

INMATE RECLASSIFICATION



SCDC is changing the way it classifies inmates, which determines where an inmate is housed. The new system places a high value on behavior and is based on points, which determine the inmate's custody level.

THE BASICS

POINT SYSTEM

New inmates and inmates who have been in SCDC custody for fewer than 12 months receive points for a variety of factors, including:

Age, education level, current and prior offenses, escape history, assaultive history on inmates or staff, and gang affiliation

After serving 12 months, the system begins placing a higher value on behavior rather than convicted offenses and background. Inmates who have been in SCDC custody for longer than 12 months have two additional categories that also are considered:

Disciplinary history and participation in work and/or programs

CUSTODY LEVEL

As part of this process, SCDC is changing the way it describes custody levels. Now, institutions are described as Levels 1, 2 and 3. Going forward, Level 1 will be referred to as **minimum** custody. Level 2 will become **medium** custody, and Level 3 will become **close** custody.

PROJECTIONS

Projections show a large increase in the number of inmates who will be advancing to a lower custody level. That means SCDC will need to change the custody levels of some institutions. Those decisions are being made now.

The number of inmates in Level 3/close custody is expected to drop dramatically. This will enable SCDC to move those inmates to a single-cell housing plan, which will increase the safety for both officers and inmates.

The number of inmates in Level 1/minimum custody is expected to rise. This will enable more inmates to work and learn trade skills.

SENTENCES

The new classification system changes where an inmate serves his time and can affect his ability to earn a higher level of work credits, which can result in an earlier release date. It does not reduce sentences. Only the courts can do that.

SPECIFICS ON BACK 

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THE SPECIFICS

EXCEPTIONS/ SPECIFICS

Female inmates will be assessed on a separate system that will increase the number of minimum and medium custody inmates and reduce the number of Level 3/close custody inmates.

Inmates are eligible to be considered for movement to a lower custody level each year as part of their annual classification review.

Inmates serving life sentences must serve at least seven years in Level 3/close custody before being considered to advance to medium custody.

There is a classification override process. Inmates will be educated about how this can effect their housing assignments.

Major disciplinary convictions are counted against an inmate. Minor convictions could impact an inmate's classification status if they are numerous.

Inmates serving sentences for no parole offenses will have to serve the mandatory 85 percent of their sentence.

WORK CREDITS

The new system will change the way SCDC handles work credits. Previously, inmates were required to have fewer than eight years left to serve before being allowed to earn work credits at the highest level. The new system allows all inmates to earn work credits at the highest level as long as they do not receive a major disciplinary conviction.

GOOD TIME CREDITS

Calculation for good time credit remains the same. This is dictated by law.

Inmates who must serve 85 percent of their sentences earn three days of good time per month. Inmates who are not required to serve 85 percent of their sentences earn 20 days of good time per month.

Good time credit is taken away if an inmate receives a major or administrative disciplinary convictions.

The department is studying the feasibility of restoring some good time for inmates who are disciplinary free for six months or longer.

HARDSHIP TRANSFER

Inmates may request a transfer to a different geographical region at their annual review if they have a continuous work record and have remained disciplinary free. This transfer process no longer requires outside documentation from family.

TIMING

Some moves will take place quickly as SCDC moves to this new system. The goal is to have all inmates reviewed and moved within one year.

OTHER

As inmates shift to lower custody levels, they will have greater access to existing and new programs and better work assignments.

The Prison Industries program will remain. SCDC will determine any changes after the inmates have been reclassified.

All inmates in general population will have visitation privileges.

Inmates at designated facilities will not be affected.