



*State of North Carolina*  
*Department of Public Safety*  
*Division of Prisons*

Chapter: F  
Section: .0100  
Title: **Operational Searches**  
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**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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**.0101 PURPOSE**

Operational searches are essential to the safe and secure operation of a prison facility and are a primary method to detect and intercept weapons, drugs and other contraband detrimental to the order and security of the facility.

**.0102 DEFINITIONS**

- (a) Complete Search - A strip-search (removal of all person's clothing), a search of the person's effects, and a visual search of the person's body cavities to look for contraband.
- (b) Routine Search - Pat and frisk searches with the person clothed. Can include the removal and search of hat, shoes, and socks.
- (c) Body Cavity Search - The probing of body orifices in search of contraband.

**.0103 POLICY**

- (a) In the searching of inmates, all correctional officers and staff are required to act reasonably and professionally and employ a "common sense approach." Every effort should be made to assure that inmates are not unnecessarily embarrassed or humiliated.
- (b) The facility head will be responsible for developing and implementing a facility search and seizure procedure consistent with this policy. Facility procedures must be reviewed annually to assure compliance with the current policy of the Division of Prisons.
- (c) Routine (Clothed) searches of male inmates may be conducted by correctional officers of either sex.
- (d) Complete (strip) searches of inmates will be conducted only by correctional officers of the same sex as the inmate, except in emergency circumstances as determined by the shift supervisor. Afterwards, the staff conducting the search will submit an "Incident Report," explaining the urgency justifying the search exception.
- (e) Routine (pat/frisk) and/or Complete (strip) searches of female inmates by male staff will only be conducted during an emergency situation as determined by the shift supervisor. The only exception to this section is an instance when time and circumstances do not permit the arrival of female staff or consultation with the shift supervisor prior to conducting the search due to an imminent threat of physical violence and a search is necessary to secure the inmate to

prevent injury to staff or inmates. Afterwards, the staff conducting the search will submit an "Incident Report," explaining the urgency justifying the search exception.

- (f) Searches of inmates shall not be conducted for the purpose of determining the person's genital status as it relates to transgender or intersex. Please refer to Prisons Health Care Policy, Gender Identity Disorder, TXI-13.
- (g) To control contraband, searches of inmates are authorized at the discretion of staff. Refusal to submit to a search may result in a forced search and disciplinary action against the inmate.

#### **.0104 SEARCHES OF INMATES**

- (a) Complete Searches are to be conducted as follows:
  - (1) The search is conducted in an area, which is readily accessible to only persons participating in the search. Privacy is insured to the extent possible and temperature and lighting are adequately controlled.
  - (2) The inmate must empty all pockets, remove all clothing and place all articles in front of him/her. The inmate is then instructed to step back from the area where the articles are placed to prevent access to the articles.
  - (3) Staff will search all clothing and personal property are searched and any articles that are considered contraband are removed.
  - (4) All sections of the body, including body cavities, are carefully inspected. The body search is conducted as follows:
    - (A) Have the inmate remove any artificial limbs, removable dentures and other prosthetic devices and staff inspect.
    - (B) Staff will examine casts and dressings with a metal detector, or have medical personnel inspect and/or remove and replace such items.
    - (C) Have the inmate to vigorously run their fingers through their hair while shaking the hair. Staff may ask the inmate to part their hair in several places to view scalp for contraband, body parasites, injuries, and to determine the inmate is not wearing a wig or hairweave. If hair is shorter, or if needed staff may direct the inmate to use a wide tooth comb in the inspection of the hair scalp.
    - (D) Within a safe distance visually inspect the ears, nose, and mouth (with a flashlight, if possible). Do not place fingers into the openings.

