

**Province of Prince Edward Island**  
**Community and Correctional Services**  
**Adult Policy and Procedures**

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<b>Strip Search</b>	<b>04-06-10</b>	<b>April 12, 2018</b>	<b>1 of 4</b>

## **1 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and authority for conducting strip searches.

## **2 Policy**

2.01 All offenders are subject to strip searches. Authority for strip searches is provided in Section 18 (1) of the *Correctional Services Act Regulations*. Subject to subsection 18 (3) of the Regulations, an officer shall, at any time, have the right to search an offender including the right to remove an offender's clothing if, in the officer's opinion, removal is necessary for the offender's own safety and protection or the security of the Correctional Centre.

### 2.02

- a) A strip search occurs when an offender is required to undress and personally expose the external area of the body orifices for visual inspection and the person's clothing shall be closely examined and searched.
- b) At no time during a strip search is it necessary to touch the person to complete the search. Always use verbal direction so offenders know what is expected of them by the Officer.
- c) Staff are not to touch offenders during a strip search or forcibly remove their clothing. If the offender is uncooperative and violent, the offender may be handcuffed and placed in a holding cell and monitored until his/ her behaviour is acceptable.

2.3 Section 18 (2) of the *Correctional Services Act Regulations* states: Subject to Subsection (3), where so directed by the Centre Manager or upon return to the Correctional Centre property for any reason, an officer shall make a thorough search of the offender, including the stripping of the offender's clothing, if necessary, and carry out as required any of the functions of the Centre Manager listed in Section 5.

Section 5 (1) of the *Correctional Services Act Regulations* stated "Upon reception of an inmate at a correctional centre, the Centre Manager shall:(e) cause to be made a complete and thorough search of the inmate including the stripping of clothing..."

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2.4 An officer shall not search an offender of the opposite sex except in exceptional circumstances where the search is necessary to ensure the safety of an offender or the safety and security of other persons or property. It may only be conducted if an officer of the same sex as the offender cannot be accessed and with approval of Manager or Designate. The search is to be done in the presence of another officer.

a) If this occurs, an Incident Report must be submitted to the Centre Manager and Provincial Manager Custody Programs by the officer in charge and the officer conducting the search.

2.5 All searches shall be conducted in a manner and location that are sensitive to the privacy and personal dignity of the person being searched. The following situations may require the strip searching of an offender:

- New admissions, including lock-ups;
- Following an open visit or return from a temporary absence;
- Moving in and out of Admitting / Discharge Unit;
- Returning from off grounds, i.e., court, escort, etc.;
- Entering into the segregation area (see policy 04-05-05);
- Any person suspected of concealing contraband.

2.6 All searches shall be conducted in a manner that preserves safety for offenders and staff.

### **3 Procedure**

3.1 Strip searches are to occur in the Admissions/Discharge unit. If this is not possible, the search is to occur in an area that is as private and secure as possible;

3.2 The offender is escorted to Admissions/Discharge designated area;

3.3 Admissions unit staff will conduct the search. The escorting Officer will assist, as required.

3.4 The offender is to be informed that a strip search is to occur.

3.5 The offender is to be directed to cell #182 or designated area.

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3.6 A frisk search is to be conducted prior to the strip search.

3.7 The offender is to be instructed to remove his/her clothing.

3.8 Staff are to be aware that some offenders, especially women offenders, may have been victims of physical or sexual abuse in the past and a strip search may be a traumatic experience. In the case of routine strip searches, the visual inspection of the naked body of compliant offenders outlined below may be conducted in a two-step process, commonly referred to as **half & half searches**.

- a) In the second step, the offender will then be asked to remove all clothing that covers the lower half of her body. Once this area has been visually inspected, she/he will be given clothing to cover the lower body (her/his own or institutional issue).
- b) In the second step, the offender will then be asked to remove all clothing that covers the lower half of her body. Once this area has been visually inspected, she/he will be given clothing to cover the lower body (her/his own or institutional issue).

3.9 The following safety procedures are to be adhered to when conducting strip searches:

- a) Two Officers of the same sex must be present during a strip search;
- b) Latex or search gloves are to be worn by officers when conducting a strip search;
- c) Isolate the offender to be searched;
- d) Be professional in conduct toward the offender;
- e) Always do a pat down on new admission offenders before removing restraints from the offender;
- f) During strip searches do not touch offender. Have them expose required search areas;
- g) Where possible, conduct searches where a surveillance camera records the actions of the staff members;
- h) Use Universal Precautions when handling clothing or items;
- i) Seal, any contraband found, in appropriate containers which will not leak, be punctured or otherwise become a hazard to those who must handle it afterward;
- j) Label contraband containers as to their risk (eg. 'Bio-hazard', 'sharp', 'powder', etc.);

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- k) Wash hands after search procedures;
  - l) Offenders with suspected parasites or diseases must be isolated until treated and deemed clear of infecting the rest of the offenders and staff. The nurse will be consulted in such cases.
- 3.10 The Correctional Officer will give verbal direction to the offender, so the search is conducted in a systematic manner (top to bottom) and is to instruct the offender to:
- a) Stand facing you;
  - b) Extend hands forward and spread fingers;
  - c) Open mouth (remove dentures, if applicable), hold them forward so they can be visually inspected;
  - d) Pull earlobes down to view inside ear;
  - e) Bend head forward and vigorously run his/her fingers through his/her hair;
  - f) Continue visual check down front of offender's body (if female, instruct offender to lift their breasts);
  - g) Visually check naval area;
  - h) If offender is obese and there are areas of fat folds; have offender lift folds;
  - i) If crotch area is hard to view, instruct offender to separate legs and left leg and turn outward;
  - j) Male offenders are to be instructed to lift their scrotum and penis;
  - k) Spread toes apart;
  - l) Have offender lift arms straight up and turn slowly until their back is to the Officer;
  - m) Have offender bend forward and spread buttocks;
  - n) Lift one foot at a time so the Officer can do a visual on the bottom of the foot;
  - o) Issue institutional clothing.
- 3.11 While offender is still present, make a thorough search of his or her clothing. If contraband is found, remove, label, and notify the Floor Supervisor.