



KYI

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

SPECIAL EDITION CRISIS UPDATE

Baraga Correctional Facility

July 23, 2024

The Corrections Officers working at the Baraga Correctional Facility, a maximum-security state prison, are suffering badly from the impacts of a severe staffing crisis. The vacancy rate for officers is now up to a dangerous 34%. This results in constant mandatory 16-hour shifts and violations of the Department's overtime rules. Officers are forced to work double shifts multiple times per week and frequently on back-to-back days with no relief in sight. Every day, the prison runs with far less officers than what is required, resulting in prisoner activities being limited or canceled. This in turn leads to disturbances and assaults on the officers when prisoners get frustrated.

It is time for the public and our elected officials to be made aware of what is really happening in Michigan's state prison system. This series of reports will pull back the curtain for everyone to have a glimpse of what it's like to work in short-staffed prisons.

From July 1 through July 18, 2024, there were 544 corrections officer overtime shifts. 387 of those overtime shifts were mandatory overtime, and the vast majority of the rest were worked voluntarily in an attempt to avoid mandatory overtime. There were 135 violations of the MDOC's 32-hour rule, which is a policy designed to protect officers from excessive overtime. During this time there were also 350 "closed" officer positions across all three shifts. A closed officer position means that there wasn't an officer stationed at a required position inside the prison.

The following is a summary of events just from July 1 through July 17, 2024, that occurred at the maximum-security Baraga Correctional Facility:

7/1/24 – Officers had to use tear gas and tasers to control 3 prisoners fighting.

7/3/24 – Officers broke up 3 prisoners fighting on the yard.

7/4/24 – 2 officers responded to 2 prisoners assaulting another prisoner. When they arrived, the 2 prisoners began punching and kicking the officers resulting in injury. Tear gas and tasers were used to stop the assault and the facility went on lockdown. The 2 officers were sent to the hospital.

7/5/24 – Officers were placed on a Forced Move team to deal with disruptive prisoners. Officers were verbally threatened by prisoners and tear gas was used to gain compliance.

7/6/24 – All Level 5 housing units were placed on lock down due to shortage of officers.

7/8/24 – Prisoner yard periods closed due to shortage of officers and need for a Forced Move team.

7/9/24 - Prisoner yard periods shortened to 30 minutes due to shortage of officers.

7/9/24 – A prisoner assaulted an Officer by throwing an unknown liquid on him. A Forced Move team was assembled, and tear gas was needed to control the prisoner.

7/9/24 – Officers responded to 3 prisoners fighting on the yard.

7/11/24 – Prisoner yard periods canceled due to shortage of officers.

7/12/24 – Prisoner yard periods canceled due to shortage of officers.

7/12/24 – Prisoners started a disturbance in response to yard periods being canceled. Forced Move teams were assembled, and an additional Forced Move team was summoned from the Alger Correctional Facility two hours away. Prisoners refused to follow orders, verbally threatened officers and tear gas had to be used to gain compliance and restore order.

7/13/24 – Prisoner yard periods canceled due to shortage of officers.

7/15/24 – Prisoner yard periods in the morning were shortened to 30 minutes due to shortage of officers. Prisoner yard periods in the afternoon were canceled due to shortage of officers.

7/15/24 – 3 prisoners created a disturbance in a housing unit. A supervisor was assaulted and a Forced Move team utilized tear gas and a pepper ball launcher to restore order.

7/16/24 – Prisoner yard periods shortened to 30 minutes due to shortage of officers.

7/17/24 – Officers responded to three separate fights on the yard involving 6 prisoners and responded to 1 prisoner assaulting another prisoner. Tasers were used to gain compliance.

[Email Governor Whitmer Today!](#)