



October 14, 2025

Delivered via electronic mail: angel.quiros@ct.gov

Department of Correction
Attn: Commissioner Angel Quiros
24 Wolcott Hill Road
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Re: Heat Mitigation Report – Response Requested Pursuant to C.G.S. § 18-81qq

Dear Commissioner Quiros,

I am pleased to transmit the enclosed Heat Mitigation Report prepared by the Office of the Correction Ombuds pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 18-81qq. The report reflects observations and data collected during inspections conducted at multiple correctional facilities throughout the 2025 summer season.

In accordance with § 18-81qq, I respectfully request that the Department provide a written response to the findings and recommendations contained in this report no later than November 18, 2025. To ensure completeness and clarity, please have the Department's response address each recommendation enumerated alphabetically in the report. This will assist the OCO in accurately documenting the Department's actions and including them in its subsequent public reporting and legislative updates.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to you and the facility leadership and staff at Osborn Correctional Institution, Bridgeport Correctional Center, and Hartford Correctional Center for their professionalism, responsiveness, and collaboration during the inspection process. Their assistance was invaluable to ensuring a thorough and balanced review.

The Office looks forward to continued partnership with the Department as we work together to strengthen conditions, transparency, and safety across Connecticut's correctional system. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of the report or schedule a follow-up meeting.

Respectfully,
DeVaughn L. Ward
DeVaughn L. Ward, Esq.
Correction Ombuds
Office of the Correction Ombuds



HEAT MITIGATION REPORT

DeVaughn L. Ward, Esq, Correction Ombuds

October 8, 2025

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I. Executive Summary

This report is issued pursuant to the statutory authority of the Office of the Correction Ombuds (OCO) under Connecticut General Statute § 18-81qq, which empowers the Ombuds to investigate conditions of confinement, assess constitutional or statutory violations, and publish findings and recommendations.

Connecticut experienced multiple extended periods of extreme heat during June and July 2025, including three multi-day heat waves with outdoor temperatures exceeding 90°F. On four occasions—June 18, July 14, July 27, and August 8—the Governor activated the State’s Extreme Hot Weather Protocol¹. Public health research identifies a heat index of 85°F as a threshold where risks of heat-related illness increase², and the National Weather Service classifies the 80–90°F range as a “Caution” zone³. Within correctional settings, the impact of such conditions are magnified by aging infrastructure, inadequate ventilation, and the absence of statewide standards governing heat mitigation.

This investigation focused on the three Connecticut facilities without air conditioning—Bridgeport Correctional Center, Osborn Correctional Institution, and Hartford Correctional Center—which collectively house approximately 2,700 individuals.

Facility Population, August 1, 2025 ⁴			
Facility	Accused/Other Status	Sentenced	Total
Bridgeport CC	512	102	614
Osborn CI	95	1,095	1,190
Hartford CC	786	113	899

Through announced and unannounced inspections, review of DOC guidance, and resident and community complaints, the OCO found that heat mitigation practices are inconsistent and rely on a patchwork of facility-level directives rather than enforceable statewide policy.

¹ State of Conn., Governor Lamont, *Governor Lamont Activates Extreme Hot Weather Protocol*, CT.gov (June 18, 2025; Jul. 14, 2025; Jul. 27, 2025; Aug. 8, 2025).

² Aaron W. Tustin et al., *Evaluation of Occupational Exposure Limits for Heat Stress in Outdoor Workers — United States, 2011–2016*, 67 *Morbidity & Mortality Wkly. Rep.* 733 (2018); Nat’l Weather Serv., *What Is the Heat Index?*, NOAA, <https://www.weather.gov/ama/heatindex> (last visited Sept. 16, 2025).

³ Nat’l Weather Serv., *What Is the Heat Index?*, NOAA, <https://www.weather.gov/ama/heatindex> (last visited Sept. 16, 2025).

⁴ *Correctional Facility Daily Population Count By Facility*, CT Open Data Portal, dataset no. n8x6-s299 (Connecticut), https://data.ct.gov/Public-Safety/Correctional-Facility-Daily-Population-Count-By-Fa/n8x6-s299/about_data (last visited Sept. 19, 2025).

Documented deficiencies included unreliable access to cold drinking water, poor fan placement or removal of fans from housing units, inconsistent implementation of protocols, and reports of retaliation by staff through fan shut-offs. Residents reported heat-related rashes, respiratory difficulties, and worsening conditions for those with chronic illnesses.

The Department of Administrative Services has initiated long-term HVAC projects at Hartford and Bridgeport facilities, with completion expected by 2027. Osborn, by contrast, will expand use of generator-powered cooling units as an interim measure after its full retrofit proposal—estimated at \$120 million—was not approved. While these capital projects represent meaningful progress, they do not address immediate risks during the summers of 2026 and 2027.

The OCO concludes that the Department of Correction faces a substantial risk of constitutional violations if current deficiencies persist. Federal courts, including recently in *Tiede v. Collier*⁵, have recognized that confining incarcerated persons in dangerously hot environments without adequate mitigation may constitute deliberate indifference under the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. In addition, public health authorities warn that conditions exceeding 85°F indoors place incarcerated populations at heightened risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death⁶.

Accordingly, this report provides findings from summer 2025 inspections and offers targeted recommendations. These include establishing enforceable temperature standards, ensuring consistent access to water and fans, expanding shower and laundry access, implementing hourly temperature logs, adopting a “heat score” system to protect medically vulnerable residents, and prioritizing timely infrastructure repairs. Together, these measures are necessary to safeguard health, uphold constitutional standards, and prepare the correctional system for future extreme heat events.

⁵ *Tiede v. Collier*, No. 1:23-CV-1004-RP, 2025 WL 359207, at *58–59 (W.D. Tex. Mar. 26, 2025).

⁶ Kaitlyn Brunn et al., *Carceral Heat Exposure as Harmful Design: An Integrative Review*, 349 Soc. Sci. & Med. 116653 (2025).

II. Background

According to the National Weather Service (“NWS”), heat is one of the leading weather-related killers in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year.⁷ During the summer, high temperatures can create dangerous conditions, exacerbated in recent years by climate change. In prisons with aging infrastructure, these conditions have caused several heat related deaths prompting lawsuits throughout the country⁸. Research has consistently shown that correctional facilities with inadequate cooling systems and heat mitigation practices expose their populations to increased adverse mental and physical health outcomes, elevated incidents of suicide attempts, and increased mortality rates⁹. Studies and lawsuits have documented that sustained indoor heat above 85°F places people at risk for heat exhaustion, dehydration, and heat stroke¹⁰.

Vulnerable individuals—including those with chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, or who take heat-sensitive medications—are at heightened risk¹¹. Courts across the country, including recent rulings in Texas, have recognized that failing to address extreme heat in prisons can constitute deliberate indifference under the Eighth Amendment¹². Public health authorities emphasize regular access to cold drinking water, ventilation, cooling spaces, and opportunities for showers as critical mitigation steps¹³. Some carceral institutions and jurisdictions have set explicit indoor temperature limits or issued guidance for correctional facilities. For example, Oklahoma mandates that jail temperatures not exceed 85°F unless otherwise authorized by a physician¹⁴, California has piloted housing unit standards aiming to maintain indoor temperatures below 79°F¹⁵, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons has issued clinical guidance on the prevention and management of heat

⁷ Nat’l Weather Serv., *Heat Safety Tips and Resources: Heat Is the Leading Weather-Related Killer in the United States, Resulting in Hundreds of Fatalities Each Year*, NOAA (last visited Sept. 16, 2025), <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat>

⁸ Kaitlyn Brunn et al., *Carceral Heat Exposure as Harmful Design: An Integrative Review*, 349 Soc. Sci. & Med. 116653 (2025).

⁹ Julianne Skarha et al., *Heat-Related Mortality in U.S. State and Private Prisons: A Case-Crossover Analysis, 2023* (on file with PLOS or relevant journal) (finding that extreme heat days are associated with increased mortality in prisons, suicide increases, etc.).

¹⁰ Brunn et al., *supra* note 6

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *See, e.g., Tiede v. Collier*, No. 4:21-cv-02945, 2025 WL 1449443 (S.D. Tex. Mar. 26, 2025) (holding that housing people in non-air-conditioned prisons during extreme heat plausibly alleges unconstitutional conditions of confinement); *Ball v. LeBlanc*, 792 F.3d 584 (5th Cir. 2015) (affirming injunction requiring Louisiana prison officials to address extreme heat exposure for death row inmates); *Gates v. Cook*, 376 F.3d 323 (5th Cir. 2004) (finding unconstitutional conditions where Mississippi prisoners were exposed to extreme heat, inadequate ventilation, and pest infestations); *Walker v. Schult*, 717 F.3d 119 (2d Cir. 2013) (recognizing that exposure to extreme temperatures can support an Eighth Amendment claim where officials fail to act despite knowledge of the risk).

¹³ Brunn et al., *supra* note 6

¹⁴ Okla. Admin. Code §§ 310:680-5-3(d), 310:670-5-6(26).

¹⁵ California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, *Sustainable Operations & Climate Change Initiatives* (2022).

related illness, emphasizing monitoring, hydration, and appropriate medical response during extreme heat events¹⁶.

