

# CORRECTIONS IN THE FUTURE

Many states across the country, including Georgia, have passed, or are in the process of passing, criminal justice reform measures to restrain skyrocketing prison costs by providing sentencing courts with less expensive community-based sentencing alternatives for low-level, non-violent drug and property offenders.



**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects the public by operating safe and secure facilities through the development of professional staff and effective offender management.

Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner

## PRISON DESIGN AND OPERATION

Due to a high percentage of violent and dangerous offenders, prison architectural firms have designed facilities intended to be safer to manage and cheaper to operate.



### NEW PRISONS

- Rely on smaller, self-contained living units or “pods”
- Each pod will house 100 offenders or less
- Discontinue use of large-scale cell blocks and yards to eliminate the congregation of large numbers of offenders
- Offender activities (i.e., eating, sleeping, visitation, showering, programming, education, medical and barbering) will be conducted within each pod



### BENEFITS OF NEW DESIGN

- Effective management of violent prison population
- Significant decrease in risk of officer safety by reducing staff intensive large-scale offender movements
- Increase in flexibility in classification, offender housing and staffing in each pod
- Increase in security by limiting an offender’s ability to smuggle and distribute contraband as well as coordinate facility-wide disturbances

## TECHNOLOGY: TRACKING OFFENDERS AND VISITORS

### TRACKING OFFENDERS

- Future prisons will rely on technology-driven counting and tracking systems
- Some jurisdictions are using Radio-frequency identification (RFID) tracking systems to monitor offender populations using electronic bracelets worn by offenders to track movements
- RFID is the wireless non-contact use of radio frequency electromagnetic fields to transfer data, for the purposes of automatically identifying and tracking tags attached to objects
- RFID can be programmed to sound an alarm if an offender enters a prohibited area or if there is an unusual concentration of offenders in a specific area
- Other tracking technology exists, such as biometric entry point systems, which prohibits an offender to enter an area through the scan of an offender’s iris or fingerprint but has yet to be deployed

### RAPID ID

- Mobile 3G device that compares a flat fingerprint of an individual to both state and federal criminal database
- The fingerprint will identify if a visitor is on probation, parole, a sex offender or has an active warrant
- This technology is located at all state prisons

### THROUGH BODY SCAN

- Low dosage x-ray detector
- Can detect metallic and non-metallic contraband
- Currently used at specific facilities

### VISITOR PHOTO ID

- Each facility uses a mobile device to take pictures of visitors who are approved contacts for offenders
- The photo is uploaded to SCRIBE under the offender’s visitor contact list

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## TECHNOLOGY: SECURITY AND OPERATIONS

Technological advances play an increasingly important role in maintaining prison security and operations. Shrinking state budgets and a nationwide prison population of approximately 2.3 million fueled a trend to find more efficient, cost-effective, and sophisticated means of maintaining control of facilities.

### VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

- Increased role in facilities nationwide
- Assists with officer surveillance
- Cost-effective
- High video quality
- Remotely controlled to zoom in/out, and change point of view
- Newer cameras are more durable and increasingly resistant

### VIDEO CONFERENCING

- Delivers services to offenders within living units
- Used primarily for offender visitation
- Used in an increasing number of offender court appearances (see Telecourt Fact Sheet for more information)
- Helps enhance officer and public safety
- Reduces offender transportation costs

### CONDUCTED ELECTRICAL WEAPONS

Used to reduce injury to staff and offenders, to aid as a deterrent from having to use hands-on force, reduce the cost of injuries to staff and offenders, and help operate safe and secure facilities.

- Commonly known as “tasers”
- Proven effective in disabling disruptive and combative offenders
- Used within specific facilities and by the Interdiction Response Teams (IRT)

## HARDENING PROJECT

The Hardening Project was implemented in March 2013 to harden all close security prisons through the construction, renovation, and retrofit operations to establish a tiered disciplinary segregation mechanism for problem inmates and increase security throughout all close-security facilities. In 2015, the GDC began to harden large, medium-security facilities and establish a Cell Phone Management System.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Installation of barrel bolts, tray/handcuff slots, stainless steel fixtures, wall-mounted beds and updated lockers, light switches, and shower doors
- Hardened light fixtures and heater vents
- Issuance of OC spray and stab-resistant vests to all on-duty correctional officers

## TIER TARGETING SYSTEM

The TIER targeting system was implemented in August 2013. It is divided into three tiers to create a managed and measured stratification-oriented pathway for offenders to successfully transition from Administrative Segregation to lower-security levels and provides greater management of long-term Administrative Segregation offenders (see TIER Fact Sheet for more information).