

Australian Capital Territory

Corrections Management (Prisoner at Risk, Court Transport Unit) Policy 2008

Notifiable instrument NI2008- 454

made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, section 14(1) (Corrections policies and operating procedures)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Prisoner at Risk, Court Transport Unit) Policy 2008*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

3 Policy

I make the

PRISONER AT RISK, CTU POLICY

in Schedule 1 to this instrument, to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

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Executive Director
ACT Corrective Services
19 September 2008



Court Transport Unit (CTU)



PRISONER AT RISK POLICY

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Purpose

To outline the way in which prisoners who are deemed to be “Prisoner at Risk” (PAR) are managed and escorted while in the custody at the CTU.

Authority

Legislation

Corrections Management Act 2007, chapter 5

Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005, sections 20 and 21

Policy

Prisoner at Risk (PAR)

The term PAR refers to any prisoner who has:

- threatened to harm him or herself;
- been assessed as being at risk of harming him or herself; and/or
- recently engaged in suicidal or self-harming behaviour.

Principles

Court appearances can be a particularly stressful time for prisoners. As such, prisoners who are in custody at the CTU may present a higher suicide or self-harm risk when compared to persons in custody at a correctional centre.

In order to reduce the incidence of suicidal or self-harming behavior, emphasis must be placed on:

- monitoring and observation of all prisoners;
- sharing timely and comprehensive information between ACTCS, the ACT Courts and Tribunals, the AFP, and ACT Health; and
- facilitating mental health and health assessments.

Observation of prisoners at the CTU

To maintain safe custody, all prisoners received into the CTU will be subject to visual and camera observations. Prior to a health assessment being undertaken by ACT

Health, observations will be undertaken at least every 15 minutes for adults and 5 minutes for young people.

Where a prisoner has engaged in suicidal or self-harming behaviour the level of observation will be increased to every 5 minutes.

Where a prisoner is determined to be at an extremely high risk of harm, it may be necessary for a Corrections Officer to continually observe the prisoner. The discretion for this rests with the CO3 in charge of the CTU.

Assessment of PAR

Prior to any assessment conducted by MHACT and Corrections Health, all prisoners will be identified as “*awaiting health assessment*”. This classification indicates to all Corrections Officers that the medical and mental health of the prisoner is unknown.

Any prisoner who demonstrates or is suspected of suicidal or self-harming behaviour will be assessed by Mental Health ACT (MHACT) prior to escort.

Prisoners assessed by MHACT as being a PAR will be placed on the observation regime recommended by MHACT. The observation regime will be implemented by the CO3 and maintained until the risk status is reclassified by MHACT.

Escorts

It is possible that a prisoner may engage in suicide or self-harming behaviour during an escort irrespective of whether the prisoner was assessed as being a PAR prior to the escort. As such, all prisoners will be subject to 5 minute observations during escorts.

Where, following an assessment by MHACT, a prisoner is deemed to be at (a known) risk of suicide or self-harm, additional considerations may be made with regard to the following:

- the functionality of the escort vehicle (i.e. lighting, camera and communications systems);
- the type of vehicle for escort; and
- the physical location of the prisoner in the vehicle i.e. vehicle compartment.

Escorts from NSW

Prior to escorting a prisoner from a NSW correctional centre, the designated Senior Escort Officer (SEO) will conduct a handover with a NSW Corrections Officer. This handover will include the prisoner’s risk status, security classification, and any other appropriate information.

Irrespective of the outcome of this handover, all prisoners will be subject to 5 minute observations during escorts.

Suicidal or self-harming behaviour during escort

If during an escort, a prisoner is observed engaging in suicidal or self-harming behaviour, the SEO will contact the CTU control room immediately and:

- divert to the nearest correctional facility or police station; or
- stop the vehicle and respond to the situation.

The SEO, along with the CO3, will determine the appropriate course of action. This decision will take into account the degree of suicide or self-harm risk, the number of prisoners on board, and any other considerations as appropriate.

Forms/Templates

[Assessment of PAR](#)

[Attempted Suicide/Self Harm Checklist](#)

[Change of PAR Status](#)

[Notification of Prisoner at Risk](#)

Related policies and procedures

[CTU Escort Policy and Procedure](#)

[Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure](#)

Date	Changes Made	Approved By	Signature