Complaints and Resident Reports

There have been longstanding complaints about the lack of air conditioning in CT DOC¹⁷. During the summer of 2025, the Office of the Correction Ombuds received multiple complaints concerning three facilities involved in this investigation, both verbally from residents during inspections and through emails submitted by the loved ones of incarcerated individuals. The complaints included inconsistent access to cold drinking water, fans being turned off, heat-related rashes and illnesses, and concerns that medically vulnerable residents remained housed in non-climate-controlled areas.

On June 24, 2025, a mother wrote via email to the office regarding her son at Osborn Correctional Institution:

"I'm writing because my son is currently incarcerated in Osborn Correctional. He was just moved there in May and has let me know of the deteriorating conditions within that facility. Since there, he has contracted scabies, been without light in his cell, and has had no fan or air conditioning while being held in the cell on lockdown for most days. The officers come around every few hours with semi-cold water to cool off during this heat wave, but it's still uncomfortably hot."

That same day, another mother submitted the following complaint via email:

"I am writing you to file a complaint for the inhumane conditions at Osborn Correctional Institution. My son is incarcerated there and this heat is affecting his health. He has asthma and can't breathe when it's cool, let alone over 100 degrees. I wouldn't let my animals suffer with this heat."

During a June 30, 2025 visit to Bridgeport Correctional Institution, residents reported that bedding was changed only once per month, which they stated led to increased rashes and infections. On July 9, 2025, during another visit to Bridgeport, a resident reported a heat-related rash.

Finally, during a July 29, 2025 inspection of Osborn Correctional Institution, a resident in F Block reported being held the prior day in a cell with a sink that contained "maggots" and

¹⁶Federal Bureau of Prisons, *Prevention and Management of Heat-Related Illness: Clinical Guidance* (Dec. 2017), https://www.bop.gov/resources/pdfs/heat_related_illness.pdf.

¹⁷Ashad Hajela, *Reporter's Notebook: Enduring Summer Heat in a Connecticut Prison*, Conn. Pub. (July 23, 2024), <https://www.ctpublic.org/the-reporters-notebook/2024-07-23/reporters-notebook-enduring-summer-heat-in-a-connecticut-prison>; *We're in a Heat Box: Sweltering Summer Felt in CT Prison with Limited Air Conditioning*, Conn. Pub. (July 18, 2024), <https://www.ctpublic.org/news/investigative/2024-07-18/osborn-prison-connecticut-no-central-air-conditioning>.

other insects. The Ombuds observed this cell, where insects were visible in the sink, raising concerns that access to drinking water for this cell during the heat wave was both inadequate and unaddressed despite the cell being occupied. Residents also reported that correctional staff intermittently turned off fans as retaliation. A photograph of the sink is documented in the appendix.

Extreme Temperature Legal Standards

C.G.S. § 18-81 grants the Commissioner of Correction authority to establish rules ensuring the “health, safety and humane treatment” of incarcerated persons. This statutory mandate encompasses climate-related risks and requires conditions that safeguard health and dignity.

Courts have long acknowledged that extreme temperatures—whether excessive heat or cold—raise constitutional concerns. Prolonged exposure to cold poses a direct health risk and cannot be justified by any legitimate penological interest¹⁸. Pretrial detainees are entitled to protections at least equal to those of convicted prisoners.¹⁹ Courts have granted relief where proof showed extreme temperatures likely to injure health²⁰. Some jurisdictions have adopted remedial frameworks such as “heat scores” to prioritize medically vulnerable individuals for climate-controlled housing.²¹ To succeed in such claims, plaintiffs must demonstrate that conditions, alone or in combination, deprived them of a single identifiable human need (such as warmth), and that officials acted with deliberate indifference.²² While the Constitution does not require “comfortable prisons,” it does require the provision of basic human needs, and prison conditions cannot inflict wanton or unnecessary pain²³.

CT DOC Heat-Mitigation Policies & Guidance

The OCO did not find published administrative directives establishing temperature thresholds in the facilities. In practice, and during this investigation, facilities frequently canceled outdoor recreation or relocated programming informally during extreme heat. However, OCO did not find any published administrative directive or statutes memorializing this practice even though these are common utilized throughout CT DOC. Instead, CT DOC facilities appear to rely on facility-level protocols and administrative discretion rather than standing directives, which is concerning because, without explicit guidance, residents and staff lack clear, measurable standards to reference.

¹⁸ *Benjamin v. Fraser*, 161 F. Supp. 2d 151, 153 (S.D.N.Y. 2001).

¹⁹ *Crosby v. Georgakopoulos*, No. 03-5232 (WGB), at *1 (D.N.J. June 24, 2005); *Darnell v. Pineiro*, 849 F.3d 17, 29 (2d Cir. 2017).

²⁰ *Webb v. Livingston*, 618 F. App'x 201, 204 (5th Cir. 2015).

²¹ *Tiede v. Collier*, No. 1:23-CV-1004-RP, 2025 WL 359207, at *58–59 (W.D. Tex. Mar. 26, 2025).

²² *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 296 (1991); *Walker v. Schult*, 717 F.3d 119, 121 (2d Cir. 2013); *Sherman v. Cook*, No. 3:20-cv-1485 (SRU), at *13 (D. Conn. Jan. 29, 2021).

²³ *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 349 (1981); *Helling v. McKinney*, 509 U.S. 25, 33 (1993); *Youngberg v. Romeo*, 457 U.S. 307, 315 (1982); *DeShaney v. Winnebago Cnty. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 489 U.S. 189, 200 (1989); *Johnson v. Prentice*, 144 S. Ct. 11, 15 n.2 (2023).

Below is a chronological timeline of heat mitigation guidance issued DOC statewide and at the three facilities without air conditioning:

Hartford Correctional Guidance (June 6, 2025)

On June 6, 2025, Warden Long at Hartford CI issued early seasonal instructions to staff in advance of warmer weather with water jug distribution protocols beginning June 7. Kitchen staff and housing officers were assigned responsibility for refills and returns each shift.

Bridgeport Correctional Guidance (June 17, 2025)

On June 17, 2025, Deputy Warden Bonaventura issued a roll call notice to all staff directing that notice be read at every roll call on every shift from June 17 until June 23, 2025. The notice directed kitchen staff to arrange for ice to be delivered to units four times daily (twice on first shift and twice on second shift). Additionally, the population was directed to receive chilled juice once a day. Lastly, the notice directed a Lieutenant to initial and date after delivery.

Statewide Guidance Issued (June 18, 2025)

On June 18, 2025, District Administrator Nick Rodriguez issued a memo to Bridgeport, Osborn, and Hartford correction staff addressing heatwave preparedness, hydration, ventilation, schedule modifications, medical readiness, and contingency relocation planning in advance of a predicted heatwave. Key directives included:

- Regular monitoring of housing unit temperatures with maintenance support.
- Ensuring frequent refills of water jugs and placing additional water stations in common areas.
- Encouraging hydration through staff education and inmate outreach.
- Ensuring all fans and cooling units function at full capacity and deploying portable coolers as needed.
- Modifying daily schedules to reduce strenuous activities during peak heat hours.
- Ensuring staff have access to cooler spaces for breaks.
- Preparing medical staff and supplies for heat-related illness.
- Developing contingency relocation plans for units with unmitigable extreme heat.

Osborn Facility Protocol (July 18, 2025)

In advance of projected 90 °F+ conditions, Operations Captain Shannon Brown issued specific heat mitigation protocols to all staff:

- Ice water distribution four times daily (8:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 3:30 PM, and 5:30 PM).
- Two water jugs per unit (three for H Block); jugs to be monitored by camera and documented in logbooks with lieutenant initials.
- Jugs collected and sanitized daily by kitchen staff.
- Ice sourced from three facility machines, with contingency plans for breakdowns.
- Medical staff directed to identify any additional needs during heat waves. This protocol was ordered to remain in place throughout the summer.

Long-Term Heat Mitigation Efforts

The State of Connecticut has initiated comprehensive HVAC feasibility studies at the three correctional facilities without air conditioning as part of a long-term strategy to mitigate extreme heat conditions and ensure humane standards of confinement. Commissioned through the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Construction Services, these studies reflect the recognition that original housing units, built decades ago without cooling systems, are no longer adequate in the face of rising summer temperatures.

On June 30, 2025, the Correction Ombuds met with the DAS Project Manager to review the studies, project timelines, and anticipated costs. DAS confirmed that projects at Hartford and Bridgeport are moving forward, while the Osborn project has not been approved due to substantially higher projected costs. All approved projects are expected to be completed by summer of 2027.

