

# 2020 Oregon Wildfires and the Department of Corrections' Response

## Evacuation Numbers

| Move                                               | Evacuation | Return    | # of AICs |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (→ DRCI Medium) | 9/10-9/11  | 9/15-9/18 | 1,303     |
| Deer Ridge Correctional Facility (→ DRCI Minimum)  | 9/10-9/11  | 9/17      | 766       |
| Mill Creek Correctional Facility (→ OSP)           | 9/8        | 9/10      | 257       |
| Oregon State Correctional Institution (→ OSP)      | 9/8        | 9/15      | 824       |
| Santiam Correctional Institution (→ OSP)           | 9/8        | 9/10      | 363       |

The wildfires have created an incredibly difficult situation for Oregonians and the Department of Corrections (DOC) has not escaped the impact of this emergency. Our daily operations have been affected and life at some of our institutions is not ideal for those who live and work at them. However, life and safety are our first priority and we will return to normal operations as soon as conditions allow.

In times of crisis, rumors can spread quickly. To minimize stress on AIC friends and family, victims, and all other involved parties, please only share information with loved ones you know to be true. Please see below for a number of frequently asked questions.

### **Was DOC really prepared to evacuate due to wildfires?**

DOC has extensive emergency preparedness plans that cover evacuations—specifically for the Cascadia earthquake, which covers logistics that go above and beyond the evacuations DOC has had to complete so far in this unprecedented fire season. However, there are always unique circumstances we cannot predict and so some parts of our plan did not go as smoothly as we would have liked. For example, we could not stop at our planned restroom stops because many of them were closed due to the wildfires. DOC's normal transport vehicles have bathrooms on board, but alternative buses had to be used given the number of AICs being transported. We recognized and understand this was an issue and will make significant changes during the return trips.

### **Were evacuating adults in custody given medications in a timely manner?**

During an emergency, operations do not run as efficiently as normal. Medications were provided to AICs, but not always on their normal schedule.

For example, DOC could not legally process a medication administration line (med line) while Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) adults in custody were on a bus because narcotics must be secured. Med line resumed late Friday morning and evening med line went late into the evening. Morning med line was resumed the following day and was back to normal distribution by Saturday, September 12.

### **How many meals did adults in custody receive before, during, and after evacuation?**

AICs received two hot meals on Thursday before prior to evacuating as well as a sack lunch.

Friday September 11 was the first day at the facility - AICs were not processed in until 9 a.m. At that time, several female AICs quickly assisted with making meals in the kitchen. These women were part of the team and they got a brunch and a hot dinner. Due to the increased capacity at the institution, the portions were smaller than normal.

## 2020 Oregon Wildfires and the Department of Corrections' Response

Saturday AICs received two hot meals, breakfast and dinner, and a sack lunch which was enhanced from the facility's supplies. The portion sizes for these meals were normal. That became the standard meal practice until they returned back to their institution.

### **What are the housing conditions like at OSP and DRCI?**

The housing units Coffee Creek Correctional Facility adults in custody occupied are the same cells/bunk areas that DRCI adults in custody occupied just hours before their arrival. DRCI had to move quickly to transfer DRCI adults in custody to the institution's minimum facility to make room for the arriving CCCF AICs. The minimum facility was cleaned before AICs were moved over. Because of the emergency situation and the rush to evacuate, some areas may not have been thoroughly cleaned prior to CCCF adults in custody moving in; however, DRCI made cleaning materials available to all units so they were able to clean as soon as their primary needs had been met (food, water, shelter, sleep, etc.).

Both OSP and DRCI have had to manage housing AICs in areas where they would not normally be housed and social distancing became even more difficult—just as it has in many emergency shelters for the general public. And just like in many public emergency shelters, some AICs have had to sleep on mattresses on the floor, given the limited space.

Both OSP and DRCI did their best to mitigate the effects of smoke inside the institutions. At DRCI, facility doors were kept closed as much as possible, and staff changed out the filters on swamp coolers.

### **What measures is DOC taking to limit exposure to COVID-19 for evacuating adults in custody?**

As usual, all employees and adults in custody are encouraged to wear their masks whenever six feet of social distancing is not possible. Additional masks were provided to evacuees who forgot to pack or lost their masks in the move as soon as possible, and many AICs were provided with additional masks so they can change them out more often due to the wildfire smoke.

COVID-19 positive cases were never in contact with the rest of the population during evacuations.

### **Why were conflicting adults in custody put together at OSP (causing fights)? Why were different security level adults in custody allowed to be in the same location?**

DOC houses minimum and medium security AICs together all the time. We have to do this for a variety of reasons: medical and mental health needs that can't be as fully addressed at a minimum security institution. Also, we didn't have enough minimum beds to house all of our minimum custody AICs. All of our medium custody prisons house both – minimum and medium AICs. This is our normal practice and we manage it successfully every day. There are very few AICs who are maximum custody and they are always in restricted housing. Examples of this restrictive housing include the Behavioral Health Unit at OSP and the Intensive Management Unit at SRCI.

On Tuesday, September 8, we evacuated adults in custody from Mill Creek Correctional Facility, Santiam Correctional Institution, and Oregon State Correctional Institution. Adults in custody from these three prisons were relocated to the Oregon State Penitentiary. Steps were taken immediately to separate the AICs by facility within OSP as much as possible. There were occasions (for example, during meal time) where AICs from different facilities had to share the same area. Given this unusual scenario (not to mention the heightened stress among AICs due to current events), OSP had several altercations last week. No stabbings were reported. OSP staff have been working closely with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to identify potential conflicts, and appropriate moves were made to ensure the safety of all. As a result, OSP has had no further altercations since the end of last week.

## 2020 Oregon Wildfires and the Department of Corrections' Response

### **Was DRCI cleaned before the AICs were moved?**

Each housing cell in the medium facility is cleaned and sanitized daily. AIC orderlies sanitized hard surfaces on the units multiple times during the day. Dayrooms and general areas are also cleaned multiple times during the day to include handrails, bathrooms, showers, etc. Basic cleaning supplies are stored on each unit for intermittent needs. The units had been cleaned in the normal fashion up until the AICs left each unit.