

<b>GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</b>		
Standard Operating Procedures		
<b>Functional Area:</b> Facility Operations	<b>Reference Number:</b> IIC02-0002 (220.02)	<b>Revises Previous Effective Date:</b>  7/1/08
<b>Subject:</b> Security Classification		
<b>Authority:</b> Owens/Jacobs	<b>Effective Date:</b> 07/31/2014	Page 1 of  6

**I. POLICY:**

The Georgia Department of Corrections administers a security classification instrument to all offenders to assess institutional risk and recommend a security classification level of close, medium, or minimum security. The goal of this process is to protect the public by operating safe and secure facilities while ensuring the protection and safety of GDC staff, contractors, visitors and other offenders. A valid and reliable assessment of offender institutional risk assists staff in maximizing the utilization of GDC facility assets and programing resources.

**II. APPLICABILITY:**

All state, private and county facilities and transitional centers

**III. RELATED DIRECTIVES:**

A. GDC Rules: 125-2-4-.03 Identification and Classification, 125-3-1-.02 Resident Security Classification

B. GDC SOP's: IIB03-0004, GDC SOPs: IIC05-0001 Inter-Institutional Transfers, IIB09-0001 Administrative Segregation, VB01-0002 Access to Services/Programs, VG01-0007 Treatment/Habilitation Planning, VB01-0006 Work Activity Performance Report

**IV. DEFINITIONS:**

A. **Security Classification** - A comprehensive measure of institutional risk factors are used to determine appropriate housing, levels of supervision, and work detail assignments.

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**B. Exception Review** - A Classification Review performed to determine if new circumstances warrant the submission of an immediate security review and override to justify changing the offender's security classification.

**C. Override** - Upon analysis and investigation, an override may result in the evaluator recommending a higher or lower custody level status. This consideration is beyond any mandatory considerations within the classification instrument; along with the reviewer's assessment regarding an offender's observed and documented behavior.

**D. Threshold/ Override Review** - A Threshold/Override Review is conducted every twelve months on those offenders whose security level was the result of an override or when the offender's system-generated security level changes by crossing the threshold from one security level to another.

**V. ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**VI. PROCEDURE:**

**Security Classification:** Upon placement into the supervision of the Georgia Department of Corrections the Security Classification Instrument, Next Generation Assessment, (NGA) generates a security level in Scribe for each offender. The Security Classification Instrument is an automated system that analyzes a number of factors. Each factor is assigned a unique weight and then processed by an algorithm that produces a security level for an offender, which is displayed in Scribe. The identified security level is reviewed by the Warden-Superintendent/Designee for final approval and comment if necessary. The system also allows limited override capability that is submitted through Scribe for Central Office review and final approval.

The security classification instrument requires a one-level analysis of the system-generated security level by the Warden-Superintendent/Designee to review and approve. The designee shall be the Chief Counselor, S.I.P. Coordinator, Deputy Warden of Care Treatment (At Some Facilities this is the Deputy Warden of Care & Treatment/Security), Asst. Superintendent or

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Diagnostic Director if applicable. The Deputy Warden of Security can also fulfill this role. Security classification reviews shall be completed directly in Scribe by the Warden/Designee and not on paper to be entered later by other staff.

The Warden-Superintendent/Designee shall review the system-generated security level and determine if it is appropriate. If appropriate, they shall confirm this security level in Scribe. This process will finalize the security level. If Warden-Superintendent/Designee does not concur, an override can be submitted to change the security level. In Scribe, the Warden-Superintendent/Designee shall submit the override request to change the security level, and document the reason for the change. The Warden-Superintendent/Designee will be presented a list of override reasons and a comments field into which the justification and description of supporting data shall be entered. A detailed response citing specific documented information shall be provided to clearly describe and support the override justification.