- **Hartford Correctional Institution:** Commissioned in March 2024, the study recommends rooftop air handler units for the kitchen and laundry, along with courtyard-mounted air handling units for the housing blocks. The estimated timeline includes a 90-day contracting phase, a 320-day design phase, and 150 days for bidding and contracting, with the construction timeline to be finalized upon completion of design and procurement planning. The project is currently in the design phase.
- **Bridgeport Correctional Center:** Completed in November 2023, the study evaluated options for cooling housing Blocks 37–39 and the Madison Building. The preferred option involves installing air handler units in the courtyards, at an estimated cost of \$4.29 million, with an additional \$1.14 million for the Madison Building. The project, which is approximately one month ahead of Hartford in scheduling, is also in the design phase.
- **Osborn Correctional Institution:** Issued in January 2024, the study proposed a full facility retrofit with a centralized chilled water plant and new distribution systems. With projected costs between \$76 million and \$85 million, Osborn represents the largest capital investment of the three facilities. At present, this project has not been approved. Instead, the facility will expand its existing cooling capacity through generator-powered air conditioning units to provide partial relief during high-heat periods.

In total, Hartford and Bridgeport will move forward under a \$25 million allocation for design, construction, and electrical upgrades, including the installation of outlets in Bridgeport's cell blocks to improve conditions of confinement. Both projects will proceed under a Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) model to streamline bidding and reduce delays.

These projects mark a significant step toward addressing extreme heat in Connecticut's correctional facilities. However, the lack of funding for Osborn—home to approximately

1,200 individuals—underscores ongoing challenges in ensuring consistent climate control and in meeting constitutional standards of confinement across the state.

III. Methodology

The findings in this report are based on a multi-source review combining direct inspections, document analysis, weather data, and resident/staff input. The following methods were employed:

Facility Inspections

The Office of the Correction Ombuds conducted site visits to Bridgeport, Osborn, and Hartford correctional facilities in June and July 2025. Visits were a mix of announced and unannounced inspections, allowing observation of both routine operations and conditions. Temperature was measured by the Ombuds and verified in some instances by DOC maintenance staff. During each visit, the Ombuds inspected housing units, dayrooms, medical areas, and common spaces to evaluate fan placement, air circulation, and access to drinking water.

Review of Heat-Mitigation Protocols

The OCO reviewed written directives and facility-specific guidance issued by DOC leadership were collected and reviewed. Facility logbooks and staff reports were examined, when available, to determine compliance with water distribution and other required practices.

Resident and Community Complaints

Complaints submitted to the Ombuds' office were considered, including allegations regarding inconsistent water access, broken fans, staff retaliation through turning fans off, and inadequate opportunities for showers and laundry changes. Concerns were cross-referenced with inspection observations and logbook records when possible.

Weather Data

Local weather records from Hartford-area stations were analyzed to establish daily outdoor high and low temperatures during the inspection period. This data provided context for comparing indoor facility conditions against external heat events.

Legal and Policy Review

Federal and state case law, constitutional standards, and correctional regulations were reviewed to establish applicable legal benchmarks. Comparative standards from other jurisdictions and medical literature on heat-related illness informed best-practice recommendations.

IV. Findings

A. Bridgeport Correctional Institution

Constructed 1957; renovated 1974. Air conditioning in Infirmary, North, and Memorial units. Cell Blocks 37, 38, and 39 do not have air conditioning.

June 30, 2025, 11:00AM – Announced Visit

Outside Temperature: High 96 °F, Low 59 °F

Context: Routine inspection of heat mitigation measures.

Findings: During the June 30 inspection at Bridgeport, heat mitigation protocols were inconsistently applied, with temperature checks occurring irregularly. Staff reported that they had issued informal guidance to avoid housing medically vulnerable residents in non-climate-controlled units, and recreation was reportedly suspended when outdoor temperatures exceeded approximately 95 °F. However, written evidence of these directives was not produced. Conditions in several housing areas demonstrated serious deficiencies: in the gym, which was being used for overflow housing, there were no fans operating, and no ice water or juice buckets were observed. In 39 Block, no ice water or juice was available and only a single fan was functioning in the 9 Corridor Day Room. In 37 Block, problems varied by corridor: in 37A, a fan positioned at the officer's post was directed toward staff rather than residents, while in 37B, the 4 Corridor Day Room had no fans at all; Staff stated that replacements were on backorder with expected delivery in early July. In other units, fans were observed stored under stairwells and not deployed despite high temperatures and residents being out of their cells, and some fans that were in use were covered in debris, further reducing their effectiveness.

July 9, 2025, 6:45PM - Unannounced Visit

Outside Temperature: High 87 °F, Low 72 °F

Context: Visit prompted by sewage leak in 39A; also used to observe heat protocols.

Findings: A plumbing failure occurred in Unit 39A due to a clog that developed over time from accumulated clothing in the piping system. As a result, forty-seven residents were relocated to the facility gym. The gym ultimately housed more than fifty individuals, including residents and staff, but had only one small, fixed fan in operation. Water access was inadequate, with minimal water available in a single cooler and only limited ice on hand. Several residents reported heat-related rashes and discomfort.

July 22, 2025 10:00AM – Unannounced Visit

Outside Temperature: High 79 °F, Low 54 °F

Context: Follow-up inspection of heat mitigation.

Findings: Following the June 30 inspection and a subsequent email to Warden Burgos regarding the deficiencies, an unannounced visit confirmed that ice and water were available in all housing units. In addition, fans were purchased on July

11 and had been deployed and properly positioned in the corridors to improve air circulation.

B. Osborn Correctional Institution (Somers)

Built in 1962, with boilers replaced in 2020 and some valve replacements in 1996. Currently, only 10% of the facility (administration, healthcare areas, guard dining) has cooling; the rest of the facility has only heating/ventilation.

June 24, 2025, 10:45AM – Announced Visit

Outside Temperature: 98–101 °F

Context: Inspection of cooling infrastructure and housing conditions.

Findings: Nine 25-ton generator-powered cooling units were in operation, which is reportedly double the standard requirement. Temperature readings across housing units varied: B Block measured 77 °F; C and D Blocks measured 84 °F; E, F, and H Blocks each measured 86 °F; J Block Lower measured 91 °F; and J Block Upper peaked at 95 °F in the rear and front right sections where a fan was inoperable. Loft 1 and Loft 2 measured 80 °F and 83 °F, respectively. Several housing units exceeded 85 °F, with J Block Upper recording the highest temperatures. Water jugs were observed in the units, but some fans were found to be misdirected, limiting their effectiveness.

July 29, 2025, 3:00PM– Unannounced Visit

Outside Temperature: Mid-to-high 80s °F

Context: Follow-up inspection of heat mitigation

Findings: Temperature readings at the facility showed variation across the housing units. B Block measured 75.6 °F with ice water available. C Block recorded 88 °F, but no water was present at the time of inspection and the logbook showed delayed entries. D Block measured 71.6 °F with water available. E Block recorded 84.9 °F, with highs between 92–94 °F; no water was present at inspection, though the logbook noted a jug refill at 6:15 PM. F Block measured between 86–90 °F, with no water or fans observed during inspection, although the logbook indicated later cell-side water distribution. H Block measured 81 °F with water and fans available. J1 and J2 measured 78 °F with inconsistent water access noted. Loft 1 measured 78 °F with both water and fans available, while Loft 2 ranged between 71–78 °F with water and fans present. The chow hall reached 92 °F. Observations also noted elevated humidity in E Block and excessive heat in F Block RHU. While a cold-water protocol was issued on July 18, it was not consistently followed. Additionally, residents alleged that staff intermittently turned off fans as a form of retaliation.

C. Hartford Correctional Institute

Hartford CI was originally built in 1977 with major expansion in the 1990s. The facility lacks a centralized cooling system. Cooling systems are a patchwork of packaged air systems installed area by area since the 1990s.

June 27, 2025 Visit, 11:00AM – Announced**Outside Temperature:** 73°F**Context:** Inspection of cooling infrastructure and housing conditions during week of heat wave.**Findings:** Water and fans were observed in all housing units. Several residents reported discomfort from heat conditions throughout the week, with temperatures perceived as particularly warm in units located on higher floors. Condensation on floors caused by the combination of temperature and fan use was also noticeable.**July 25, 2025 Visit 10:00AM – Unannounced****Outside Temperature:** 95°F**Context:** Follow-up inspection of heat mitigation.**Findings:** All housing units had water and fans; however, residents continued to report excessive heat, particularly in upper-level areas where floor condensation was also observed. Plant Facilities Engineer (PFE) staff was unavailable to obtain temperature readings during the inspection.**D. Risk of Constitutional Violation & Adverse Health Outcomes**

Based on the inspections conducted during the summer of 2025, the evidence demonstrates that Connecticut’s correctional facilities continue to face significant deficiencies in addressing extreme heat, especially in older housing units without climate control. Despite some existing protocols and long-term capital projects, implementation of heat mitigation measures has been inconsistent, leaving residents exposed to prolonged periods of indoor temperatures exceeding 85°F, unreliable access to cold water, and inadequate fan placement. Considering these persistent conditions and federal rulings such as *Tiede v. Collier*—which held that housing incarcerated people in dangerously hot environments without adequate mitigation constitutes deliberate indifference—CT DOC faces a substantial risk of violating the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments’ prohibitions on cruel and unusual punishment if these deficiencies are not promptly and effectively addressed. Moreover, CT DOC residents face an extreme risk of adverse health outcomes, including heat-related illnesses such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, which in severe cases can lead to death.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this initial investigation by the OCO, heat mitigation should continue to be treated as a prioritized area of concern within Connecticut's correctional system. This report documents critical deficiencies and it also provides a foundation for immediate corrective steps.

