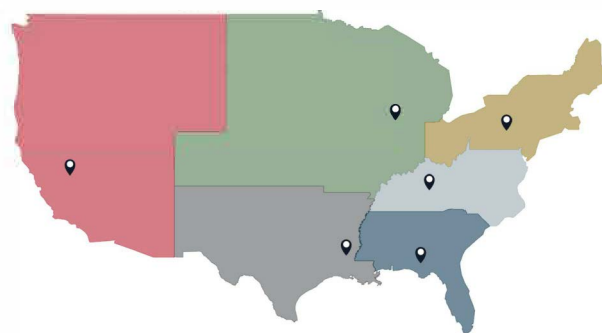




Concurrent Inspections of BOP Food Service Operations

Report Number: 25-062 | Posted Date: June 17, 2025 | Division: Evaluation & Inspections



Between Tuesday, June 4, and Thursday, June 6, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted a series of unannounced, concurrent inspections assessing the administration of food service at six Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) institutions, one in each of the BOP's six regions:

- Mid-Atlantic Region—U.S. Penitentiary (USP) McCreary in Pine Knot, Kentucky;
- Southeast Region—Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Marianna in Marianna, Florida;
- South Central Region—Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Pollock in Pollock, Louisiana;
- North Central Region—Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) Chicago in Chicago, Illinois;
- Northeast Region—FCC Allenwood in Allenwood, Pennsylvania; and
- Western Region—FCI Mendota in Mendota, California.

The DOJ OIG's Inspections Program

The DOJ OIG has determined that it can enhance the effectiveness of its oversight, and its ability to alert the BOP to concerns, by conducting short notice and unannounced inspections of BOP institutions. Since 2023, the OIG has conducted such inspection visits at 13 BOP institutions, including those discussed in this product.

The OIG has released the results of its completed prior inspections, which include [FCI Waseca](#), [FCI Tallahassee](#), [FCI](#)

Sheridan, FCI Lewisburg, and Federal Medical Center Devens; its inspection work on Federal Detention Center SeaTac and USP Canaan is ongoing.

We focused these inspections on the administration of food service given the serious food service-related issues we identified during prior inspections.

Prior Findings in BOP Food Service

Most concerning, during our inspection of FCI Tallahassee we observed moldy bread served to inmates, rotting vegetables in a food preparation refrigerator, a food warehouse with insects inside and on top of food, damaged and warped containers of food, and likely evidence of rodent droppings and rodents having chewed through food packaging. Additionally, at FCI Tallahassee and during prior inspections of other institutions, we identified a variety of issues impairing the administration of food service.

As outlined in Appendix 1, at the six institutions we inspected, we toured the institutions and observed operations throughout, including the kitchen, the freezers and coolers, the food preparation areas, the dining areas (dining halls and satellite feeding locations), the food service infrastructure, and the food storage warehouses. We also observed meal preparation and service. Additionally, we interviewed institution leadership, line staff, and inmates regarding food service and food service infrastructure.

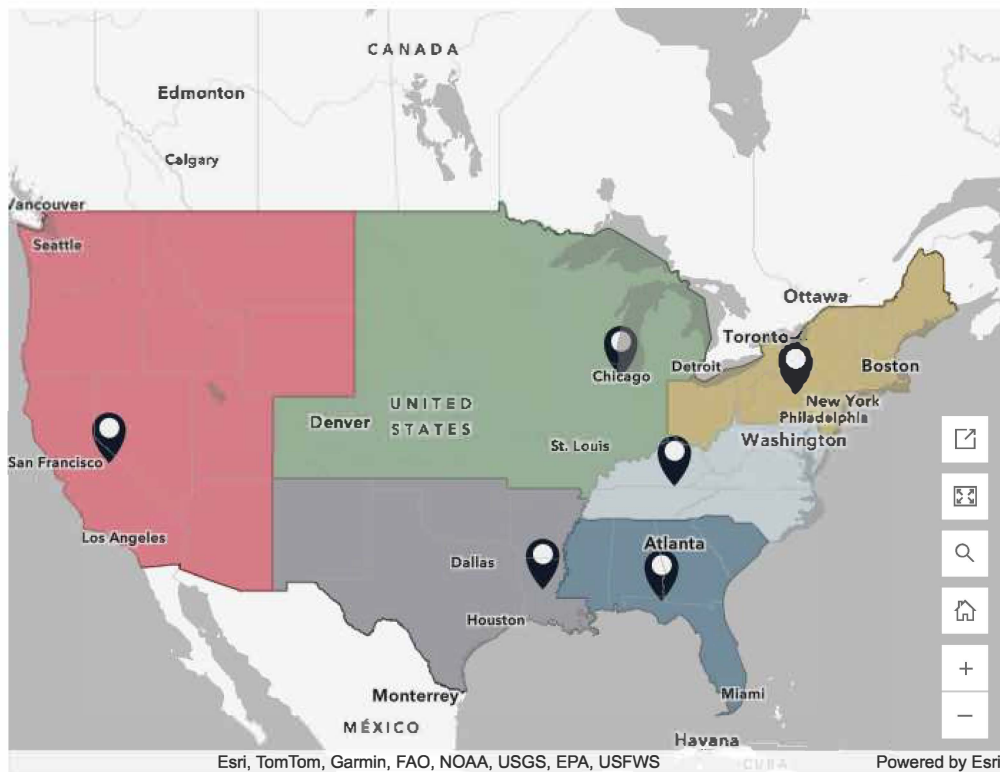
Our inspections identified a wide range of food service conditions and operations at the six institutions. As we detail below, the food service operations at some institutions appeared to be well run, were generally clean, and had few if any serious issues identified; others had significant problems in multiple areas; the remaining institutions fell somewhere in between. At several of the institutions we inspected, we observed failures to maintain security and accountability for kitchen knives, the inability to x-ray pallets of food entering the institution for contraband because the facility's x-ray machines were broken, an absence of cameras in food warehouses, Food Service Department staff shortages, and unaddressed repairs in food service areas.

