GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS **Standard Operating Procedures**		
Policy Name: Standard Operating Procedures		
Policy Number: 101.02	**Effective Date:** 6/16/17	**Page Number**: 1 of 7
Authority: Commissioner	**Originating Division:** Executive Division (Office of Professional Standards)	**Access Listing:** Level I: All Access

I. **Introduction and Summary:**

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) shall operate based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are maintained in a central Policy Management System/Library. This policy governs the development and dissemination of GDC policies and provides a systematic and uniform process. Employees who develop and maintain policies must follow the requirements outlined in this document for drafting, approving, revising, and withdrawing policies. All policies are available to all employees. Level I and Level II policies are made available to the public.

II. **Authority:**

A. O.C.G.A: 42-2-4 and Georgia Open Records Act 50-18-70 through 77;

B. Board of Corrections Rule: 125-1-2-.01;

C. GDC SOP: 101.03 Local Operating Procedures; and

D. American Correctional Association (ACA) Standards**:** 2-CO-1A-05, 2-CO-1A-07, 2 -CO-1A-16, 2-CO- 1A-17. 2-CO-1A-18, 4-4004, 4005, 4-4014, and 4-4012.

III. **Definitions:**

A. **Division -** Area that performs a specific role or function within the GDC. Divisions are responsible for developing and maintaining SOPs related to their functional area.

B. **Divisional Management -** Each Division has a management team that is responsible for reviewing and approving the Division's policies. The Divisional Management team may consist of the Assistant Commissioner, Division Director, Deputy Division Director(s), and managers.

C**. Policy -** A course of action or a principle that guides and determines present and future decision-making. Policy reflects the philosophy upon which the agency operates as steered by the Rules of the Board of Corrections.

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D. **Policy Review Committee** - Collectively, this Committee identifies changes required for a policy during the revision and review processes. This Committee will determine if the policy can be understood with ease by any reader and especially those who are not trained, nor proficient in the specific area as addressed by the policy.

E. **Policy Folders** - Folders in the Policy Management System/Library Application containing policies and the attachments related to those policies.

F. **Policy Management System/Library -** Policy management software and system that enables users to review, revise, and publish policies. This system allows users to view all effective policies.

G. **Policy Manager(s) -** Designated employees within each Division responsible for managing policies, which includes review and revision. Policy Managers may assign other Divisional staff members the responsibility of creating or revising policies, as appropriate.

H. **Process Action Team (PAT)** - A group of subject matter experts, including staff at all levels, who confer in the development of a new policy or policy revisions.

I. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** - Established procedure(s) to be followed in carrying out given operations or in given situations. A set of fixed instructions or steps for carrying out routine operations.

J. **Statewide Policy Administrator -** The GDC employee designated by the Commissioner to oversee the Policy Management System currently approved for use by the Department and to ensure the annual review of policies is conducted.

IV. <u>Statement Of Policy And Applicable Procedures</u>:
The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for SOP organization and numbering based on input from Divisions.

A. Organization of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's):

1. SOPs are organized into **Functional Areas** with a designated series reference number as follows:

   100 – Executive Division

   200 – Facilities Division

   300 – Probation Operations

   400 – Administrative Division

   500 – Operations, Planning and Training

2. Numbering of SOPs:
   Each SOP number will begin with the designated series reference number followed by a decimal and the number of the SOP within the series (i.e. 100.01, 300.10 etc.).

3. SOP Levels of Access:
   a. Level I: All Access (anyone can view or possess and may be placed in the Inmate Reference Library);

   b. Level II: Required Inmate Access (must be available in the Inmate Reference Library);

   c. Level III: Contraband for Inmate to Possess (inmates cannot view or possess); and

   d. Level IV: Contraband for Inmate to Possess and Not Required to Release under the GA Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-72 (25) (A) (not to be released to anyone outside GDC without permission from the Office of Legal Services).

   Note: The level of access for each policy can be located in the header of the SOP and on the SOP Access Level Listing.

B. SOP Guidelines:
   1. Each Division is responsible for the content of its SOPs and must assign a Policy Manager to manage its policies.

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2. The Policy Manager shall annually review his or her Division's policies and revise as appropriate. The Policy Management System/Library will automatically notify the Policy Manager electronically when SOPs are due for annual review.