**A. System-Generated Security Level Changes:** System-generated changes to an offender's security level shall be through the security classification application in Scribe. The Warden-Superintendent/Designee shall refer periodically to the Warden's/Superintendent's Queue in Scribe to ensure that changes to an offender's security level are processed within 10 business days of the offender's arrival at the facility. The Warden-Superintendent/Designee shall also ensure that changes to the offender's security level are appropriate.

**B. Recommended Custody Level Override:** As outlined above (VI.A), the Warden-Superintendent/Designee shall review the security assessment of each offender under GDC supervision. If upon conclusion of their review, the Warden-Superintendent/Designee determines that the system-generated security level is not appropriate, an override can be submitted. The override process is completed in full and submitted through the security classification application in Scribe. Specific attention shall be made to document in detail the justification and provide an alternative security recommendation.

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C. **Central Office Override Review:** Designated staff in Offender Administration/Classification and Central Office/ Facility Operations shall review and approve all override requests. These reviews shall be completed within 10 business days upon submission of the override. If during the review, questions arise or the submission needs further clarification, the reviewers shall contact whoever submitted the override. Final decisions are entered into the Scribe security classification application and if a change is approved, the new security level shall be displayed in the offender's Scribe record.

D. **Non-Discretionary Override:** Offenders serving certain sentences are subject to specific restrictions in terms of the assigned security level and shall conform to a specific security level regardless of the system-generated security level in Scribe.

1. Upon the security classification review by the Warden-Superintendent/Designee, an override can only be submitted following guidelines outlined above in VI.B. These non-discretionary over-ride considerations include:

- a) **Life Without Parole:** The security level of an offender sentenced to Life Without Parole shall never be lower than CLOSE.
- b) **Under death Sentence:** Offenders currently under Death Sentence shall never be reduced and must remain CLOSE security.
- c) **ICE Detainer:** Offenders with an active Detainer from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) shall never receive a security level lower than MEDIUM.
- d) **Time Restriction:** Offenders serving sentences that exceed 15 years, to include Life with Parole shall **never** receive a security level lower than MEDIUM. An override can be requested to reduce or raise an offender's security level, **but** it shall **never** go below MEDIUM security.

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e) **Sex Offender:** The security level of an offender whose current sentence is a sex offense shall never be lower than MEDIUM. If the offender has been identified as a sexual predator, then that offender's security level shall never be below CLOSE.

f) **Escape/Abscond History:** Offenders who have had a sentence and/or Disciplinary Report for an escape or escape attempt from inside a secure facility within the past five years or serving sentences for abscond, escape, or attempting to abscond/escape from a Transitional Center within the past two years, shall **never** receive a security level lower than MEDIUM. An override can be requested for such offenders to reduce or raise an offender's security level, but again it shall **never** to go below MEDIUM security.

E. **THRESHOLD/OVERRIDE REVIEWS:** Security Threshold/Override Reviews shall be conducted when there are behavioral or operational reasons to submit an override to change the offender's security level. The following are examples:

1. An offender whose security level was established by an override;
2. An offender whose security level was set as a result of an exception review, resulting from an extra-ordinary event as noted below;
3. An offender's security level crosses over the established security scale threshold from one level to another, i.e. from medium security to close security or from close security to medium security; and/or
4. An offender's behavior warrants a security level change. (Follow the process outlined above in VI.B)

F. **EXCEPTION REVIEWS:** Exception security reviews may be initiated whenever GDC staff recognizes the need. The

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following circumstances are examples that provide cause to complete an exception review:

1. **Crime of Violence:** Any act which involved killing or serious assault, including an aggravated sexual act, taking part in a riot, kidnapping, and hostage-taking.

2. **Major Prison/Center Infraction:** Conviction of any disciplinary infraction which falls in the "greatest" severity category, or conviction of three (3) or more "high" severity infractions for assaultive behavior, high value contraband, weapons and/or drugs, within ninety (90) days.

3. **Major Threat to Institutional Operations:** Current information identifying an offender to be a major threat to institutional operations, i.e., STG leader.

VII. **RECORD RETENTION:** None