Ultimately, many of the issues we observed are manifestations of longstanding BOP-wide issues the OIG has previously identified, including ineffective contraband mitigation, insufficient security camera coverage, staff shortages, and failing infrastructure. The DOJ OIG's body of BOP oversight work has previously identified these as significant enterprise-wide challenges for the BOP and those prior reports contain recommendations on each of these topics for corrective action by the BOP. This product highlights how those existing findings and recommendations relate to the food service operations at the six institutions we inspected. We also identified several other serious concerns specific to food service operations including the malfunctioning of major food storage equipment, sanitation failures, and workplace safety issues.

Although we did not identify food quality and food safety issues as egregious as those found at FCI Tallahassee, the issues identified through this project presented concerning risks to both food safety and workplace safety, as well as the general security of some of the inspected institutions. See below for further details on our observations and findings.

Nationwide View

The interactive map below shows the six institutions we inspected within their respective BOP regions. Click on each pin for more details on an institution.



Overview of Significant Findings

Please expand the collapsible content below for an overview of the significant findings from our inspections.

Safety and Security Concerns in Food Service Stemming from Long-standing Management Challenges

CONTRABAND

OIG work has consistently found that BOP employees do not always follow established correctional policies and procedures to detect and intercept contraband that poses a direct risk of inmate self-harm or violence that could result in death. During our food service inspections, we similarly found lax enforcement of contraband mitigation procedures. For example:

- At USP McCreary, we found a large unattended and untethered knife in a food preparation area. This is a direct violation of BOP policy, which states that knives must be under the direct supervision of employees and tethered to a stationary object if they are to be used in unsecure food service areas. Additionally, a BOP employee told us that when the knife is not in use it is stored in an unlocked desk drawer, as opposed to a locked cabinet as required by BOP policy.
- At FCI Marianna, we found that employees were not appropriately tracking the use of two knives and five other sharp tools.
- At FCC Pollock, we found that multiple keys had been issued for a secure knife cabinet, although BOP policy states that only one key should be issued to ensure employee and inmate safety.
- FCI Mendota and FCI Marianna did not have functional pallet x-ray machines to detect possible contraband in large food shipments being brought into the institution. Based on our discussions with food service staff, it is likely that neither institution has had a functional pallet x-ray machine for at least 2 years prior to our

inspection. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP stated that BOP policy does not require the use of pallet x-ray machines and noted that institutions do not rely solely on them to examine incoming food shipments for contraband, as they use manual searches as a supplemental search technique. Notwithstanding the value of manual searches, we believe that pallet x-ray machines can still assist the BOP in preventing the introduction of contraband.

- At FCC Allenwood, inmates routinely diverted large volumes of food and hid it, for personal use, in drop ceilings.

Reference to Previous Work: In June 2016 the OIG reported on the BOP's Contraband Interdiction Efforts and made recommendations to address weaknesses, including in contraband tracking capabilities. The OIG closed the last open recommendation from that report in November 2024. Additionally, in a June 2014 report on the Procurement of X-Ray Equipment, the OIG identified significant concerns about the BOP's sole reliance on the x-ray machines that it had purchased because of limitations on their ability to identify contraband. In that report, we recommended that the BOP consider conducting periodic and unannounced external testing of the effectiveness of using pallet x-ray machines to prevent the introduction of contraband. As of January 2015, the OIG had closed all recommendations in that report. Given the scope of this food service product, we did not determine the extent to which the BOP was testing the effectiveness of the pallet x-ray machines across all of its institutions, including the six we visited. However, the inoperability of these machines at FCI Marianna and FCI Mendota indicates that the BOP's approach to using pallet x-ray machines to combat contraband introduction is an area that continues to merit attention from the BOP.

