West Point model of command and leadership to the needs of law enforcement.

The result of this collaboration is the NJSACOP Command & Leadership Academy, a unique blend of theory and application. Candidates with the greatest leadership potential are selected for this highly competitive program from municipal, county, state, and federal agencies from throughout the region.

For a program of this caliber, law enforcement professionals who are selected make more than a casual commitment; it is an intensive, demanding course that will pay dividends for the participant and his or her agency for a lifetime.