



Virginia Department of Corrections

Facility Security and Control

Operating Procedure 435.1

Special Operations Unit

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REVIEW

The Content Owner will review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in June 2022 and necessary changes have been made.

The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in June 2023 and necessary changes have been made.

COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections. Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, ACA standards, PREA standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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DEFINITIONS

Analysis - The activity whereby meaning, actual or suggested, is derived through organizing and systematically examining diverse information and applying inductive or deductive logic for the purposes of criminal investigation or assessment

Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP) - A system of residential facilities operated by the Department of Corrections to provide evidence-based programming as a diversionary alternative to incarceration in accordance with COV §53.1-67.9, *Establishment of community corrections alternative program; supervision upon completion*

Daily Log - An automated record of all incoming telephone calls, emails, and correspondence received by the OLU Operations Center; the Daily Log is available to all Special Operations Unit staff.

Division Coordinators - DOC employees responsible for managing information gathering and intelligence development relative to facilities and communities in assigned areas of the state.

Gang/Security Threat Group (STG) - A group of individuals who: (a) possess common characteristics that distinguish them from other persons or groups of persons and who, as an entity, pose a threat to the safety and security of staff, the facility, inmates or the community; (b) have a common distinctive goal, symbolism or philosophy; (c) possess identifiable skills or resources, or engage in unauthorized/illegal activities. Criminal street gangs, terrorists (domestic & international), radical extremists, hate groups, cults, and neighborhood cliques are examples of a Gang/STG.

Gang Specialist - A DOC employee (P&P Officer, Surveillance Officer, Institutional Investigator, Intelligence Officer, or other individual), designated by the Unit Head to be responsible for development and communication of intelligence related to gangs/STGs within that unit; there will be at least one Gang Specialist designated from each DOC institution, each Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP) facility, and each Probation and Parole Office.

Incident - An actual or threatened event or occurrence outside the ordinary routine that involves:

- The life, health and safety of employees, volunteers, guests, or inmates/probationers/parolees
- Damage to state property
- Disruption or threats to security, good order, and discipline of a facility or Organizational Unit
- Exposure of the Department of Corrections to significant news media or public attention

Information - Pieces of raw, unanalyzed data that identify persons, evidence, or events or illustrate processes that indicate the incidence of a criminal event or witnesses or evidence of a criminal event

Inmate - A person who is incarcerated in a Virginia Department of Corrections facility or who is Virginia Department of Corrections responsible to serve a state sentence

Intelligence - The product of the analysis of raw information related to crimes or crime patterns with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons in an effort to anticipate, prevent, or monitor possible criminal activity

Intelligence Analyst - Reviews information and creates reliable intelligence products

Intelligence Bulletin - A finished intelligence product in article format that describes new developments, methods, and evolving trends

Intelligence Specialist - Employee assigned to the DOC Special Operations Unit that facilitates the DOC statewide information gathering and intelligence process

Investigations Log - An automated record of all Special Operations Unit investigations and information requests; the Investigations Log is available to all Special Operations Unit personnel.

Operations and Logistics Unit (OLU) Operations Center - The portion of the Special Operations Unit that is staffed at all times to serve as the main repository and clearing house for all DOC incident notifications and intelligence

Operations Center Coordinator - A DOC employee responsible for managing the daily operations of the OLU Operations Center

Operations Lieutenant/Operations Analyst - Receives incoming communications at the OLU Operations



Center, responds to requests for assistance, and communicates all matters of concern in accordance with established Special Operations Unit protocols

Organizational Unit - A DOC unit, such as a correctional facility, Regional Office, Probation and Parole Office, Virginia Correctional Enterprises, Academy for Staff Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Management Unit, Agribusiness Unit, and individual headquarters units, e.g., Human Resources, Offender Management, Internal Audit.

Probationer/Parolee - A person who is on community supervision as the result of the commission of a criminal offense and released to the community under the jurisdiction of courts, paroling authorities, the Virginia Department of Corrections, or other release authority; this includes post release supervision and Community Corrections Alternative Programs (CCAPs).

Sensitive but Unclassified - Information that has not been classified by a federal law enforcement agency that pertains to significant law enforcement cases under investigation and criminal intelligence reports that require dissemination criteria to provide information to only those persons necessary to further the investigation or to prevent a crime or terrorist act

Special Investigations Unit (SIU) - The statewide DOC unit staffed and directed by persons qualified and competent to conduct lawful criminal and administrative investigations; its Special Agents have the same power as a law-enforcement officer and are authorized to conduct investigations into criminal activity, procedural and administrative violations, and employee misconduct affecting the operations of the DOC.

