



Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs

STATEWIDE OBJECTIVE JAIL CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURE

1. **Purpose:** To establish a statewide procedure for the use of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) Objective Jail Classification System. This model consists of four instruments/forms that are applied to inmates from the point of admission through release:

- ◆ Initial Classification
- ◆ Reclassification
- ◆ Needs Assessment
- ◆ LSI-SV Risk Assessment

The initial screening or pre-classification tool is not identified or discussed within this procedure due to most facilities already having an initial screening system in place, at the time of booking, which would determine any immediate housing considerations relative to; medical, mental health, protective custody, or any other special needs.

2. **Authority:** Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) and participating agencies.

3. **Definitions:**

4. **Procedures:**

I. Initial Classification Instrument -

The initial classification form is intended to be administered on recently admitted inmates who are unlikely to be released on bail, own recognizance, or any other form of pretrial release, within 72 hours of admission. The initial classification will be completed no later than 72 hours of admittance. All inmates need to be interviewed during the classification process. This is considered a critical part of the classification process because it not only allows the classification staff to obtain self-reported data but it also allows the inmate to gain an understanding of the classification process itself. This also allows the inmate to ask questions, which may alleviate some fears and anxieties, associated with being in jail.

The Initial Classification Instrument consists of seven primary numerically scored items approved by the WASPC Objective Classification Committee. These items and associated scores will be totaled and used to make an initial scored custody designation of minimum, medium, or maximum for general population inmates. The scale is a two step additive scale. The first three items are first tabulated to ensure if an inmate has been charged with a serious crime (Class A Felony), and/or has a prior conviction for a serious crime, and/or has a prior conviction for an escape from a secure facility, that inmate will most likely be initially classified as maximum custody



Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs

STATEWIDE OBJECTIVE JAIL CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURE

within general population.

If the inmate does not initially classify maximum custody on items 1-3, the remaining four items (4-7) will be assessed and scored. The total of the seven primary items will then be totaled to determine one of the three general population custody levels. These seven primary items are:

- (1) Severity of Current Offense
- (2) Adult Conviction History (10 years)
- (3) Escape History (10 years)
- (4) Prior Inmate Institutional Behavior
- (5) Prior Felony Convictions (10 years)
- (6) Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- (7) Current Age

Itemized Instructions:

A. Item #1 (Severity of Current Offense) - A score of 7 to 0 is determined based on the severity of the crime for which the subject is being booked.

- This refers to single most serious offense. It is not an accumulative score.

- If the offense is a warrant, the original offense indicated would be used to determine the score. In the case of a technical violation, the original offense for which probation/parole was granted would be used to determine the score. * These charges can only be used once. If used, they can not be considered again in this instrument.

B. Item #2 (Adult Conviction History) - A score of 7 to 0 is determined based on the severity of a crime for which the inmate has been convicted within the last 10 calendar years.

- This item deals solely with adult convictions. Although Juvenile convictions can not be used in this item, they can however be used as a consideration for override purposes.

- This refers to single most serious offense. It is not an accumulative score.

- These charges can only be used once. If used, they can not be considered again in this instrument.

- An inmate's criminal history can be found using the following: Local Data/Records, NCIC, self-reporting, etc. As a general rule, indications of arrest with no official disposition should not be used. If the crime is of a serious nature it's recommended staff inquire further with the arresting agency.

- All references to time such as "within the last 10 years", refers to calendars



years regardless of whether the inmate was incarcerated during this period. The fact the inmate was incarcerated can be used as an overriding factor/consideration.

C. Item #3 (Escape History) - A score of 7 to 0 is determined based on the inmates escape history within the last 10 calendar years.

- There is a lifetime consideration.

- This refers to single most serious offense. It is not an accumulative score.

- Excluding current charge. If used in Item #1, it can not be used again in the item.

*** Maximum Custody Score (Add Items 1-3)** - At this point, Items 1-3 will be totaled. If the totaled sum is 7 or higher, the inmate is automatically assigned a maximum custody status. You are still required to complete the remainder of the form.

