

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Joseph Ponte, Commissioner

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April 7, 2017

Derrick D. Cephas, Acting Chair
NYC Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Cephas:

The New York City Department of Correction ("Department") is requesting an emergency variance pursuant to §1-15(b)(3) of the New York City Board of Correction's ("Board") minimum standards from sections: 1-03 Personal Hygiene, 1-05 Lock-in, 1-06 Recreation, 1-07 Religion, 1-08(f) Access to Courts and Legal Services (regarding access to the law library only), 1-09 Visiting, and 1-10 Telephone Calls of the Board's minimum standards for the Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC). We are seeking this emergency variance through the weekend, effective immediately, to ensure that the safety and security of OBCC is maintained and that all staff and inmates are kept safe.

Multiple slashing incidents, two on April 6, 2017, and a third on April 7, 2017, recent weapons recovery and overall escalating inmate tension and violence at OBCC necessitated the Department to institute a facility-wide lockdown on April 7, 2017, to conduct a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the situation including a review of the inmate population dynamics within OBCC, thorough searches and intelligence investigations. The Department has made and will continue to make every effort to limit the scope of the lockdown and any disruption to services. During the lockdown, medical and mental health services will be maintained. Best efforts will be made to afford all inmates with showers, however, security issues may cause some disruption. While visiting will be suspended, attorney visits will remain in effect.

Despite our best efforts, we are unable to achieve full compliance with the above noted provisions of the minimum standards for the duration of the facility-wide lockdown period, in order to effectively identify, evaluate, and neutralize all threats and maintain the safety and security of the facility. On Sunday evening, April 9th, the situation will be assessed to determine whether additional time is required to continue the investigation. The Department will notify the Board immediately if the variance can be ended early or if it needs to be extended.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Heidi Grossman at (718) 546-0955.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,


Cynthia Brann
Acting Commissioner

cc: Martha King, Executive Director