3. Policy Managers and Divisional Management should consider and review other SOPs when drafting or revising a SOP to eliminate redundancy and resolve contradictions and discrepancies. Policy Managers should seek input from other Divisions impacted by a new or revised SOP, including forwarding the draft policy to other Divisions for review and approval using the Policy Management System/Library.

4. Questions about a policy regarding relevant laws and Board of Corrections' rules and regulations should be forwarded to the Office of Legal Services. All other questions about a policy or its relation to other departmental policies should be forwarded to the Statewide Policy Administrator.

C. SOP Creation and Revision Process:
   1. SOPs shall be created, revised, approved, and published within the Policy Management System/Library.

   2. The Policy Manager must involve participation of staff representing every level and function in the agency so they can contribute to and participate in the development of policies and procedures. Related community agencies with which an institution has contact with may also participate in policy development, coordinated planning, and interagency consultation. Employee participation and the participation of community agencies can be achieved through meetings, suggestion programs, councils, and similar formats. Participation in the formulation of policies and procedures may also be achieved through PATs.

   3. Participation in PATs, staff meetings, employee councils, etc. for the development and review of organizational policies shall be documented.

   4. Policy Managers shall ensure that written policy delineates channels of communication for purposes of delegating authority, assigning responsibility, and coordinating and

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supervising work. All communications should specify that the delegation of authority be complete and consistent, timely and accurate, and cover what personnel need to understand to be able to carry out their duties. Provision is made for alternate channels of communication in extraordinary situations.

5. When a Division needs to create a new SOP, the responsible Policy Manager shall advise the Statewide Policy Administrator so a new SOP number can be assigned.

D. SOP Approval Process:
   1. Documents requiring review and approval shall be sent directly to the Divisional Management by the Policy Manager using the system workflow.

   2. Upon approval by Divisional Management, the Policy Manager will send the SOP and all attachments for review using the system workflow to the Statewide Policy Administrator, who shall involve the Policy Committee before forwarding to the Office of Legal Services. If rejected by the Statewide Policy Administrator and the Policy Committee, the SOP will be sent back to the Policy Manager for revision. If approved, the SOP will be forwarded to the Office of Legal Services for review to ensure that the SOP:

      a. Has been properly researched and does not conflict with relevant laws or regulations;

      b. Is on the proper template with proper formatting; and

      c. Does not conflict with existing policy.

   3. If discrepancies or conflicts exist, the Office of Legal Services will return the policy to the Policy Manager for resolution and note the reasons for its return.

E. SOP Publication Process:
   1. After the Office of Legal Services completes its review and approves the policy the Statewide Policy Administrator will be notified. The Statewide Policy Administrator will publish the policy to the Policy Management System/Library. SOPs are effective on the date published to the Policy Management System/Library. Only the Statewide

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Policy Administrator has authority to publish an effective policy to the Policy Management System/Library.

2. Once the policy is published within the Policy Management System/Library, the Statewide Policy Administrator will notify all units of the GDC electronically, including accreditation personnel, auditors, and compliance personnel when newly effective policies are placed in the user library so accreditation and audit documents can be updated and adjustments can be made to business processes.

3. The Statewide Policy Administrator will then notify all users (staff) electronically that a policy has been published with a new effective date. The Warden or Superintendent shall ensure that a complete listing of all new and revised SOPs are posted on the Official Bulletin Board of the Facility for a period of 30-days following the revision date so that each employee, volunteer, and contractor may view them. Prior to implementation of a new or revised policy that concerns inmates, the Warden or Superintendent will ensure that inmates are notified prior to implementation.

F. Signing a Document:
   When new policies are published, electronic signature may be required by all users. The electronic signature acknowledges review of the policies through the electronic policy management system.

G. Archiving a Document:
   The Statewide Policy Administrator will be the only staff that has authorization to archive a document. If a document has electronic signatures associated with it, that may need to be referenced in the future, the document shall be archived. Documents will not be deleted.

H. Training for the SOP process:
   Training on the SOP process shall be offered on an "as needed" basis as determined by the Statewide Policy Administrator who will notify all appropriate personnel of the times and dates of classes. Any questions regarding the SOP process shall be directed to the Statewide Policy Administrator.

IV. **Attachments:**

Attachment 1: SOP Format; and

Attachment 2: SOP Process Diagram.

V. **Retention Schedule:** All attachments are informational purposes only and may be destroyed when obsolete or replaced.