Statewide Gang Coordinator - a DOC employee responsible for managing the gang and security threat group information entered into the VACORIS Gang Module.

VACORIS Gang Module - DOC gang/STG information located within VACORIS

Virginia Fusion Center - A multiagency intelligence unit currently located at Virginia State Police Headquarters that provides a centralized, comprehensive, information and intelligence network to enhance the operational efficiency of the agencies involved in the prevention activities as they relate to criminal activity in Virginia, including terrorism

PURPOSE

This operating procedure establishes the Department of Corrections (DOC) Special Operations Unit to gather, collect, and analyze information and intelligence from internal and external sources and to provide timely, informative, comprehensive reports and assessments to DOC Organizational Units and external partners.

PROCEDURE

I. Special Operations Unit Mission

- A. The DOC has the responsibility to maintain a safe, secure environment within DOC organizational units and to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth. The ability to gather relevant information and develop this information into actionable intelligence is essential to maintaining public confidence in the DOC to carry out its mission for the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- B. The DOC Special Operations Unit provides for an expansive intelligence network to detect, address, disrupt, and prevent criminal activities, individual and organized, within DOC facilities and communities at large. Information gathered by the Special Operations Unit is maintained, managed, and accessed using computerized intelligence information systems.

II. Special Operations Unit Organization and Administration

- A. The Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement and designee are responsible for the supervision and management of the Special Operations Unit, such responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - 1. The implementation of this operating procedure and the development of internal Special Operations Unit protocols to ensure that efficient and effective intelligence gathering and dissemination practices are being utilized
 - 2. The identification and prioritization of intelligence in a manner that is consistent with the DOC's mission of providing safety and security in its organizational units and, when applicable, within the community
 - 3. The approval of any release of information or intelligence to other criminal justice and law enforcement agencies
- B. The Special Operations Unit is comprised of an OLU Operations Center, two Field Service Operations Divisions, and a section of Gang Specialists, staffed by Operations Lieutenants, Intelligence Specialists, and Intelligence and Operations Analysts to assist individuals who are qualified and competent in information and intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination techniques.
 - 1. The OLU Operations Center is a stand-alone facility staffed by Intelligence Analysts and Operations Lieutenants to assist the Operations Center Coordinator in the management of the Center's operations. Two of the Intelligence Analysts are trained and certified as Cell Phone Extraction Technicians.
 - 2. Two Field Service Operations Divisions serve designated areas of the state to provide and supervise targeted interdictions in coordination with DOC detection canines, cell phone analysts, intelligence specialists, and drug task force agents. Division Coordinators, supervised by the Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee, manage each of the Operations Divisions.
 - 3. Gang Specialists under the supervision and management of the Statewide Gang Coordinator serve as the primary DOC resource on gang/STG information and training; see Operating Procedure 435.2, *Gang and Security Threat Group Identification and Tracking*.
 - 4. The Special Operations Unit is staffed with individuals who specialize in the control of drugs and other contraband being introduced into DOC facilities.

III. Special Operations Unit Responsibilities

- A. The Special Operations Unit is responsible for receiving and reviewing information and for creating and



disseminating intelligence that will enhance the DOC's ability to meet its mission of public safety. Special Operations Unit staff utilize information received and intelligence developed to:

1. Provide timely notification of threats and incidents to DOC Administration and other appropriate agencies.
 2. Provide the Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee with daily briefing report(s) for the Director, Chief of Corrections Operations, Deputy Directors, Regional Operations Chiefs, Corrections Operations Administrator, and other designated Executive Staff.
 3. Provide Intelligence Bulletins to authorized DOC staff as well as local, state, and federal criminal justice and law enforcement agencies.
 4. Produce all DOC Security Bulletins to be posted on the Virtual Library.
 5. Conduct regular meetings with the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), Institutional Investigators, and Regional Gang Specialists to coordinate information gathering and analysis.
 6. Develop and implement operational plans for interdictions and other actions to control drugs, contraband, and other threats to DOC organizational units.
 7. Coordinate and disseminate information regarding emergency preparedness and evacuations in the event of a serious weather event or other natural or manmade disaster.
 8. Provide training to assist and support DOC organizational units in their staff development, intelligence gathering, and information sharing processes.
- B. The Special Operations Unit has the responsibility of leading the DOC in the collection and analysis of gang/security threat groups (STGs) intelligence and information, and to act with other agencies in a unified response to minimize the threats from these groups.
1. Gangs and STGs present serious challenges to the safety and security of DOC facilities and to the public.
 2. All gang/STG member and activity information gathered in DOC organizational units flows through the Special Operations Unit for documentation and analysis.
 3. Gang Specialists in the Special Operations Unit are responsible for:
 - a. Developing and disseminating intelligence relative to the covert and illicit activities of gangs/STGs and other criminal enterprises that pose a threat to facility safety and security and to the community
 - b. Maintaining and managing the VACORIS Gang Module in accordance with Operating Procedure 435.2, *Gang and Security Threat Group Identification and Tracking*
 - c. Entering gang/STG identification information into the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) as required (5-ACI-1A-20)
 - d. Providing information and resources in order to give DOC staff current and relevant gang/STG related training
 - e. Holding quarterly meetings with the Virginia Fusion Center and the Attorney General's Office related to gang/STG strategy
- C. The Special Operations Unit aids in the administrative and managerial decision making and emergency preparedness process by:
1. Gathering and analyzing information from all available internal and external sources.
 2. Finding correlations and developing intelligence that guides and support informed decisions.
 3. Developing reliable intelligence.
 4. Ensuring there is a seamless flow of information, intelligence, and communication between DOC organizational units and headquarters.
- D. The Special Operations Unit monitors law enforcement, emergency service, and weather radio systems,

