

Vermont Department of Corrections Annual Internal Report - Sexual Victimization

An Analysis of 2015 & 2016 Data



Prepared by: Wendy Yoder, PREA Director – October 3, 2017

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

All Vermont Adult Correctional Facilities have been audited and found to be in full compliance with the Final Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards for Adult Prisons and Jails.

Introduction

Each year the VT DOC collects accurate and uniform data for every allegation of sexual victimization and completes the Survey of Sexual Victimization Report (SSV). The SSV report provides information on every allegation of sexual victimization and is posted on the VT DOC's 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 2015 and 2016 and is utilized by the VT DOC 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 2015 to two in 2016. The number of substantiated staff sexual harassment incidents increased from zero in 2015 to one in 2016. 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 at zero in 2016. The number of inmate on inmate abusive sexual contacts decreased from eight in 2015 to six in 2016. The number of substantiated inmate on inmate sexual harassment incidents decreased from 18 in 2015 to eight in 2016. The reduction of inmate on inmate sexual abuse and sexual harassment is attributed to continued focus on inmate and staff sexual safety education.

Problem Area Identification & Corrective Measures

Staff Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment

Location of Incidents: There were three substantiated cases of staff on inmate victimization in 2016. Of these cases, one occurred in the medical services area, one occurred in a living unit and one involved written correspondence with no location identified.

Classification of Staff Involved: The three allegations involved a medical professional and two full time security staff members.

Corrective Measures: Continue with current staff orientation and training programs.

Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts

Location of Incidents: There were no substantiated inmate on inmate nonconsensual acts in 2016.

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.

Inmate Abusive Sexual Contacts

Location of Incidents: Five of the six (or 83%) substantiated incidents in 2016 took place in common areas inside and outside the living units. This is a change when compared to 2015, when 50% of the abusive sexual contact incidents occurred in common areas inside and outside the living units.

Corrective Measures: Continue with comprehensive staff and inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker PREA Orientations, PREA Newsletters, PREA Posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our facility resident handbooks. Investigate using incident by specific

location data to identify areas for increased supervision and/or increased camera coverage.

Inmate Sexual Harassment

Location of Incidents: Three of the eight substantiated incidents (or 26%) took place in cells shared by the victim and perpetrator. Four incidents occurred in common areas both inside and outside the living units and one incident was reported with an unknown location.

Corrective measures: Continue with comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker PREA Orientations, PREA Newsletters, PREA Posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section in facility handbooks. Investigate using incident by specific location data to identify areas for increased supervision and/or increased camera coverage.

Incidents by Facility

Facility Locations: The numbers that follow are the collective total of inmate on inmate incidents over the period of 2015 and 2016, Chittenden Region Correctional Facility (CRCF) reported 13 substantiated incidents; Southern State Correctional Facility (SOSCF) reported eight substantiated incidents, Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility (MVRFCF) and Northwest State Correctional Facility (NWSCF) each reported six substantiated incidents. Northeast Correctional Facility (NECC) and Northern State (NOSCF) correctional facilities reported five substantiated incidents and Southeast State Correctional Facility (SESCF) reported zero incidents.

Corrective Measures: Continue with staff training and comprehensive inmate education efforts that include intake, medical and caseworker PREA Orientations, PREA Newsletters, PREA Posters, and a comprehensive and consistent Sexual Safety and PREA information section for our facility handbooks.

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 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. There were no apparent patterns involving the 2016 sexual abuse incidents.

Corrective Measures: Continue with current incident review and a corrective measure practices to include review and sign off by key personnel at both the facility and central office level.

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.



Prepared BY: Wendy Yoder, VT DOC Director, PREA



Date



Approved By: Lisa Menard – VT DOC Commissioner



Date

**Vermont Department of Corrections 2015 – 2016
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	
Total 2015	0	8	18	0	0	26
Total 2016	0	6	8	2	1	17
TOTAL	0	14	26	2	1	43
Location						
CRCF						
2015	0	3	5	0	0	8
2016	0	4	0	1	0	5
CRCF TOTAL	0	7	5	1	0	13
MVRCF						
2015	0	2	3	0	0	5
2016	0	0	1	0	0	1
MVRCF TOTAL	0	2	4	0	0	6
NECC						
2015	0	2	2	0	0	4
2016	0	0	1	0	0	1
NECC TOTAL	0	2	3	0	0	5
NOSCF						
2015	0	0	3	0	0	3
2016	0	0	2	0	0	2
NOSCF TOTAL	0	0	5	0	0	5
NWSCF						
2015	0	0	3	0	0	3
2016	0	1	2	0	0	3
NWSCF TOTAL	0	1	5	0	0	6
SESCF						
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0	0	0	0
SESCF TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SOSCF						
2015	0	1	2	0	0	3
2016	0	1	2	1	1	5
SOSCF TOTAL	0	2	4	1	1	8