The following recommendations are presented as the next phase of response, along with a request that CT DOC develop a structured plan for stakeholder review and implementation over the coming year. In addition, the OCO will undertake a further phase of investigation in the summer of 2026—including detailed complaint and incident analysis—supported by the full deployment of the Office's Case Management and Tracking System (CMTS).

A. Codify Temperature Standards

The Department of Correction (DOC) should establish statutory or regulatory maximum and minimum temperature thresholds for correctional facilities—drawing on standards already in use in other states and federal guidelines—no later than May 2026.

B. Strengthen Protocol Enforcement

The DOC should issue clear, statewide advisories aligned with the Governor's Hot Weather Protocol. These advisories should be directed to incarcerated individuals, staff, and the public, and must specify which facilities and housing units are affected as well as the mitigation steps being implemented. The advisories should also ensure consistent compliance with heat mitigation requirements, including reliable access to cold water and ice, proper deployment and placement of fans, accurate documentation of compliance efforts, and facility-wide distribution of advisories during heat emergencies.

C. Implement Hourly Temperature Logs

All housing units without climate control should maintain hourly temperature logs during summer months, with records preserved for independent oversight. This will provide verifiable data on exposure levels and support accountability for corrective action.

D. Guarantee Regular Bedding and Laundry Changes

The DOC should mandate at least weekly changes of bedding and laundry during summer months at facilities lacking air conditioning. This will reduce the risk of heat-related illness and help maintain sanitation. Soiled bedding during hot and humid conditions deteriorates sanitation and personal hygiene, creating an environment that increases the risk of skin infections, rashes, fungal conditions such as athlete's foot, and the spread of communicable illnesses like staphylococcal (staph) infections.

E. Expand Shower Access

The DOC should increase the frequency of showers during heat advisories to help residents regulate body temperature. The current policy of showers every three

days should be updated and formalized in Administrative Directives to reflect higher summer needs.

F. Ensure Timely Infrastructure Support

The DOC should prioritize the repair and replacement of broken fans and cooling equipment. Facility-wide readiness assessments should be conducted no later than May 2026 and again in May 2027 to confirm preparedness for summer conditions.

G. Advance Long-Term Capital Projects

The DOC should continue to support and monitor DAS-managed HVAC projects at Bridgeport and Hartford and begin planning for upgrades at Osborn Correctional Institution, which currently relies heavily on generator-powered cooling units.

H. Protect Medically Vulnerable Residents

The DOC should produce clinical guidance on the prevention and management of heat-related illness, including staff training on risk factors, signs and symptoms, prevention strategies, and appropriate interventions. Procedures must ensure that medically vulnerable individuals are prioritized for placement in cooler housing during high-heat periods. To operationalize this, the DOC should adopt a “heat score” system to identify and prioritize residents with chronic illness, disabilities, or advanced age for placement in climate-controlled housing. This framework has been upheld in federal litigation and provides a practical, evidence-based model for Connecticut.

VI. Appendix



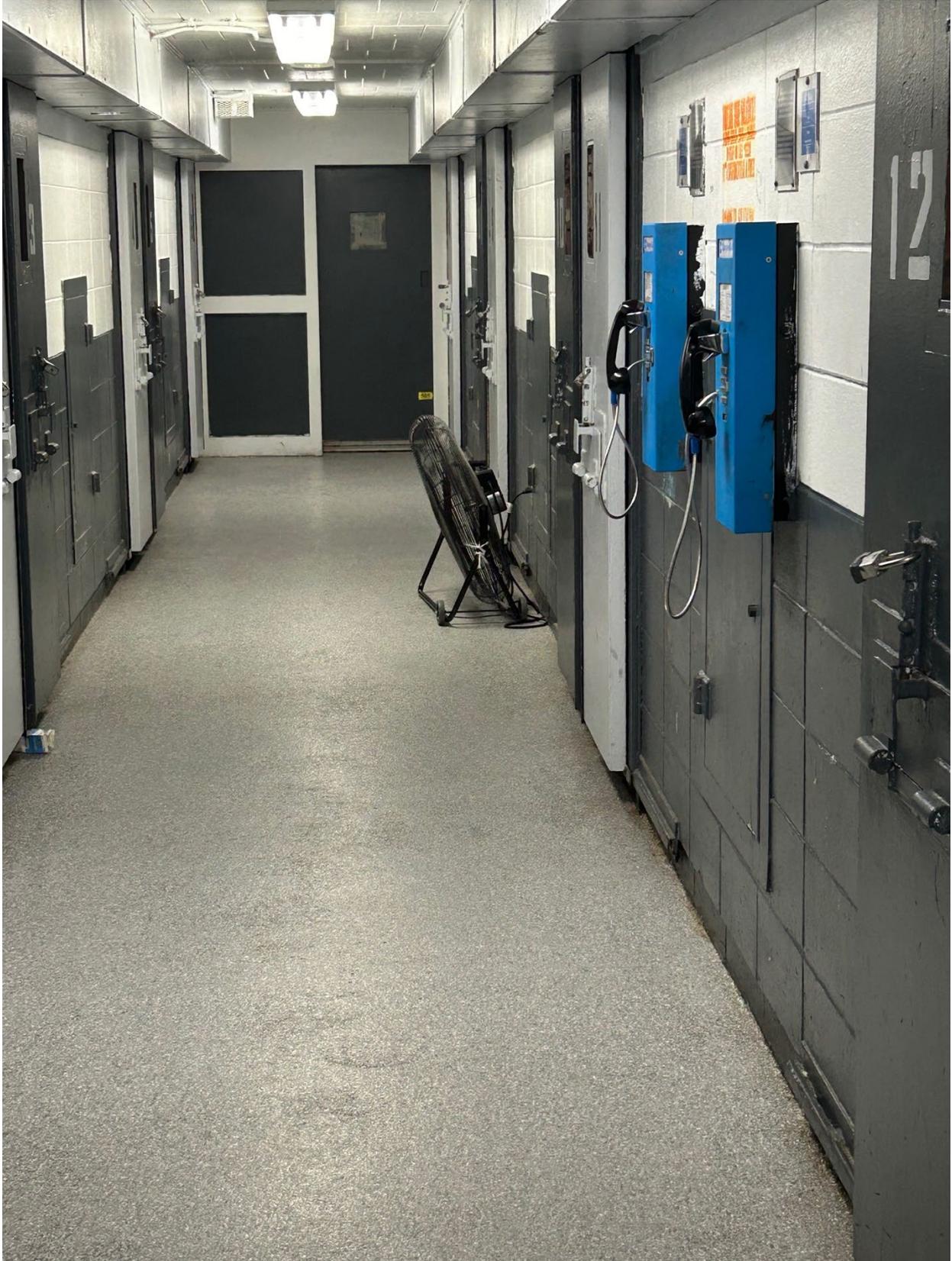
Individuals temporarily housed in Bridgeport CI Gym visit on during July 9, 2025 visit.



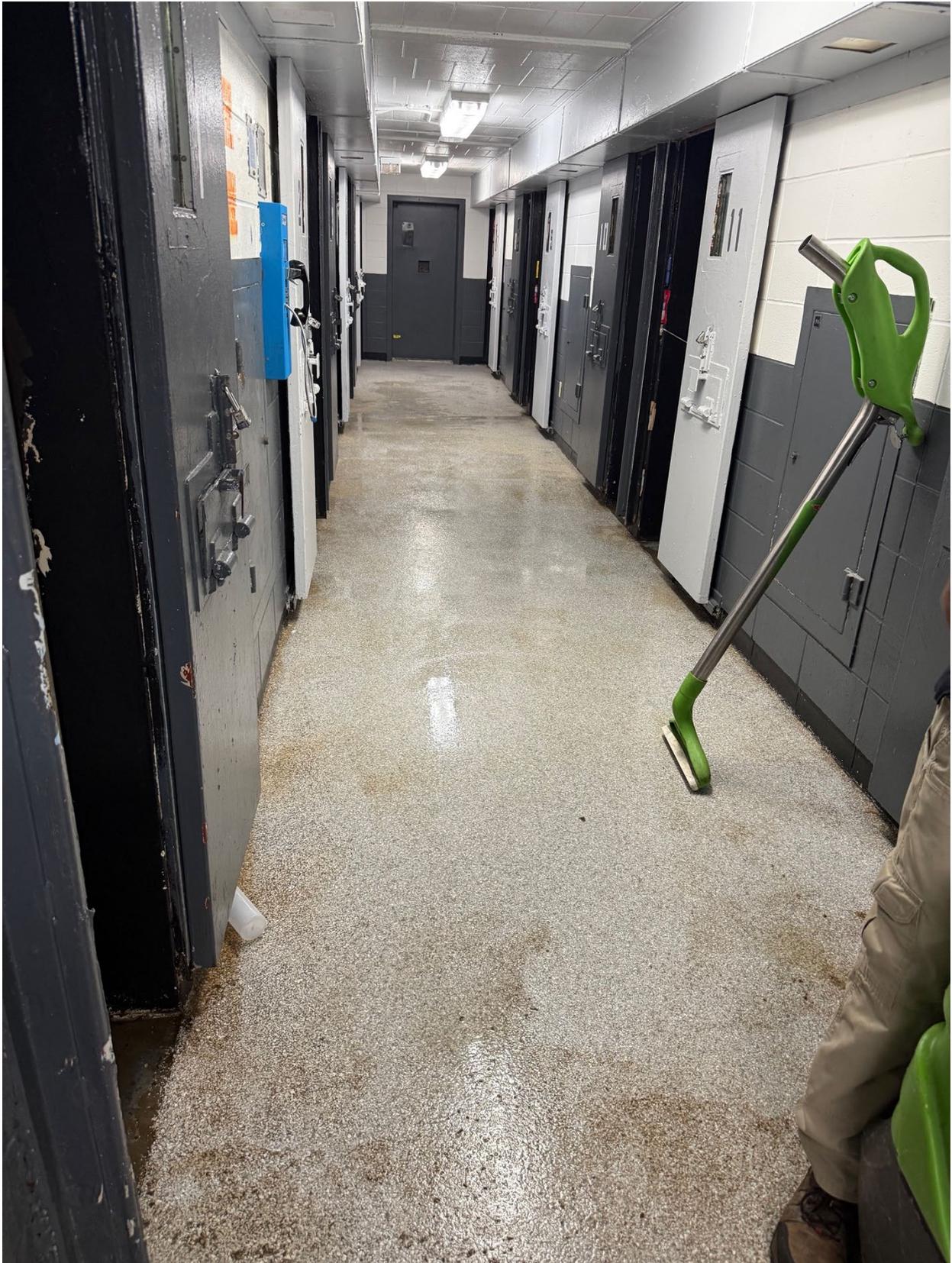
Fan placement on July 22, 2025 visit to Bridgeport CI.



