

Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

Media Update

May 11, 2015 – 11:30 a.m.

(Lincoln, NE) Thank you all for being here today. This has been a very difficult 24 hours.

At approximately 1:00 am staff regained control of the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI). The Nebraska State Patrol is on-site and investigating the events of May 10th and 11th. Two inmates have been found dead in one of the housing units. Staff is working to locate and notify next-of-kin, at which time additional information will be made available.

At approximately 2:30 pm on May 10, 2015, staff at TSCI noticed a gathering of approximately 40 inmates in front of a housing unit. As staff reported to the area to break up the gathering a staff member was assaulted; when another staff came to assist in breaking this up, another inmate began assaulting the second staff member. As the group of inmates became more volatile, staff members were unable to control them. The tower officer fired warning shots and then fired a shot at an inmate, striking him in the leg.

Subsequently, multiple incidents began in several housing units, including fires and other disruptions, to which staff members were responding. The NDCS special teams (Corrections Emergency Response Team – CERT; Special Operations Response Team – SORT; Crisis Negotiation Team – CNT) were called in to assist.

Due to the ongoing investigation, I cannot share details regarding timelines. During this time, the following occurred:

- A recreation staff member barricaded herself in an office in the gymnasium and was rescued by special teams members
- Inmates had control of two housing units
 - Including staff offices
 - Control centers were not breached
- The special teams rescued multiple staff from two housing units
- Housing Units 2 and 3 sustained the most damage
 - Damage included:
 - Fire and smoke damage
 - Windows broken out
 - Ceiling tiles were torn down
 - A wall constructed to separate two living units was torn down
 - Staff offices were damaged
 - Cameras taken down and destroyed
 - Water damage
- Injuries to staff and inmates:
 - Two staff assaulted during the initial altercation – non-life-threatening injuries
 - Corporal Hatzenbuehler and Caseworker Guern – both returned to work
 - One inmate shot in the leg during the initial altercation – non-life-threatening injury
 - One inmate injured during a staff use-of-force
 - Two other inmates received non-life-threatening injuries caused by other inmates

- o Two inmates died – cause of death unknown, however, appears to be caused by other inmates

The special teams assisted staff in regaining control of the housing units and other areas of the prison. I thank the Johnson County Sheriff's office, the Tecumseh Volunteer Fire Department, the Nebraska State Patrol and the State Fire Marshal's office for their ongoing assistance during these incidents.

All inmates are accounted for and the public is safe. Staff members continue to manage the facility. The facility is locked down until further notice.