



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MEMORANDUM

Metropolitan Correctional Center, New York, New York

DATE:

April 15, 2009

TO:

FROM:

THRU:

SUBJECT: RESUBMITTAL OF PROCEDURAL MEMORANDUM FOR
PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

The original Procedural memorandum for Psychological Observation was initially submitted on July 20, 2005 to the Warden and through the Associate Warden of Programs. The procedures outlined below have been in effect since the aforementioned date. This memorandum is being resubmitted as revisions have been made since this period of time and updated signatures are necessary.

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC), New York with regard to inmates placed on Psychological Observation status.
2. **DEFINITION:** A Psychological Observation occurs when an inmate who suffers from a mental illness, a serious personality disorder, a medical problem (impairing their mental status), or drug intoxication and/or withdrawal symptoms begins to deteriorate. The inmate is no longer mentally stable and therefore, it is inappropriate for s/he to remain in general population or the Special Housing Unit (SHU). Inmates placed on psychological observation differ from inmates placed on suicide watch as they are not imminently suicidal (e.g., have not expressed self-harm or engaged in self-harming behavior), but rather, due to his/her impairment in mental status or functioning (e.g., not eating, not sleeping, disorganized/unusual thinking, poor self-care), his/her behavior can be unpredictable. Psychological Observation status is intended as a temporary designation to be utilized until such time as the inmate becomes sufficiently stable (e.g., able to function independently in general population) to be returned to his/her housing assignment or transferred to an inpatient psychiatric facility such as a Federal Medical Center.
3. **PROCEDURES:** The following are the guidelines for a Psychological Observation:
 - A. Only a member from the Psychology Services Department may place and remove an inmate from Psychological Observation status as only a psychologist can determine if an inmate is at elevated risk for suicide or not. Upon placement or removal of Psychological Observation, the Psychologist will notify the Operations Lieutenant, Health Services Staff (i.e., Physician Assistants, Health Services Administrator, and Clinical Director), Food Service Administrator, and Duty Officer.
 - B. Psychological Observations will be conducted in the suicide watch area or when not feasible due to space limitations, one of the designated suicide watch cells in SHU. The inmate on observation will be continuously monitored by either an Inmate Companion or a

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staff member.

C. An inmate on Psychological Observation status is allowed only items indicated by a Psychologist. These items will be indicated on the inmate's psychological observation log book. The suicide watch mattress and suicide watch blanket will be used for all inmates on psychological observation.

D. Log entries as to the behavior of the observed inmate will ideally be made every 15 minutes in a marble log book by the Inmate Companion or staff member, but observation of the inmate is continuous.

E. When the observation is conducted in the suicide watch room, the Unit 2 Officer will make hourly rounds and sign the log book.

F. A Lieutenant and Physician Assistant will also make rounds once a shift and sign the log book.

G. On a daily basis a Psychologist will assess the inmate on Psychological Observation and sign the log book.

H. If there is a staff watch being conducted on 9S, the staff member cannot watch more than two inmates on psychological observation at a time. If the Staff member is watching two inmates on psychological observation, they must be directly next to one another so that the officer can directly observe both of them on a continuous basis.

c:

 Captain
Health Services Administrator