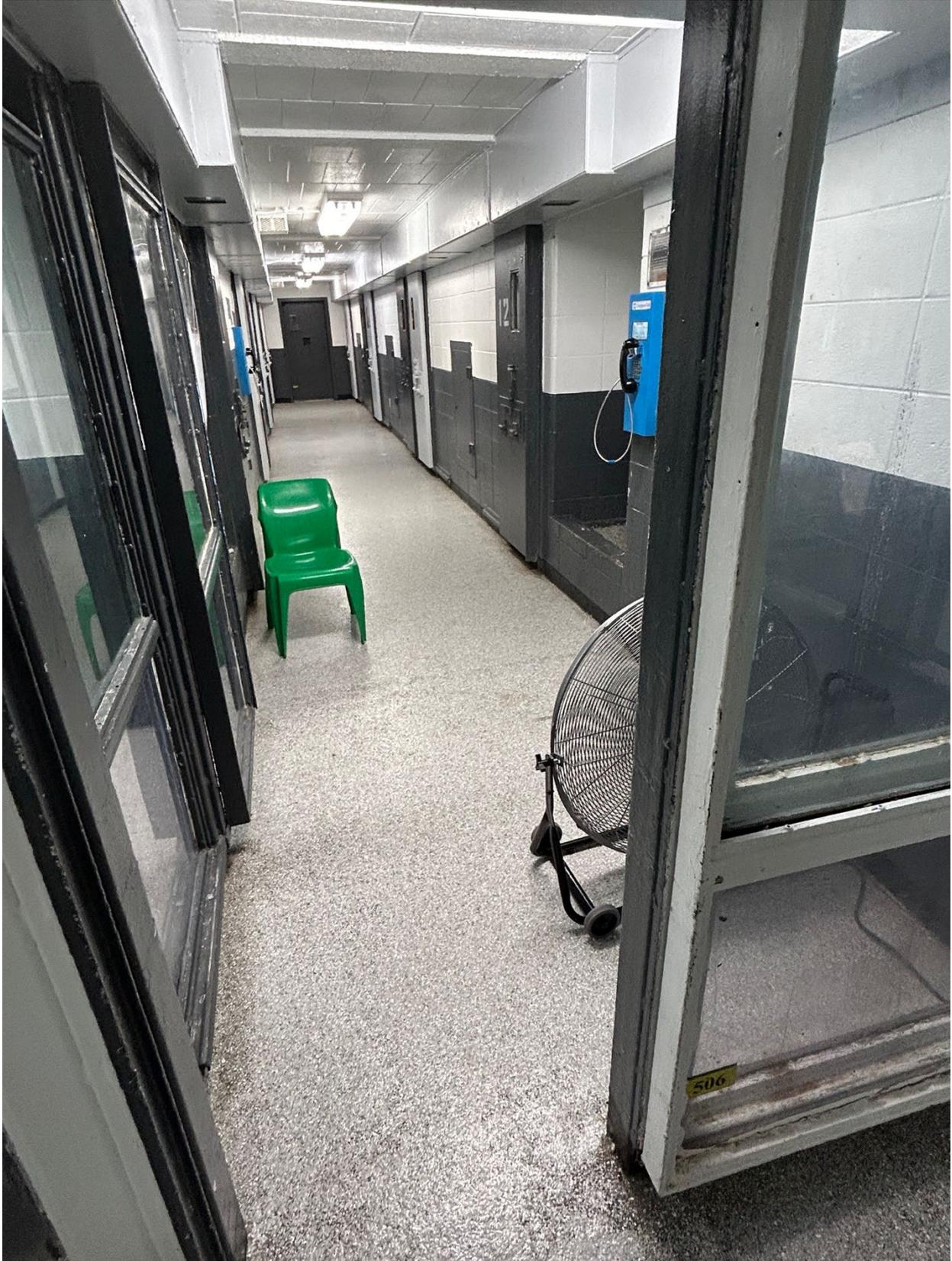
Debris covered fan at Bridgeport CI on July 22, 2025 visit.



Fan placement at Bridgeport CI June during July 22, 2025 visit.



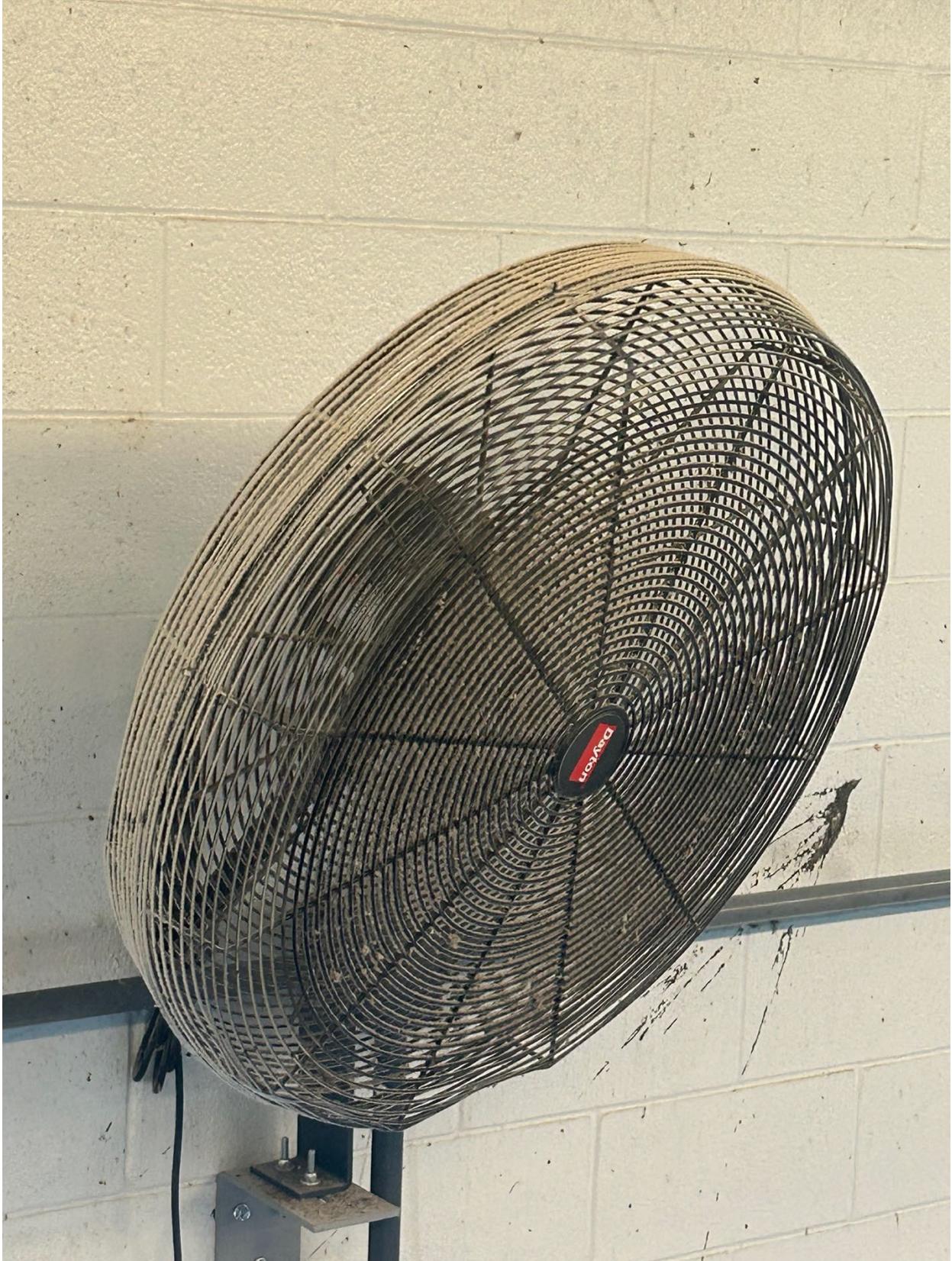
Sewage leak on July 7, 2025 at Bridgeport CI.



