



Fact Sheet: Restraint Desk Use in Enhanced Supervision Housing

What is a restraint desk?

A restraint desk is a security restraining device consisting of a school-style desk surface and a chair that are bolted to the floor. The floor level locking device secures ankle restraints; the locking device is operated with a waist level handle and padlocked during use. The desks are designed to secure potentially disruptive inmates during therapeutic, educational, programming, and/or recreational sessions in a classroom setting.

Restraint desks allow for young adults who would otherwise not be permitted to participate in programming with their peers, due to their propensity to engage in violence, the opportunity to be exposed to rehabilitative and educational services.

The Department's policies on the restraint desks

The Department's limited utilization of restraint desks within Enhanced Supervision Housing (ESH) housing units is specifically for violent and disruptive inmates and may be used in other areas as needed to promote safe program participation while ensuring safety and security.

Inmates in these housing units have histories of persistent violence, have been adjudicated for a restraint status because of their violent acts, and were involved in either slashings or stabbings, serious assaults on staff or other inmates, or have been identified as influential gang leaders who have or have had weapons and/or ordered attacks. Previously, these young adults would have been confined to a cell up to 23 hours because there was no safe option to allow them to participate in programming and activities with other young adults. Restraint desks are used for both adults and young adults (ages 18-21), but not for adolescents or for those who have been excluded for medical or mental health reasons.

ESH model

ESH is a progressive and safe management approach and has never been a replacement for the long-standing correctional standard of twenty-three (23) hour lock-in. ESH maintains a phased housing structure consisting of four (4) levels. Each level is designed to promote progress through rehabilitation. Inmates can progress through each level with consistent and productive program participation and positive behavior, earning additional privileges with successful completion of each level. The security protocols instituted at each level are directly related to the safety and security concerns associated with the inmates placed within that particular housing level.

The placement of an inmate is determined by the severity of the inmate's behavior, with Level 1 of ESH, where restraint desks are utilized, representing the most restrictive level for the management of the most violent inmates in DOC custody. Level 4 is the least restrictive level for the housing of inmates who have successfully completed the prior levels, and it most closely resembles general population units.

The approach allows for incremental increases in lock-out hours through the levels going from seven (7) to ten (10) to fourteen (14) hours out of cell in controlled settings.



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Impact of restraint desks in ESH

ESH provides opportunities to safely participate and engage in educational and programmatic therapeutic activities. It has been proven to reduce violence for the target inmate population, particularly in the progression from level to level:

- From September 1, 2015 to September 1, 2016 there was a 58% reduction in both violent and non-violent infractions across all of ESH.
- As of February 10, 2017, in Level 1 of ESH, there are currently 40 inmates, and the population housed there had an average involvement in 8 UOF a month, and a total of 22 slashings over 18 months. Since placement in ESH Level 1, there has been an average of 4 UOF a month and no slashings over just 3 months. In addition, 7 inmates have moved on from Level 1 to Level 2, without restraint desks.

ESH allows young adults to interact with each other in a controlled environment that in the absence of the restraint desks could not be safely accomplished.

How are restraint desks used in other jurisdictions?

The use of restraint desks is a correctional best practice utilized as a custody management strategy for disruptive inmates. They are used in numerous jurisdictions such as Colorado, California, New York, and Washington. Restraint desks help create a safe environment for both staff and inmates during program facilitation and other idleness reduction activities.

Others whom have had experience with the use of restraint desks in various settings include:

- NYU's Marron Institute of Urban Management, Senior Research Scholars Sandy F Mullins, Dan Pacholke, and Angela Hawkins.
- Harold Clark, Director of the Virginia Department of Correction, and formerly head of both Washington State, Massachusetts, and Nebraska.