

Assaults on Correctional Officers, July, 2007

Correctional Officers are routinely assaulted and gassed. Prisons are a dangerous environment. CUSA is dedicated to improving the working conditions of correctional officers nationwide. Below are some news accounts that highlight what we encounter on a daily basis.

Florida
Iowa
Missouri
Vermont

Guard attacked at Oakdale prison

A correctional officer at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center was assaulted by an inmate sometime Friday, prison officials said. Greg Ort, deputy warden of the Oakdale-based prison, declined to provide many details on the assault, saying the incident was under investigation. He said the officer suffered a "superficial injury" but was treated at the prison's medical clinic and released.

Ort declined to comment on what, if any, weapon was used in the attack, or what actions are being taken against the inmate. The attack on the guard is one of several to have occurred in Iowa prisons this week. Three guards were injured in a fight with two inmates at the Anamosa state prison Wednesday, while another Anamosa prison guard was assaulted by an inmate Monday. Ort said IMCC officials have "taken actions to address the issues here."

The Iowa Department of Corrections released more details Saturday about an assault Friday by an inmate on an officer at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center in Oakdale. About 1:30 p.m. Friday, during a routine movement of inmate Larry Smith from the Administrative Segregation exercise yard to his cell in the Administrative Segregation Unit, Smith assaulted a correctional officer with a piece of metal concealed in his hand. The assault left a 3-inch scratch on the officer's arm. The Department of Corrections considers this a serious assault, although the injury is not life threatening.

Smith, 26, is serving a 32-year sentence for attempted murder, assault on a peace officer and interference with a correctional officer from Lee County; two counts of assault with a weapon and escape of misdemeanant from Keokuk County; and assault on a peace officer from Jasper County. His sentence began Dec. 14, 1999.

After the Coralville Police Department investigates, the case will go to the Johnson County Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Three guards assaulted at Anamosa State prison

Friday, July 27, 2007, 8:36 AM

By Pat Curtis

Three correctional officers were sent to the hospital in the second attack on guards this week at the Anamosa State Penitentiary in eastern Iowa. Iowa Department of Corrections spokesperson Fred Scaletta says the latest incident, on Wednesday, involved inmates Mathew Crawford and Eric Peppers. Crawford was confronted by a guard when he walked into an unauthorized area and refused to stop.

Scaletta says Crawford became "very combative" and assaulted the guard, and Peppers attacked the responding officers. The two inmates were restrained and placed in "segregation status." The three correction officers were treated and released at an Anamosa hospital. Wednesday's scuffle follows another inmate assault on a guard at the state pen on Saturday.

Scaletta calls the timing of the assaults a coincidence, "the first one happened in a very isolated area as an inmate was being searched prior to a visit...and then this one happened outside the living unit, inside the walls, so they were completely separate incidents." Scaletta says it appears there's nothing the guards could have done to prevent the assaults, and their response was appropriate.

"There are times when, no matter how much you're trained or how many precautions you take," Scaletta explains, "the threat of injury or staff safety is always at large." The inmates involved in Wednesday's assaults are both serving 25 year prison terms. Crawford's serving time for a variety of charges in Polk County, while Peppers was convicted of 2nd degree sex abuse in Johnson County.

July 23, 2007 -- A correctional officer at the Anamosa State Prison is recovering after being assaulted by a prisoner Saturday. The Iowa Department of Corrections says Oscar Gonzales attacked the officer during a routine search. The officer was taken to Jones County Regional Medical Center where he was treated for multiple bruises on his face and chest.

The Division of Criminal Investigation is looking into the assault. Gonzales was immediately restrained and placed in segregation after the attack. The 22-year-old Gonzales is serving a 55-year sentence for attempted murder (3 counts), willful injury (2 counts) and other charges. Gonzales is serving time for a Des Moines shooting in 2005. That shooting injured Deputy Mike Lose and put him in a wheelchair.

Prison guard cleared of inmate assault charges

AP/KWMU EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL. (2007-07-30) A jury has cleared a federal prison guard in Greenville, Ill. of charges he assaulted an inmate in 2004 and lied to cover it up. Jurors in East St. Louis acquitted Eric Newsome of Vandalia last week of filing a false report, striking inmate John Clark and lying to a federal investigator of the matter.

A co-defendant, guard Daniel Gordon, has pleaded guilty to one count of falsifying records in a federal investigation. In a plea deal, Gordon admitted asking Newsome to block a surveillance camera as they entered the cell and watching Newsome beat the man. He also admitted falsifying a report later that day.

Gordon could face up to 20 years in prison. Greenville is about 50 miles east of St. Louis.

Inmate charged in fight with jail guards

July 19, 2007
Staff Report

An inmate at the Springfield prison is charged with fighting with correctional officers and spitting at them in a fight over an envelope that had a metal clasp that he refused to turn over. Bryan K. Corbin, 20, pleaded innocent Tuesday in White River Junction District Court to two counts of assaulting a correctional officer and two counts of using bodily fluids in an assault on a correctional officer.

The incident leading to the charges took place on the afternoon of March 26 when Corbin was asked to turn over to a correctional officer an envelope that had a metal clasp, according to an affidavit by Vermont State Police Detective Sgt. Thomas Williams. Police said a correctional officer had been in Corbin's cell "sorting allowable" property and came across the envelope with the metal clasp that had photos in it.

Corbin repeatedly refused to turn over the envelope and "became combative," the affidavit stated. He was given the choice of giving up the envelope or being pepper-sprayed. After still refusing to turn over the envelope, a correctional officer pepper-sprayed Corbin and Corbin spat at the officer and tried to bite him on his arm, according to the affidavit. Corbin was then placed in a cell by himself and kept yelling at the correctional officers, spitting at the prison staff through a crack in the food chute of the cell, Williams wrote in the affidavit. Police said one correctional officer suffered an injury to his nose and another suffered an injury to his knee in the struggle with Corbin.

It is unclear from court records why Corbin was in the Springfield prison at the time of the alleged assaults on the correctional officers. Corbin remains an inmate at the Springfield prison, according to the Vermont Department of Corrections. If convicted of the latest charges, Corbin faces up to eight years in jail.

No plea change in murder of Charlotte guard

By news-press.com
Originally posted on July 20, 2007

A Charlotte County inmate serving a life sentence for his role in the murder of a prison guard was denied a request to withdraw his plea, according to the State Attorney's Office. Michael Jones, who pled guilty in January for the first-degree murder of Darla Lathrem, was in court Friday asking to change the deal. Judge William Blackwell denied the request, according to State Attorney Stephen Russell.

"He took that plea," Russell said. "We went through all the requirements in terms of that plea. It met all the parameters and it stands. You have to have finality." Lathrem, a 38-year-old Fort Myers Shores resident, was the first female prison guard killed in Florida.

Jones was part of a failed escape attempt from Charlotte Correctional Institute in June 2003 along with inmates Stephen Smith and Dwight Eaglin. During the attempt, Eaglin killed Lathrem with a hammer while she was supervising a work team with all three inmates. Eaglin and Smith were both convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death.