STAFFING SHORTAGES

Previous OIG oversight products have extensively reported that staffing shortages and employee allocation are among the chief and long-standing operational challenges that affect safety and security at BOP institutions. Consistent with that reporting, we identified staffing challenges in the Food Service Departments at all six institutions we inspected. For example:

- Although there were Food Service Department staffing shortages at all institutions, they were particularly pronounced at FCI Marianna and FCI Mendota which were well below authorized levels. These shortages made it difficult for employees to safely monitor inmates and caused FCI Mendota to modify the way food is served.

Reference to Previous Work: As result of past reporting by the U.S. Government Accountability Office and the OIG, both agencies have made high-priority recommendations to the BOP to implement a reliable method for calculating staffing levels at BOP institutions. In response, the BOP developed a staffing projection tool which was implemented in October 2024. As of the publication of this food service inspection product, the OIG's recommendation remains open as the OIG continues to monitor implementation of the tool.

SECURITY CAMERAS

The OIG has repeatedly identified deficiencies, including an insufficient number of cameras, in the BOP's security camera systems that affect safety and security across BOP institutions. Although the BOP has made progress in updating camera systems and adding cameras at its institutions, of the six institutions we inspected, five (USP McCreary, FCI Marianna, FCC Pollock, MCC Chicago, and FCC Allenwood) did not have security cameras inside food storage warehouses. This is concerning because in three of these institutions BOP inmates routinely work in these large areas. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP told us that BOP policy does not require the presence of cameras in food service warehouses, which are generally outside facility perimeters and that inmates permitted to work in food service warehouses are minimum-security inmates who routinely live and work with limited supervision, in accordance with security level guidelines and local procedures.

Reference to Previous work: In a June 2016 report on the BOP's Contraband Interdiction Efforts, we found that "deficiencies within the BOP's security camera system have affected the OIG's ability to secure prosecutions of employees and inmates in BOP contraband introduction cases. These same problems adversely affect the availability of critical evidence to support administrative or disciplinary action against employees and inmates." Following the issuance of our 2016 report, the BOP began a multiyear update to cameras at 45 institutions; however, serious issues with the BOP's security camera systems remained. In October 2021, we issued a Management Advisory Memorandum finding that the BOP's camera systems continued to need significant infrastructure and equipment upgrades and that the BOP lacked a comprehensive strategic plan to address the significant deficiencies of its institution camera systems. As a result of our finding from the 2021 Management Advisory Memorandum, we recommended that the BOP develop a comprehensive strategic plan for transitioning to a fully digital security camera system. As of the publication of this food service inspection product, this recommendation remains open while the BOP continues implementing those upgrades. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP stated that as of March 2025 it had installed fiber optics in 109 of its 121 institutions installing digital cameras. The remaining institutions are in the process of completing fiber optic installation. Additionally, the BOP has obligated \$175 million toward the purchase and installation of over 27,000 cameras, fiber installation, and system upgrades at all institutions. Further, the BOP stated that, pending the availability of appropriations and the absence of supply chain disruptions, remaining camera upgrade work will be completed in the next 2 years. According to the BOP, this timeline would be compliant with the timelines prescribed in the Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021, which requires the BOP Director to ensure that BOP institutions have security camera coverage and capabilities necessary to ensure the documentation and accessibility of video evidence pertaining to misconduct, maltreatment, or criminal activity within correctional facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The OIG has routinely reported on infrastructure issues affecting the operation of BOP institutions. During the six inspections that resulted in this product, we observed how infrastructure issues can affect food service operations. For example:

- Due to broken water pipes and poor drainage that damaged the floor of MCC Chicago's kitchen, the kitchen was undergoing a complete renovation with an anticipated cost of at least \$700,000.
- We also observed floor damage in food service areas at FCC Pollock and USP McCreary. Specifically, in the inmate cafeteria at USP McCreary, we saw water seeping through broken floor tiles and emitting a strong and unpleasant odor. (We note that we were unable to determine the source of the water.) The BOP acknowledged that when stagnant water gets trapped under damaged floor tiles it can create an unpleasant smell.
- At FCI Marianna and FCC Pollock, temperatures in kitchens where BOP employees and inmates work were very hot. Specifically, we measured a kitchen temperature of 93 degrees F at FCI Marianna and 86 degrees F at FCC Pollock. A Pollock employee told us that the kitchen area is "extremely hot" and that the inmates are "working in brutal heat."