D. Item #4 (Prior Inmate Institutional Behavior) - A score of 3 to 0 will be determined based on an inmate's institutional behavior, both serious and general, within the last 3 years.

- This refers to single most serious. It is not an accumulative score. If an inmate is scored for a major incident, they can not receive additional points for a minor incident.

- Only institutional incidents, which did not result in a criminal conviction, should be counted. The criminal conviction can be counted in other areas of the form.

- Although you can only score the single most serious infraction, the remaining disciplinary history can be used as an overriding factor/consideration.

E. Item #5 (Prior Felony Convictions) - A score of 4 to 0 will be determined based on an inmate's prior felony convictions within the last 10 calendar years. This is above and/or in addition to previous items and convictions used.

- The same criteria for juvenile convictions, time considered while in the community, and /case dispositions, outlined to Item #2 also apply in this item.

- You can not use convictions already used in any previous item.

F. Item #6 (Alcohol/Drug Abuse) - A score of 1 to 0 will be determined based on an inmate's history or current abuse of alcohol or drugs. The determination can be made through self-reporting, criminal convictions, or disciplinaries associated with the use/abuse of drugs or alcohol.

G. Item #7 (Current Age) - a score of 2 to -1 will be determined based on an inmate's age.



Scale Summary and Recommendation

After completing all seven primary items, they will then be added for a total score. This total score will then determine one of the three general population custody levels.

Mandatory, Discretionary, Non-Discretionary Overrides (Increase/Lower), and Special Housing Factors

The Initial Classification form allows for two types of overrides to the scored custody level. Non-discretionary overrides reflect the jail's policy on the types of inmates who can not be placed in a lower custody level regardless of the scored custody level. Discretionary overrides are those where the classifying officer believes the scored level is not appropriate. This is done in recognition that any form will not produce the most accurate or appropriate custody for all inmates. Consequently, classification staff must have the ability to alter the scored custody level. The danger is that classification overrides, if not done properly, can easily undermine the goal of consistency in decision-making. Conversely, if staff rarely use overrides, it would suggest that they are not exercising their professional judgement, which also serves to misclassify inmates.

The general standard is that 5%-15% of the jail population should be classified based on an override and not the original classification score. Furthermore, the direction of the overrides should be balanced, meaning that about half of the overrides should result in a lower custody level and about half resulting in a higher custody level.

II. Reclassification Instrument -

The Reclassification Form is used to reassess the inmate's initial classification designation by reviewing the inmate's conduct over the past 60-90 days. Some facilities may choose to reclassify inmates at a 30 period. However, 60-90 days is an industry standard. Consequently, reclassification places more emphasis on institutional behavior and less on the inmate's charges and criminal history. In other words, the inmate has control over his or her own destiny. Because most inmates will not remain in custody for two to three months, it is unlikely that most inmates will have to be reclassified.

The same two step additive scale used for the initial classification is used for the reclassification. In fact, the forms are virtually identical. The only differences from the Initial Classification Form and the Reclassification Form is that on the Reclassification Form, Item #6 - "Alcohol/Drug Abuse" category, has been removed and replaced with the "Current Institutional Behavior" category. Also, the additive scales and/or possible scores used for reclassification have been reduced. This reduction in category scoring reduces the impact of current offenses and criminal history therefore placing increased weight on institutional behavior. *The same*



guidelines and instructions described previously for completing the Initial Classification Form are to be followed in completing the Reclassification Form.

III. Inmate Needs Assessment -

In addition to the custody considerations, the program or treatment needs of the inmate population must also be assessed and revised throughout the inmate's period of incarceration. These considerations become very important in determining the most appropriate facility (if the jail system has multiple facilities) to be assigned as well as the most appropriate housing unit within a particular facility.