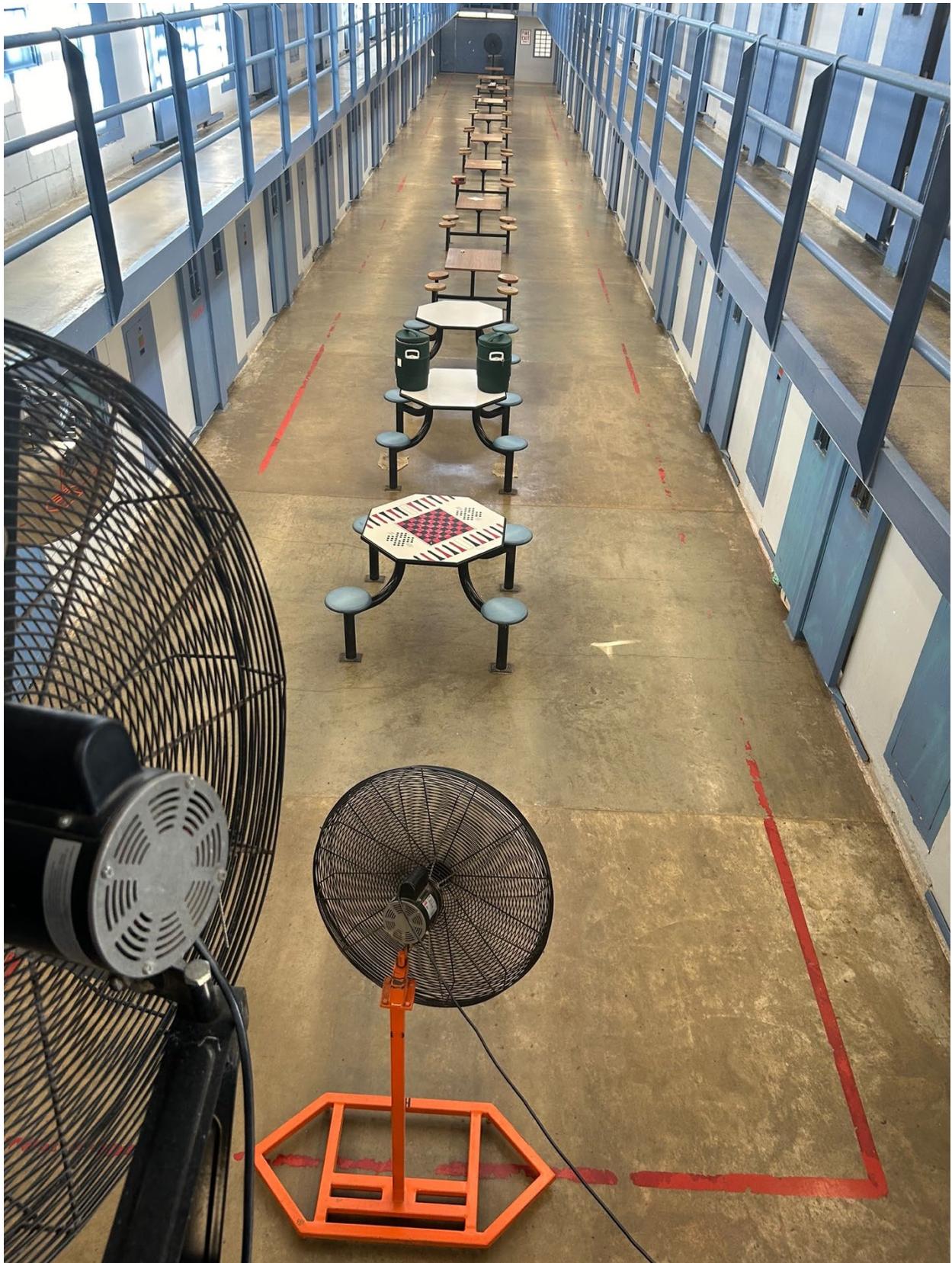
Fan Placement on July 22, 2025 visit to Bridgeport CI.



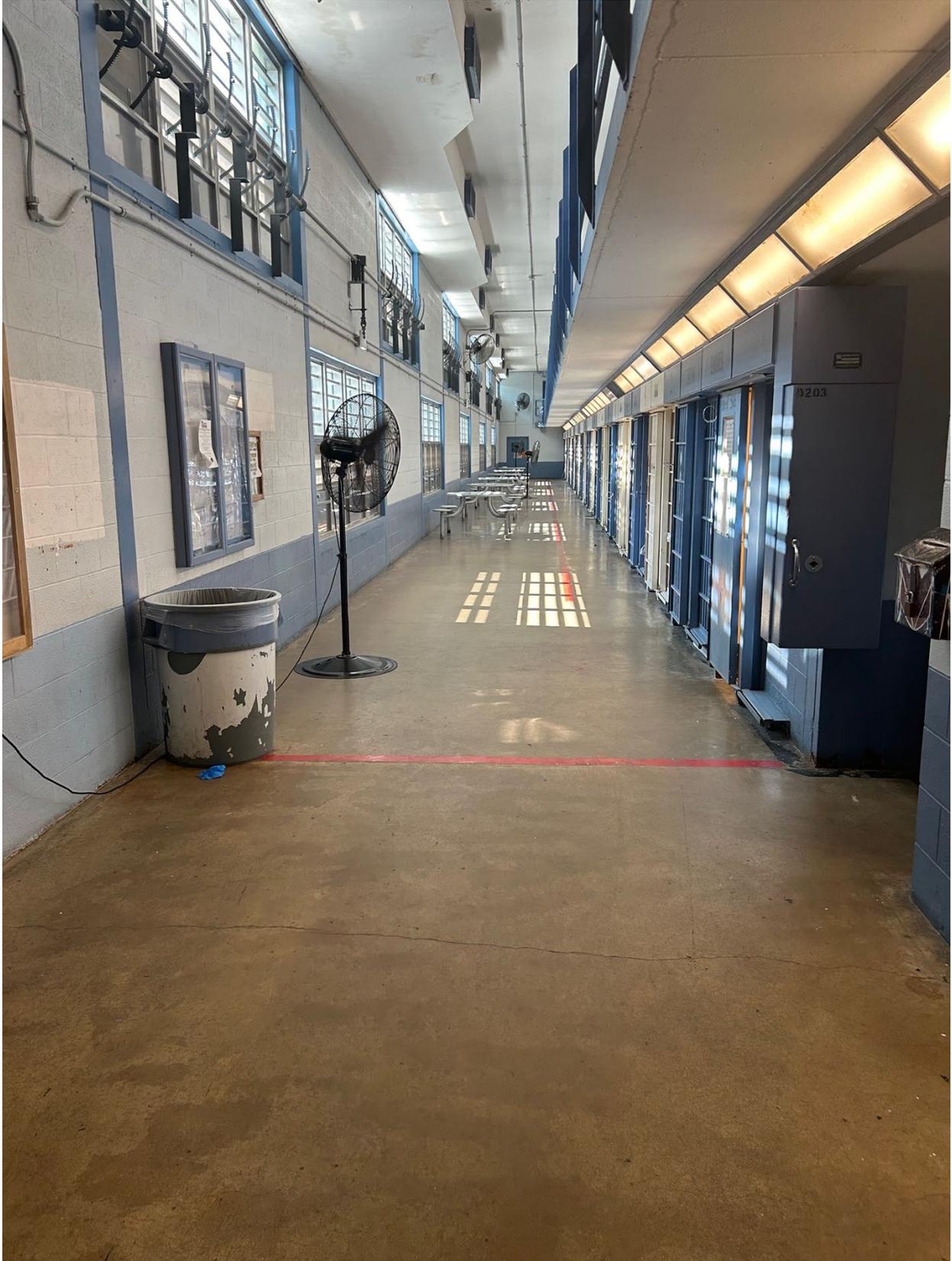
Fan placement at Bridgeport CI during July 22, 2025 visit.



Debris covered fan Osborn CI on July 29, 2025.



Fan and water cooler placement on July 29, 2025 visit to Osborn CI.



Fan placement on July 29, 2025 at Osborn Cl.



Improper fan placement at Bridgeport CI during June 30, 2025 visit.