- (E) Instruct the inmate to lift arms above head. Visually examine the armpits and, if needed, have inmate to comb through body hair.
  - (F) Instruct the inmate to hold hands out, spreading the fingers. Visually examine the hands in a palm up and down position, as well as between the fingers.
  - (G) Visually examine the inmate from the chest to the groin; include the breast, navel and any excessively fleshy or hairy areas.
  - (H) From a safe distance visually examine the groin area. Inspect the pubic hair. Have the inmate spread feet to shoulder width.
    - (i) For males, have the inmate lift his scrotum and penis simultaneously. Visually inspect the area by squatting and using a flashlight, if necessary. Have the inmate drop his scrotum while holding his penis. Inspect the area for any contraband that may be taped to the penis, and look for any open lesions. If the inmate is uncircumcised, have him pull back the foreskin.
    - (ii) For females, visually inspect the genital area and have the inmate remove any sanitary napkins or tampons and dispose of them. Have her spread her vagina and visually inspect inside visually using a flashlight, maintaining a safe distance. Have her do a deep knee bend to expel any objects. Only trained medical personnel are to perform an internal vaginal search.
  - (I) Have the inmate turn around. Visually inspect the entire back area including hairy areas and ask the inmate to lift up any excessive folds of flesh. Have the inmate spread feet to shoulder width, bend over at the waist and spread the buttocks. Using a flashlight, at a safe distance visually inspect the anal area for contraband, body parasites, open lesions, and signs of sexual abuse. Only trained medical personnel are to perform an internal anal search.
  - (J) Have the inmate lift each foot to expose the sole of the foot. Also visually examine between the toes by having the inmate to move them as he/she lifts foot for sole examination.
- (b) When Complete Searches are conducted
- (1) Complete searches of inmates may occur whenever necessary to control the presence of contraband or to maintain the security of the facility.
  - (2) Posts that routinely involve complete searches should be staffed by correctional officers of the same sex as the inmates under their supervision. Complete searches of

inmates should be conducted by trained staff of the same sex as the inmate. During an emergency operation, the commander may order complete searches of inmates by Criminal Justice Certified staff regardless of sex.

- (3) The receiving facility will conduct a complete search on all inmates upon commitment to the Department of Correction, on return from escape or court, upon transfer from another facility, or placement on segregation or control (disciplinary, administrative, maximum control, etc.).
  - (4) All inmates entering or leaving close or medium security facilities will be completely searched.
  - (5) Inmates assigned to high security maximum control, maximum control, and intensive control will be completely searched before and after visiting. General population inmates in close or medium custody will be completely searched after visiting. Minimum custody inmates may be completely searched after visiting.
  - (6) Minimum custody inmates assigned to facilities other than minimum-security facilities will be completely searched after visiting.
  - (7) Upon the discretion of the Facility Head or Officer-in-Charge and as indicated in the facility's Standard Operating Procedures, all or a random selection of minimum custody inmates will be searched daily upon the return from community based program activities. Such activities include but are not limited to Work Release, Study Release, Home Leave, Community Volunteer Leave, and Outside Work Assignment, etc.
- (c) Routine Searches are to be conducted as follows:
- (1) Correctional staff of either sex may conduct routine searches of male and female inmates.
  - (2) Where complete searches are not required, routine searches of minimum custody inmates shall be conducted upon the inmates leaving and returning to the facility for authorized outside activities.
  - (3) Where complete searches are not required before or after visiting, routine searches shall be conducted.
- (d) Body cavity searches must be authorized by the facility head or designee when there is probable cause to believe an inmate has concealed contraband in a body orifice. Body cavity searches are authorized only if a complete search has not produced the suspected concealed contraband. Body cavity searches shall be done by medical personnel of the Division of Prisons in a medical setting pursuant to procedures in the Health Care Procedures Manual. If medical personnel of the Division of Prisons are not available, the procedure may be done by

outside medical providers. An Incident Report (DC-432) must be completed to document a body cavity search.

- (e) Searches of Inmate's Quarters and Effects. Complete shakedown searches of inmate quarters and effects are authorized, regardless of whether there is reason to suspect any particular inmate of concealment of contraband. Random searches of inmate quarters and effects are to be conducted daily. Staff conducting the search should avoid any unnecessary scattering, disruption, or disarray of the inmate's personal possessions during the search. Inmates' living quarters may be searched without the inmate being present. Normally, inmates will be present when their locker is searched.

#### **.0105 SEARCHES OF VISITORS AND OTHER PERSONS**

The section on search procedures for visitors, volunteers, vendors, etc can be found in the Divisions of Prisons Entrance/Exit Policy F.3300.

#### **.0106 SEARCHES OF EMPLOYEES**

The section on search procedures for employees can be found in the Divisions of Prisons Entrance/Exit Policy F.3300.

#### **.0107 AUTHORITY TO DETAIN**

The section on Authority to Detain can be found in the Divisions of Prisons Entrance/Exit Policy F.3300.

#### **.0108 COMPLETE FACILITY SEARCH**

- (a) A complete search of each facility shall be conducted not less than once each six months. It is not necessary for the entire facility to be searched on the same day. Certain segments of the facility may be searched at different times as long as all parts of the facility get searched once each six months.

#### **.0109 DISPOSITION OF CONTRABAND**

- (a) Disposition of contraband shall be in compliance with F.0802(e) and G.S. 114-18.1.

*George Solomon* 7/10/13  
Director of Prisons    Date

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