Although the Inmate Needs Assessment has been primarily used within the state prison system, it is highly recommended that jails add this assessment to their classification process. This is especially true if a particular jail facilities mission statement addresses providing educational, vocational, or a variety of counseling programs. *The Inmate Needs Assessment is typically done in tandem with the Initial Classification and Reclassification interviews.* It requires simple observation of the inmate, and several brief questions regarding the nature of the offender's situation in regard to several major factors of need.

The Inmate Needs Assessment and instrument is broken down into two primary categories, Essential Programming Factors and Programming Enhancements. Within these two primary categories are subcategories which are scored by the classification staff and determine the inmates program needs. These subcategories are rated on a scale of 0-3 based on the inmate's needs.

A. Essential Programming Factors

Emotional/Mental Health (scored 0-3)

Substance Abuse (scored 0-3)

Physical Health (scored 0-3)

B. Programming Enhancements

Occupational Skills (scored 0-3)

Education (scored 0-3)

C. Scoring Definitions

Code 0 - No problem

Code 1 - Problem resolution would enhance ability to succeed in community

Code 2 - Problem directly related to criminal behavior/High Priority

Code 3 - Urgent/Immediate Need

As you can see, the Essential Programming Factors Category deals with those issues of physical and mental health while the Programming Enhancement Category deals with those areas of education and job skills necessary to improve the inmate's self



esteem and ability to be or become a contributing member of society.

Once all categories are scored, they are then transferred to the column matrix provided on the form. This matrix provides a quick visual reference of the information gathered in the Inmate Needs Assessment. The use of the matrix, itself, is optional. The scored categories have been weighed accordingly to value so that the height of the column reflects a subjective estimate of the priority of need in each.

IV. LSI-SV Risk Assessment (Level of Service) ~

Correctional agencies will be increasingly asked or have a need, based on overcrowding conditions, to place a larger percentage of their inmate population in a low security correctional settings and options programs (Day Jail, Day Reporting, Work Release, Electronic Home Monitoring, etc.). To assist with this determination, community risk instruments have been developed such as the LSI-SV Risk Assessment. Because the LSI-SV Risk Assessment is designed to predict possible levels of continued criminal activity and community risk, especially violent crimes, they use or place greater emphasis on those factors associated with recidivism.

This form was designed to determine what proportion of the minimum custody population would be eligible for placement in a particular options program. This instrument can also be used to determine the level of supervision (field checks, employer contacts, etc.) an inmate should receive while assigned to an options program. This is useful for those facilities whose courts have the overwhelming authority/determination of those inmates who are to be placed on an options program. Some facilities have very little discretion in these matters.

The screening version of the LSI-R (recommended/supported by WASPC for use in jails) was designed for a rapid interview/screening. The long version of the LSI-R generally requires an interview process of up to an hour and impractical in most jail settings. The LSI-SV is an additive point scale which consists of the following eight questions;

1. Two or more prior convictions (Yes/No)
2. Arrested under the age of 16 (Yes/No)
3. Currently unemployed (Yes/No)
4. Some criminal friends (Yes/No)
5. Alcohol/drug problem: School/Work (Yes/N)
6. Psychological assessment indicated (Yes/No)
7. Non-rewarding parental situation (0,1,2,3)
8. Attitudes/Orientation - supportive of crime (0,1,2,3)

The LSI-SV is completed by gathering information from the offender files, and criminal history records, and by conducting a brief semi-structured interview. The overall score will determine the level of supervision needed and/or necessary. As with the Initial Classification and Reclassification Forms, the LSI-SV allows for special



circumstances and discretionary overrides. Scoring for the eight items is based on Yes/No or "0,1,2,3" ratings. Yes, 0, and 1 scores indicate the presence of a risk factor. When score correctly, this score reflects an offender's potential risk to re-offend. All eight items are worth one point towards a risk level score. The three levels are "Low Risk" (SV score 0-2/Full LSI-R follow-up is recommended), "Medium Risk" (SV score of 3-5/Full LSI-R strongly recommended), and "High Risk" (SV score 6-8/Full LSI-R mandatory).