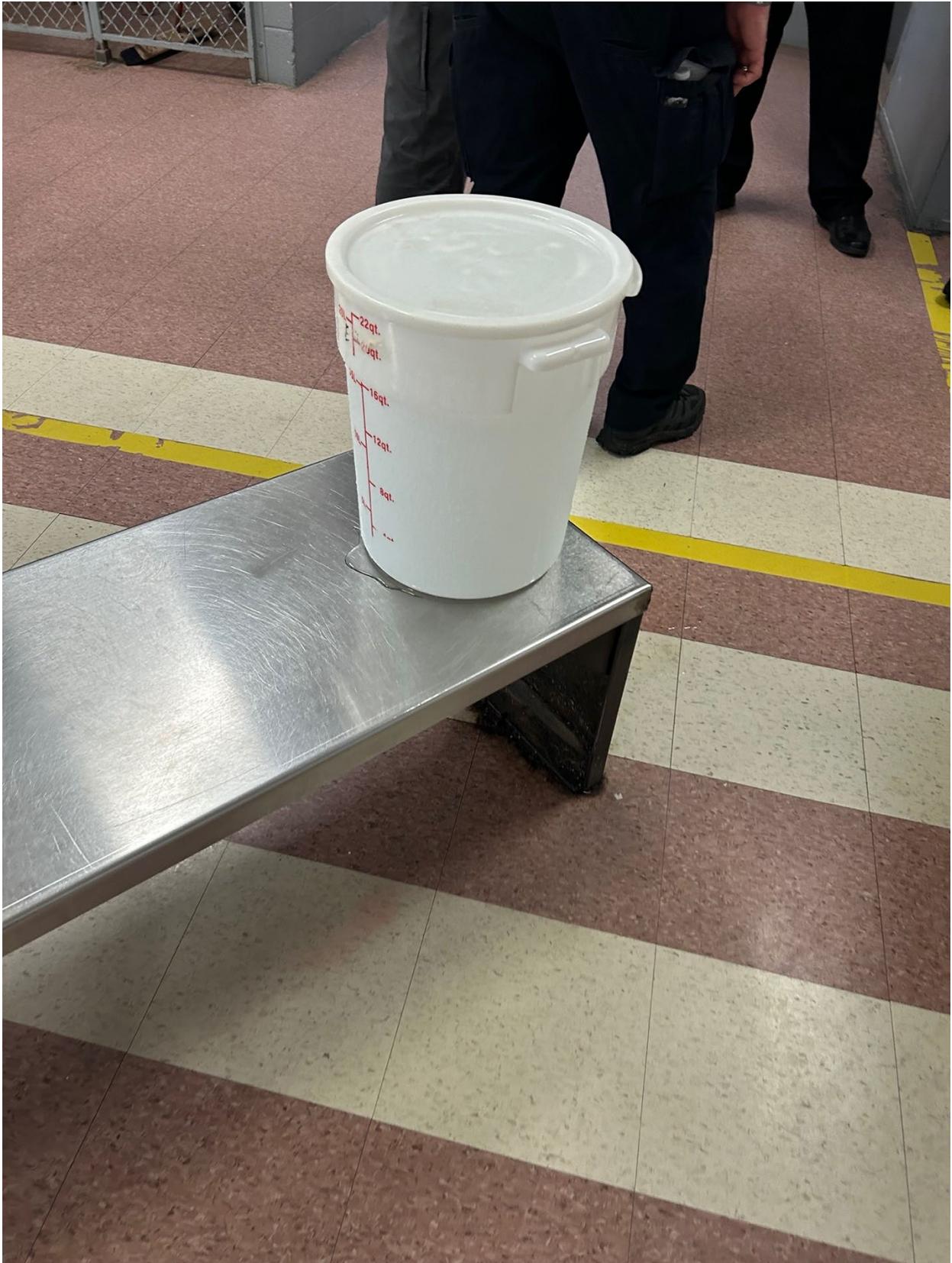
Fans placed under stairs on June 30, 2025 visit to Bridgeport CI.



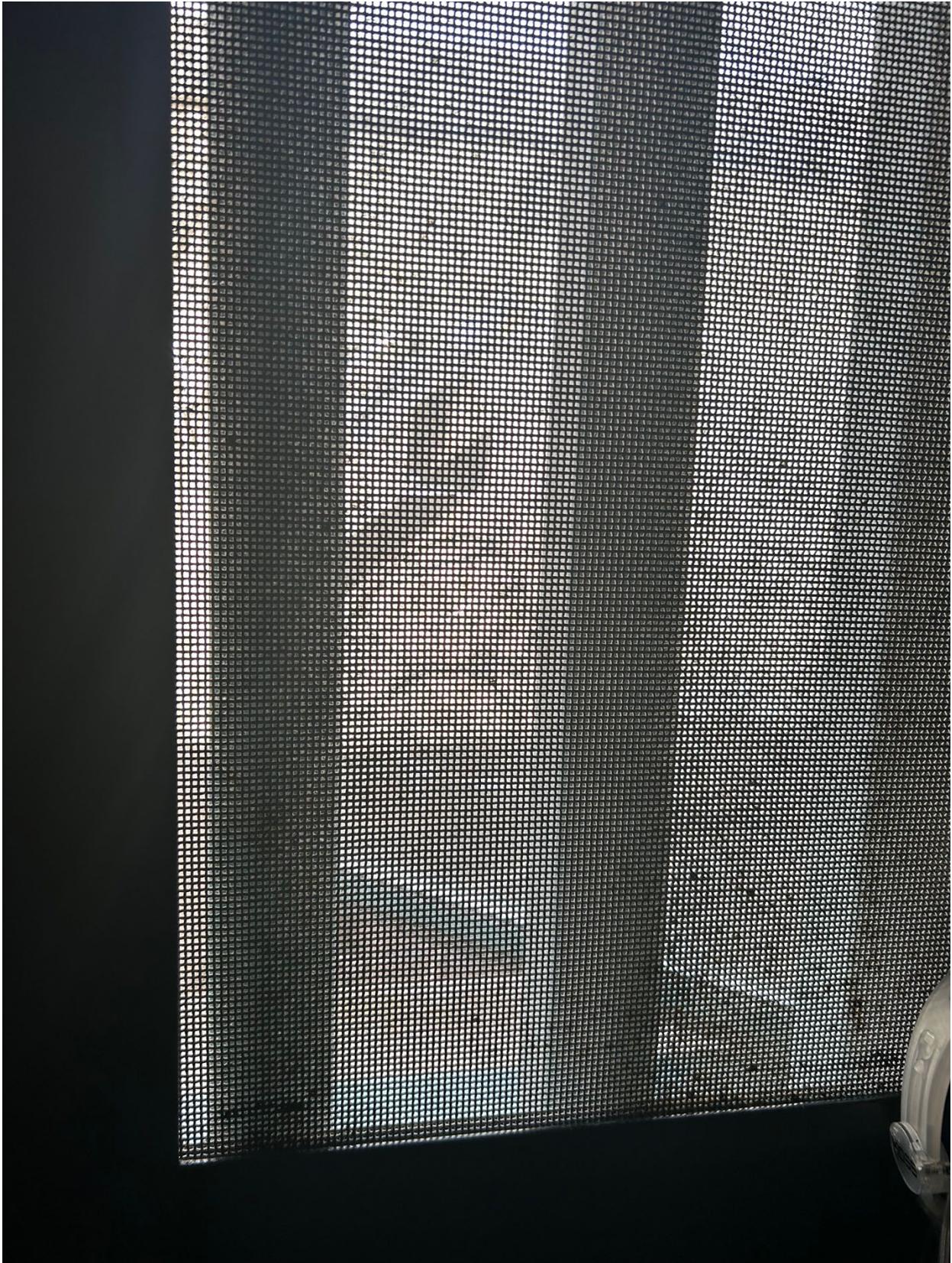
Ice water distribution at Bridgeport CI on July 22, 2025.



Ice water distribution at Hartford CI on June 27, 2025 visit.



Ice water distribution at Hartford CI during June 27, 2025 visit.



Cell ventilation in Bridgeport CI during June 30, 2025 visit.



Day single room fan in Bridgeport Ci during visit on June 30, 2025.



Soiled bedding Osborn CI during June 24, 2025 visit.



Soiled bedding during Bridgeport CI Visit on June 30, 2025.



Sink in Osborn CI during July 29, 2025 visit.



Debris covered vents during July 29, 2025 visit.



Fans positioned toward staff at Bridgeport CI during July 22, 2025 visit.



Ned Lamont
Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Office of the Commissioner



Angel Quiros
Commissioner

TO: Attorney DeVaughn L. Ward, Correction Ombuds
Office of Correction Ombuds

FROM: Angel Quiros, Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Correction

DATE: December 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Consolidated Response to Heat Mitigation Report Hartford CC, Bridgeport CC,
Osborn CI

Introduction

In response to the Ombudsman Heat Mitigation Report and October 14, 2025, request for a response, this memorandum provides a consolidated response and supporting documentation for Hartford Correctional Center (HCC), Bridgeport Correctional Center (BCC), and Osborn Correctional Institution (OCI). While we acknowledge the importance of the concerns raised, facility records, directives, and corrective measures demonstrate that several of the findings were either temporary in nature, mischaracterized due to timing, or had already been corrected prior to follow-up inspections. Across all three facilities, the Department of Correction (DOC) has established:

- Documented, accountable water/ice distribution protocols with supervisory verification.
- Seasonal fan deployment and operational monitoring.
- Prioritization of medically vulnerable populations for climate-controlled housing.

