

# **Vermont Department of Corrections Annual Internal Report - Sexual Victimization**

## **An Analysis of 2017 & 2018 Data**



Prepared by Jennifer Sprafke, PREA Director – March 10, 2020

The Vermont Department of Corrections is committed to preventing sexual victimization, and promoting safety and security for all inmates and staff.

Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility and Northwest State Correctional Facility have completed their audits and are in the 180-day remediation period. The Remaining facilities will be audited during year 2 and 3 of the audit cycle.

### **Introduction**

Each year the VT DOC collects accurate and uniform data for all allegations of sexual victimization and completes the Survey of Sexual Victimization Report (SSV). The SSV report provides information on all allegations of sexual victimization and is posted on the departments Public Web Page. The following analysis is the VT DOC's annual internal report for substantiated inmate on inmate and staff on inmate sexual victimization incidents. This report provides a comparison of incidents from 2017 and 2018 and is utilized by the PREA Director, in conjunction with other department staff, to identify opportunities for corrective measures aimed to prevent future incidents of sexual victimization.

### **Data**

The summary on the last page of this report provides the number of substantiated staff sexual misconduct, staff sexual harassment, inmate on inmate sexual abuse and inmate on inmate sexual harassment incidents.

The number of substantiated staff on inmate sexual misconduct incidents increased from zero in 2017 to four in 2018. The number of substantiated staff sexual harassment incidents decreased from one in 2017 to zero in 2018. VT DOC continues to see low numbers of staff



involved incidents. This appears to be directly related to inmate sexual safety policy, procedures and practices, including staff and inmate education.

The number of inmate on inmate substantiated nonconsensual sexual acts remained the same from 2017 to 2018. The number of substantiated inmate on inmate abusive sexual contacts increased from two in 2017 to three in 2018. The number of substantiated inmate on inmate sexual harassment incidents decreased from eleven in 2017 to three in 2018. The overall decrease in the number from fifteen to eleven is attributed to the systemwide recognition and awareness of sexual abuse indicators. As staff receive more and higher-level training, they identify a higher number of behaviors and indicators of abuse.

## **Problem Area Identification & Corrective Measures**

### *Staff Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment*

Location of Incidents: There was one substantiated cases of staff on inmate victimization in 2017 and four in 2018. Most of the incidents occurred in common areas including the kitchen, and unit dayroom. One of the reported incidents occurred in 2013 and was reported in 2018.

Classification of Staff Involved: All cases involved a full time security staff member.

Corrective Measures: Continue with current staff orientation and training programs. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

### *Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts*

Location of Incidents: There was one substantiated inmate on inmate nonconsensual act in 2017. This incident occurred when inmates in the unit day room entered another cell. There was one incident in 2018 and that occurred in the victims cell.

Corrective Measures: Continue with informed housing, bed and program assignments with the goal of keeping separate those inmates at high risk of being sexually victimized from those at high risk of being sexually abusive. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.



### *Inmate Abusive Sexual Contacts*

Location of Incidents: Both substantiated incidents in 2017 took place in common areas inside the living units. For the 2018 incidents, 2 occurred in the victim's cell and one occurred in common areas. These numbers are consistent.

Corrective Measures: Continue with comprehensive staff and inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our facility resident handbooks. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for increased supervision and/or increased camera coverage.

### *Inmate Sexual Harassment*

Location of Incidents: Nine of the eleven 2017 substantiated incidents (or 82%) took place in common areas (5 in the day room, 3 in the recreation yard and 1 in the unit bathroom). Compared to 2018 where one incident occurred when the perpetrator entered the victim's cell and two incidents occurred in the unit cell.

Corrective measures: Continue with comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section in facility handbooks. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

### *Incidents by Facility*

Facility Locations: The numbers that follow are the collective total of substantiated incidents over the period of 2017 and 2018, Northwest State Correctional Facility (NWSCF) reported eleven substantiated incidents. Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF) reported five substantiated incidents. Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) and Northeast Correctional Facility (NECC) each reported three substantiated incidents. Northern State Correctional Facility (NSCF) reported two substantiated incidents. Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility (MVRCF) reported one substantiated incident. Southeast State Correctional Facility closed.

Corrective Measures: Continue with staff training and comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker orientations, newsletters, posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our



facility handbooks. Use incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

#### *Predatory and Vulnerable Classification Strategies*

All inmates are assessed during intake and upon transfer to another facility for their risk of being sexually victimized by other inmates or sexually predatory toward other inmates. Inmates identifying as transgender or intersex have housing and program assignments reviewed at minimum twice annually.

