



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

HEIDI E. WASHINGTON  
DIRECTOR

**DIRECTOR'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM 2020 - 20**    **EFFECTIVE:** January 1, 2020

**DATE:** December 16, 2019

**TO:** Executive Policy Team  
Administrative Management Team  
Wardens

**FROM:** Heidi E. Washington, Director

**SUBJECT:** Start Unit - Alternative to Administrative Segregation

**SUPERSEDES DOM 2019 – 22 (effective 01/01/2019)**

The Department is in the process of piloting general population Start Units as an alternative placement for eligible prisoners who would otherwise be classified to Administrative Segregation. These units provide a structured environment where prisoners move through progressive levels as the prisoner demonstrates positive behavior and program participation with the goal of reintegrating them back into a traditional general population setting. The pilot Start Units for security level V prisoners will be located at the Ionia Correctional Facility (ICF) and Marquette Branch Prison (MBP); the pilot Start Unit for security level IV prisoners will be at the Oaks Correctional Facility (ECF). The program may be expanded to other facilities as approved by the Deputy Director of Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA).

The targeted prisoner population groups for placement in a Start Unit are:

- Prisoners who have been diagnosed with serious mental illness, as defined by Mental Health Services policy, procedure and protocol, whose disruptive behavior would warrant reclassification to administrative segregation.
- Prisoners who refuse to return to a traditional general population setting that has resulted in extended administrative segregation placement.
- Prisoners who have a history of repeated disruptive behavior, who would otherwise be classified to administrative segregation for new negative behavior.
- Other prisoners who would benefit from placement in the Start Unit based on their disruptive behavior, as approved by the CFA Deputy Director or designee. This may include prisoners who are within one year of their discharge date or who have received positive parole action.

Each prisoner accepted for placement in a Start Unit will be provided intake processing, during which time the prisoner's behavioral history and program needs will be reviewed to develop the prisoner's individualized Start Plan. The Start Plan shall clearly define behavioral benchmarks for increased privileges and programs for the prisoner while housed in a Start Unit.

After intake processing, there are four stages through which prisoners may progress while in a Start Unit. Stage 0 is the most restrictive and Stage 3 is the least restrictive. A prisoner's progression within a Start Unit will be based on the individual prisoner's behavior at each stage and subject to recommendations made by the housing unit team and Security Classification Committee (SCC).

Prisoners in a Start Unit may participate in all activities and services provided to prisoners in a traditional general population setting, subject to restrictions to preserve the custody and security of the facility. This may include restrictions on group activities and activities that require the mass movement of prisoners. Activities that are traditionally provided to general population prisoners in a group setting, or that require mass movement, may instead be provided to these prisoners in the housing unit, the prisoner's cell, or in another specifically designated area of the institution. Activities also may be provided at specifically designated times or under escort, as needed. Personal property also may be restricted or used as an incentive for progression through Start Unit stages.

The CFA Deputy Director shall ensure that a manual is created for the operation of Start Units that shall be available to the Warden and other necessary staff of the facility at which a Start Unit is located. At a minimum, the manual shall set forth the requirements for referral and placement of prisoners in a Start Unit, programming options, and any restrictions of general population property, activities and services.

The CFA Deputy Director or designee will issue instructions on screening of prisoners for placement in a Start Unit once the pilot begins. At that time, all prisoners with a serious mental illness will no longer be classified to administrative segregation unless authorized by the Director or designee. Although recommendations for placement in a Start Unit will be made at the institutional level, the final determination on placement will be made by the CFA Deputy Director or designee. Once the prisoner is received at a facility with a Start Unit, the prisoner may be housed in temporary segregation for up to seven business days if bed space is not available in the Start Unit.