A. CODIFY TEMPERATURE STANDARDS

DOC has reviewed policies from other Departments of Correction in the Northeast to determine what, if any, temperature standards others with similar weather have codified. Delaware does not have any guidelines that specifically outline temperature standards. Maine has a vague standard stating “temperatures in indoor living and work areas shall be appropriate to summer and winter comfort zones.” Maryland only has standards for employees, not the incarcerated population, however, their standard of a “heat emergency” is when there is a warning of ambient air exceeding 88 degrees. Similarly, Massachusetts does not have a relevant policy but does have an on-site unhealthy heat management plan for correctional facilities that identifies temperatures of 85 or higher for 1-2 days as a medium threat necessitating mitigation measures for at-risk

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individuals. Massachusetts considers a high threat to be three or more days of 85-degree temperature, which triggers a Community Heat Alert and activation of response efforts. The federal government also does not have a threshold as requested. We have reviewed New Jersey's Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson Special Report "Summer Heat in New Jersey Prisons" dated September 6, 2022. It indicated that the New Jersey Department of Correction distributed a memo with directions for statewide heat mitigation protocols when inside temperatures measure 86 degrees. We take that to mean that 86 degrees indoors is New Jersey's temperature threshold. The State of New York passed a law to require the establishment of a heat mitigation plan though no threshold temperature was identified for correctional facilities. Of note, New York State public schools are bound by a maximum temperature of 88 degrees. In New York City, the temperature is 85 degrees. Once the outdoor temperature hits 85 degrees, two fans are provided, and ice is delivered. We were unable to locate a relevant policy for Rhode Island DOC. We were unable to locate a heat policy for Pennsylvania DOC but found that regulations require fans or AC to be in use when temperatures are over 90 degrees. Vermont's DOC requires its heat mitigation protocol to be implemented when the indoor temperature is 80 degrees or higher.

In following suit with other departments of correction in the Northeast, we will not be setting a specific temperature-based standard to enact certain protocols. We will, however, enact mitigation measures when heat advisories are activated from the Office of the Governor as explained further in Section B below.

B. STRENGTHEN PROTOCOL ENFORCEMENT

On June 19, 2025, District Administrator Rodriguez issued a Heatwave Advisory requiring regular temperature checks, hydration monitoring, medical preparedness, and staff education. The e-mail documenting this is attached here. A reminder regarding water availability was distributed on July 31, 2025, as demonstrated by the attached email from DA Rodriguez.

At HCC, ice and water distribution are documented through roll call directives and captain's logs. Continuous hydration is provided to both staff and the incarcerated population. Roll call notices regarding water distribution and fans at HCC are attached here.

On June 17, 2025, a directive was issued at BCC requiring four daily ice deliveries, one juice service, and supervisor initials to verify this was done. On July 9, 2025, there was a temporary disruption at BCC due to a plumbing issue requiring the relocation of fifty incarcerated individuals to the gym. On July 22, 2025, DOC staff followed up with the Office of the Ombuds to confirm compliance. The gym housing during construction was equipped with exhaust fans and supplemented with additional portable fans and water containers.

The photograph on page 33 of the Heat Mitigation Report depicts a photograph of a sink at OCI during a July 29, 2025, visit. Warden Martin reported that the incarcerated individual was

immediately removed from the cell once staff were informed. The cell was not used regularly and was likely backed up at one point as the occupant was disposing of garbage in the sink. The sink was fixed immediately, and photographs of the cleaned sink were provided to the Office of the Ombuds. Additional compliance, memos, and documentary evidence are provided in response to paragraph D below.

CT DOC will continue to issue heatwave advisories as DA Rodriguez did in June of this year to all effected facilities in line with the Governor's Hot Weather Protocol.

C. IMPLEMENT HOURLY TEMPERATURE LOGS

Facility wellness checks at HCC documented daily climate updates and recorded unit temperatures (80–85°F).

Beginning Summer of 2026, when heat advisories are in place, as explained in sections A and B above, we will conduct daily temperature checks documented in logs for all housing units without climate control at HCC, OCI, and BCC.

D. GUARANTEE REGULAR BEDDING AND LAUNDRY CHANGES

DOC submitted a legislative response in February of 2024 documenting a structured laundry activity system for HCC. This year, HCC initiated repairs to laundry equipment. DOC received an estimate to repair the laundry equipment on January 23, 2025 (see attached estimate). It was entered into the Core system for approval by early February 2025. Weekly exchanges of bedding and laundry at HCC were confirmed and staff complaints regarding missing or stained items were addressed. The laundry schedule for HCC is attached here.

While the Heat Mitigation Report notes that BCC only offers monthly bedding changes, BCC, in fact, provided weekly exchanges and, following some concerns, upgraded to a bi-weekly rotation. This bi-weekly rotation of bedding changes is now permanent. This was implemented in early July 2025.

At OCI, there is a document process which confirms that laundry service is available three times per week for all housing units. A copy of the laundry schedule is attached here. To verify this occurs, the Officers' log bag counts on white slips, inmate workers' log on yellow slips, and supervisors verify all transactions. Additionally, mop heads are also exchanged and washed to further ensure sanitary conditions. The process includes dual verification, locked carts, and supervisor oversight at each stage. The process is outlined in a memo attached here. One challenge to providing the changed sheets to incarcerated individuals at OCI is the practice of ripping the sheets to fashion clotheslines. The incarcerated population continuously does this and depletes the available inventory at OCI.

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E. EXPAND SHOWER ACCESS

Beginning in Summer of 2026, when heat advisories are in place, as described in sections A and B above, showers will be made available to the population once per day.

F. ENSURE TIMELY INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

At HCC, fans are managed seasonally, reintroduced in June 2025 with corridor placement restrictions. The fans are removed from the unit at the end of the summer season, inspected, cleaned, and stored until the following year.

At BCC, deployment of fans was initially delayed as they were on back order with the vendor, but all fans were issued by July 11, 2025. On June 5, 2025, all cell windows were opened except for one which was due to be remedied on June 6, 2025.

Facility management and engineering will conduct a stationary fan audit to see where opportunities exist to add additional mounted fans in housing units. They will also work in conjunction with the facility administration to perform a fan check of existing fans prior to the cooling season to ensure they are functioning properly and that there is enough time to repair or replace fans as needed. DOC expects to do this in February or March.

G. ADVANCE LONG TERM CAPITAL PROJECTS

DOC is currently investigating the installation of air conditioning at OCI, and the current estimate is \$120 million. The \$75-\$85 million figure noted in the Heat Mitigation Support does not account for DAS fees, contingency fees, and construction management. This year (2025) was the first year that DOC implemented temporary air conditioners at OCI. Best practices are being developed based on what was learned during the first-year deployment. DOC plans to make changes to the temporary air conditioners next season to achieve better results.

H. PROTECT MEDICALLY VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

DOC's Health Services Unit reviewed evidence-based guidelines for best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has provided the following clinical guidance.

KEY POINTS

- Initially, emphasize broad actions, including: 1) ensure access to and encourage frequent intake of cool water and ice chips, even if not thirsty; and 2) ensure access to and encourage use of cooling areas and limiting outdoor activities.

- Additionally, identify individuals who are more vulnerable, including: 1) adults 55+years old; 2) pregnant women; and 3) individuals with higher medical acuity (e.g., Medical Score 4 or 5). These vulnerable patients should be prioritized for hydration and cooling measures; further, they should be prioritized for enhanced medical monitoring, especially for heat-related complications (e.g., heat exhaustion, heat stroke), with immediate intervention as clinically indicated.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not have specific, publicly available guidelines for heat waves in correctional facilities, recommendations can be compiled from a range of CDC resources and guidance from partner agencies like OSHA, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and state health departments. These sources stress the need for special precautions for vulnerable people in correctional settings, where environmental controls are often limited.

Identifying vulnerable populations:

Vulnerable individuals face a higher risk of heat-related illness due to various factors and conditions. Correctional facilities should identify and prioritize the following individuals:

- Older adults (age 55+).
- Those with chronic medical conditions like diabetes, heart problems, hypertension, or respiratory issues such as asthma.
- People with physical immobility or mental illnesses.
- Individuals taking medications that interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature.
- Pregnant people.
- People who have previously suffered a heat-related illness.

Medical Care

- Prioritize housing: Place individuals at higher risk in units where a healthy temperature can be maintained.
- Enhance medical monitoring: Increase checks for at-risk individuals during a heat wave.
- Provide immediate care: When inmates show symptoms of heat illness, give water, move them to a cooler area, and apply ice or cool water. Call for medical assistance if symptoms are severe or persist.
- Seek attention for specific conditions: Inmates with pre-existing conditions (like heart problems or diabetes) should receive prompt medical attention if they show signs of heat-related illness.

Hydration and nutrition

- Ensure access to water: Provide adequate amounts of cool, potable water and encourage frequent drinking, even if people are not thirsty.

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- Limit specific fluids: Avoid or limit access to caffeinated and sugary drinks, which can contribute to dehydration.
- Provide ice: Facilities should distribute ice and ice chips regularly.
- Control fluid intake for certain patients: Ensure that inmates with medical conditions requiring fluid restrictions have their intake carefully managed.