



State of New Jersey

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April 29, 2026

Via Email

Ombudsperson Terry Schuster
Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson
PO Box 855
Trenton, NJ 08625

**RE: Inspection Report – Bayside State Prison, General Population
Response to April 2026 Report**

Dear Ombudsperson Schuster:

Thank you for your office's inspection report concerning Bayside State Prison. We appreciate you highlighting the many successes of Bayside, to include out of cell time, rehabilitative programming, meaningful recreational activities and education and job opportunities. This document is submitted in response to the specific recommendations contained in the inspection report.

Recommendation that DOC institute random custody officer checks for lifesaving equipment on housing units and amend the policy to include they are kept on each custody officer's person.

It is our understanding this recommendation refers to the 911 tool, which is a sharpened instrument. Current DOC policy throughout all facilities dictates that at least one unit officer is to have the 911 emergency tool on their person throughout the shift. We have reviewed this recommendation and determined that the current policy will remain unchanged for safety and security measures given the nature of the instrument.

Recommendation that DOC reopen the dining hall.

The dining hall was closed in and around 1997 for safety and security reasons following the murder of Officer Fred Baker by an incarcerated person. In 2025 the DOC conducted a study on whether it is feasible to reopen the dining hall. After considering all factors, it was determined that reopening the dining hall is not logistically feasible due to the constraints imposed by the physicality of the space, the need for additional staff, and

the negative impact on safety and security as a result of having large groups of incarcerated persons in the dining area at one time. Reopening the dining hall would also negatively impact the daily lives of the incarcerated population.

The physical challenges are cost prohibitive to mitigate. Just to name a few, a sally port system must be installed to the entrance and exit, the roof is expected to need repairs or replacement, and the electrical system would need to be entirely upgraded. Additionally, all new kitchen equipment would need to be procured along with the hiring of several new custody staff members. The incarcerated population itself would also be disadvantaged because, in running meal time scenarios, it became clear that far more time would be spent on moving the population to/from the mess hall. This will result in significantly reduced time for an incarcerated person to attend programs, recreation and work opportunities. Please consider adjusting the inspection tool points to reflect the infeasibility of reopening the dining hall.

Recommendation that DOC conduct professional cleaning of kitchen equipment.

The New Jersey Department of Health routinely inspects the Bayside State Prison kitchen area. It was last inspected in May of 2025, at which time the rating was "satisfactory." To otherwise address your specific concerns, the kitchen's hoods are currently serviced twice a year by an outside vendor and the DOC business office is presently seeking vendor bids for professional cleaning of the kitchen equipment.

Recommendation that DOC monitor housing unit logs for completeness by ensuring the notation of end times for facility movements and activities.

Supervisors and Administrators are aware of this recommendation and will ensure that logbooks are thoroughly completed, to include end times.

Recommendation that DOC conduct periodic "deep cleaning" of showers (as needed) to prevent build-up over time.

The tier sanitation incarcerated person detail in each unit cleans showers daily with deep cleanings occurring biweekly. DOC is considering periodic deep cleaning by an outside vendor.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me should you want to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.
Commissioner