VDOT highway and traffic reporting systems, newscasts and other external sources for incidents and situations that may affect DOC operations.

1. The DOC, to enhance emergency preparedness, must be aware of such severe weather events, other natural disasters, power and communication disruptions, highway accidents and congestion, manmade disasters, and other external incidents that may affect DOC operations and activities.

E. The Special Operations Unit works closely with SIU, the designated investigatory arm of the DOC, to share and exchange information and intelligence related to DOC staff and operations.

F. The Special Operations Unit fosters and supports an information-sharing environment by maintaining a trusted partnership among all levels of government, the private sector, and other partners in order to detect, prevent, preempt, and mitigate the effects of criminal activity/terrorism against a DOC organizational unit, people, and the interests of the DOC and community at large. (4-ACRS-7F-04; 4-APPFS-1A-01, 4-APPFS-1A-02, 4-APPFS-1A-03)

1. Through its information gathering, exchange, and standardization, comprehensive intelligence analyses, assessment, and reports, the Special Operations Unit fosters networking opportunities and improved relationships between DOC and other criminal justice and law enforcement agencies. (5-ACI-1F-08; 4-ACRS-7D-06; 4-APPFS-3D-34; 2-CO-1F-07; 1-CTA-1D-02)

2. This partnership allows for the trusted, secure, and appropriate exchange of information to and from state and local governments.

G. The DOC maintains a partnership and collaborates with the Virginia Fusion Center to provide and receive intelligence on a daily basis through the Special Operations Unit OLU Operations Center.

IV. Operations and Logistics Unit (OLU) Operations Center

A. The OLU Operations Center serves as the main repository and clearing house for all DOC intelligence and at least one staff member, normally an Operations Lieutenant/Operations Analyst, is on duty at the OLU Operations Center at all times.

1. All incidents reported by DOC organizational units require notification to the OLU Operations Center and all reports must flow through the Special Operations Unit; see Operating Procedure 038.1, *Reporting Serious or Unusual Incidents*.

2. DOC staff must report all security threat information, real or perceived, and make all requests for emergency assistance to the OLU Operations Center by telephone (804) 372-4447 or email (docolu@vadoc.virginia.gov).

3. All threats and information relating to planned or potential disruptions of DOC operations or harm to DOC staff must be reported to the Special Operations Unit.

B. OLU Operations Center staff will immediately review all incoming information and will monitor a wide variety of external information networks to remain aware of activities that impact or have the potential to impact the safety, security, and orderly function of DOC organizational units and the community at large.

C. OLU Operations Center staff will notify appropriate internal as well as external entities in accordance with Special Operations Unit protocols.

1. After initial notification of an incident, OLU Operations Center staff will follow OLU Operations Center protocols to guide their response and further notifications.

a. For the most serious incidents, OLU Operations Center staff will send an immediate message, as applicable, to designated headquarters, regional, and organizational unit executive and administrative staff.

i. The OLU Operations Center based on OLU Operations Center protocol or upon request of Executive staff will open a conference call for all staff who were notified by message.

ii. Headquarters, regional and organizational unit executive and administrative staff will use the