Corrective Actions: Continue with current screening and review protocols to make informed bed, housing, and work and program assignments for all inmates.

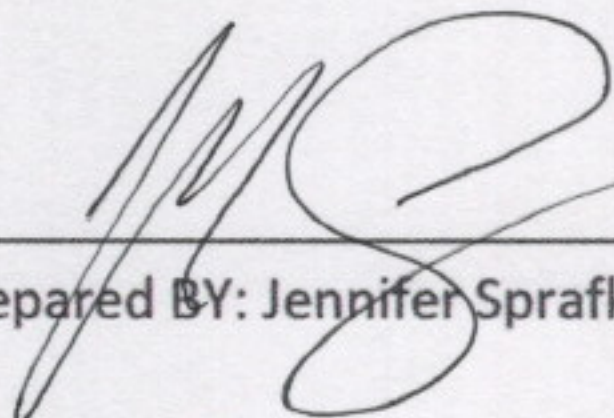
#### *Incident Review and Follow-up*

The VT DOC conducts incident reviews for all substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents of sexual abuse. Each of the three inmate on inmate substantiated sexual abuse incidents occurred in or when inmates had access to unit common areas.

Corrective Measures: Continue with individual incident review and corrective measure practices to include review and sign off by key personnel at both the facility and central office level. Use aggregated incident by specific location data to identify areas for changes to supervision practices, increased camera coverage and/or other corrective measures.

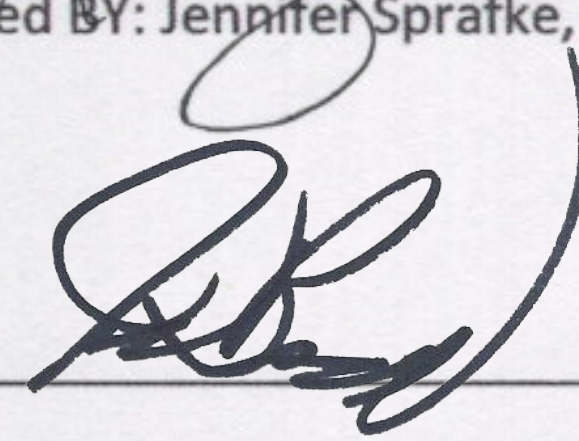
## **Conclusion**

Inmate sexual safety has and continues to be a top priority for the VT DOC. The requirements outlined in the Final PREA Standards for Adult Prisons and Jails provide direction for the department to expand its efforts toward preventing, detecting and responding to sexual victimization. Implementing the corrective measures outlined in this report will ensure that the VT DOC continues taking steps toward achieving inmate sexual safety.

  
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Approved By: James Baker— VT DOC Commissioner

9/22/2020

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**Vermont Department of Corrections 2017 – 2018  
Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) - Summary Data**

YEAR	NONCONSENSUAL SEXUAL ACTS	SEXUAL ABUSIVE CONTACTS	SEXUAL HARASSMENT	STAFF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	STAFF SEXUAL HARASSMENT	TOTAL SUBSTANTIATED INCIDENTS
	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	Substantiated	
<b>Total 2017</b>	1	2	11	0	1	15
<b>Total 2018</b>	1	3	3	4	0	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	2	5	14	4	1	26
<b>Location</b>						
<b>CRCF</b>						
2017	0	0	0	0	1	1
2018	0	1	0	1	0	2
<b>CRCF TOTAL</b>	0	1	0	1	1	3
<b>MVRCF</b>						
2017	0	0	1	0	0	1
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>MVRCF TOTAL</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>NECC</b>						
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	0	1	1	1	0	3
<b>NECC TOTAL</b>	0	1	1	1	0	3
<b>NSCF</b>						
2017	0	1	0	0	0	1
2018	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>NOSCF TOTAL</b>	1	1	0	0	0	2
<b>NWSCF</b>						
2017	1	0	7	0	0	8
2018	0	0	2	1	0	3
<b>NWSCF TOTAL</b>	1	0	9	1	0	11
<b>SESCF</b>						
2017	0	0	1	0	0	1
2018						
<b>SESCF TOTAL</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>SSCF</b>						
2017	0	1	2	0	0	3
2018	0	1	0	1	0	2
<b>SOSCF TOTAL</b>	0	2	2	1	0	5