- conference call to organize information sharing and to aid management in decision-making.
- b. OLU Operations Center staff will immediately report Class I incidents to SIU, and other units as appropriate based on incident type. Follow-up notification of Class I incidents may be made through the *Daily Executive Staff Briefing Reports*.
 - c. OLU Operations Center staff will generally make Class II incident notifications through the *Daily Executive Staff Briefing Reports*.
 - d. OLU Operations Center staff should monitor *Internal Incident Reports* to find trends and patterns of incidents that may require further analysis and reporting.
2. OLU Operations Center staff are responsible for:
 - a. Notifying SIU of all incidents requiring investigation and providing information and intelligence to assist SIU staff conduct investigations
 - b. Reporting all newly discovered security threats or suspected security threats to the Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee in accordance with internal protocols
 - c. Providing periodic reports to the Director, Chief of Corrections Operations, Deputy Directors, Regional Operations Chiefs, Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee, Corrections Operations Administrator, and other designated Executive staff in accordance with internal protocols.
 - d. Issuing periodic *Intelligence Bulletins* in accordance with internal protocols
 - e. Disseminating, with review and approval of the Operations Center Coordinator, external intelligence bulletins, publications, and information
 - f. Documenting all incoming telephone calls, emails, or correspondence received by the OLU Operations Center on an automated *Daily Log* for review by the Operations Center Coordinator or designee
 3. Forwarding all requests for assistance from SIU and external law enforcement agencies to the attention of the Operations Center Coordinator and noting the request on the *Investigations Log*
- D. The OLU Operations Center Coordinator or designee will review the *Daily Log* and, in accordance with internal protocols, assign an Intelligence Analyst or refer information for review to one or more Special Operations Coordinators. All such assignments will be noted on the *Investigations Log*.

V. Field Service Operations Divisions

- A. The two Field Service Operations Divisions of the Special Operations Unit collaborate with Institutional Investigators, Intelligence Officers, Gang Specialists, SIU staff, and jails, as well as other criminal justice and law enforcement agencies.
- B. Field Service Operations Division staff assist and support DOC organizational units within specified geographic areas with their intelligence gathering and dissemination processes.
 1. In addition to intelligence gathering and dissemination, Field Service Operations Division staff, based on intelligence gathered by the Special Operations Unit, coordinate with law enforcement and other DOC staff to perform interdictions and other operations to protect DOC organizational units.
 2. Field Service Operations Division staff organize and conduct intelligence meetings for Institutional Investigators, Gang Specialists, SIU Investigators, and other key intelligence gathering staff that work within their assigned DOC organizational units and the community.

VI. Release of Intelligence Information (4-APPFS-3D-34)

- A. All information collected, discovered, and accumulated by DOC staff, staff of other agencies, and contract staff working in DOC organizational units is confidential and use of this information must be in accordance with DOC operating procedures.
- B. All inmate and probationer/parolee information and intelligence accumulated by the Special Operations



Unit is confidential and staff will forward all requests for this information to the Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee.

- C. Staff will forward any request from an external agency for the collection of information, e.g., telephone or mail cover surveillances to the Director of Security and Correctional Enforcement or designee. The collection of such information must be in accordance within DOC operating procedures.
- D. Special Operations Unit staff may release sensitive but unclassified information and intelligence when at least one of the following prescribed circumstances applies to the individual receiving this information:
1. Right to Know - Based on having legal authority, one's official position, legal mandates, or official agreements allowing the individual to receive intelligence reports
 2. Need to Know - As a result of jurisdictional, organizational, or operational necessities, intelligence or information is disseminated to further an investigation
 3. Investigatory Value - Intelligence or information is disseminated in the law enforcement community for surveillance, apprehension, or furtherance of an investigation
 4. Public Value - Intelligence or information can be released to the public when there is a need to know and a right to know the information because of the value that may be derived from public dissemination to aid in locating targets/suspects and for public safety purposes, e.g., hardening targets, taking precautions
- E. Any information or intelligence disseminated to other criminal justice or law enforcement agencies will include a statement as to whether the information has been validated or not. In most instances, the information may be raw intelligence that has not been validated, i.e., investigated or evaluated.

VII. Training

- A. All Special Operations Unit staff are required to provide local and statewide training as needed or directed.
- B. The Special Operations Unit will provide current and relevant gang/STG and intelligence related training opportunities for all DOC staff.
- C. Gang/STG related training requirements are outlined in Operating Procedure 435.2, *Gang and Security Threat Group Identification and Tracking*.

REFERENCES

COV §53.1-67.9, *Establishment of community corrections alternative program; supervision upon completion*
Operating Procedure 038.1, *Reporting Serious or Unusual Incidents*
Operating Procedure 435.2, *Gang and Security Threat Group Identification and Tracking*

ATTACHMENTS

None

FORM CITATIONS

None