Reference to Previous Work: In May 2023, the OIG reported that BOP institutions had a large and growing list of unfunded modernization and repair needs and that the BOP was unable to address these needs because it lacked a strategy to do so. Further, we found that the BOP had historically failed to request funding to address its infrastructure needs (as of 2024, the BOP estimated that it had a \$3 billion backlog of unfunded infrastructure repairs across all of its institutions). To address this issue, the OIG recommended that the BOP develop an infrastructure strategy to increase the overall effectiveness of facilities management and to develop and implement key performance indicators to track whether the BOP is meeting its infrastructure goals. As of the publication of this food service inspection product, these recommendations remain open. During prior inspections and other prior work, we have identified institution-specific infrastructure issues that negatively affected the administration of food service, as well as the broader conditions of confinement for inmates and working conditions for BOP employees. For example:

- At FCI Waseca, we found that institution roofs were in disrepair, which allowed water to intrude into and damage the food service area. Additionally, we found that inmate beds were near pipes that occasionally leaked.
- At FCI Tallahassee, in a food storage warehouse, we found large, open holes that could let in insects and rodents. In the inmate cafeteria, we observed a window that could not be closed, which allowed water intrusion. In housing units, water frequently leaked from ceilings and windows on or near inmates' living spaces.
- At FCI Lewisburg, we found that water intruded into the meat-butcher area, rendering the area unusable, and had weakened the ceiling to the point that the institution had to install metal braces to support it. Additionally, water was intruding into a secure kitchen-equipment area and could flow into an adjacent food preparation room.
- At MCC New York, due to structural failures of a loading dock above the kitchen, large chunks of concrete had broken off and fallen into the kitchen.

Risks to Food Safety Caused by Food Storage Equipment Malfunctions and Sanitation Failures

FREEZERS AND REFRIGERATORS

Freezers or refrigerators at three of the six institutions did not maintain temperatures in compliance with BOP standards (at or below 0 degrees F for freezers and at or below 41 degrees F for refrigerators) established for food safety. For example:

- At FCC Pollock, we observed five freezers and two refrigerators with internal temperature readings that exceeded the maximum allowable temperatures.
- At FCI Marianna, we observed four refrigerators with an internal temperature reading that exceeded the maximum allowable temperature. We also found that the door to one of these refrigerators and one other freezer did not fully close, potentially creating temperature fluctuations in the refrigerator and freezer.
- At USP McCreary, we observed indicia of thawed and refrozen food in a freezer that employees told us regularly experienced temperature fluctuations and refrigerant leaks.

The failure of this equipment to maintain those temperatures was concerning because storing food above those temperatures may allow the growth of harmful bacteria and organisms, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.

Some freezers at USP McCreary and FCI Mendota were completely inoperable, requiring the institutions to rent costly mobile trailer freezers for extended periods.

MOBILE HEATING CARTS

At FCC Pollock and FCI Mendota, mobile carts used to transport food from the kitchen to housing units had inoperable heating components. Lengthy delays in the delivery of originally hot food via unheated carts can create potential food safety risks. However, we did not directly observe delays in the delivery of prepared food for a duration that could create food safety risks.

SANITATION, HANDWASHING, AND SOAP

At USP McCreary, we found a dirty kitchen that had the pervasive smell of raw meat. Further, in a broken walk-in refrigerator with a temperature of 80 degrees F, we found a large amount of day-old prepared food that had been left in uncovered serving trays. We also found that there was no soap in a bathroom used by inmates who prepare food. The lack of readily available soap for inmates who prepare food is an obvious sanitation concern and undermines institution efforts to comply with BOP policy, which requires inmates who work in food service to employ proper handwashing techniques. According to Food Service Department employees, inmates could access soap if they requested it.

Workplace Safety Concerns in Food Service

PRECARIOUSLY STACKED FOOD PALLETS

At USP McCreary, FCI Marianna, and FCI Mendota, pallets of food were precariously stacked, creating a serious risk that heavy packages could fall onto BOP employees or inmates who work in food storage areas.

ICE ACCUMULATION ON FLOORS

Ice accumulated on the floor inside and at the entrance of freezers at USP McCreary, FCI Marianna, and FCC Allenwood, creating a serious risk of slip-and-fall injuries for BOP employees and inmates.

Inspection Results Summary Table

The table below summarizes the deficiencies we identified at each institution and shows that USP McCreary and FCI Marianna had the greatest number of deficiencies. When considering the overall volume and nature of the deficiencies, we also determined that USP McCreary's deficiencies were the most significant of all the institutions we inspected. In comparison, FCC Allenwood and MCC Chicago had the fewest deficiencies of the institutions we inspected, and we came away with a positive impression of their food service operations; however, we note that at the time of our inspection MCC Chicago's kitchen was undergoing a complete renovation and the institution could not always prepare and cook certain items required by the BOP's National Menu.

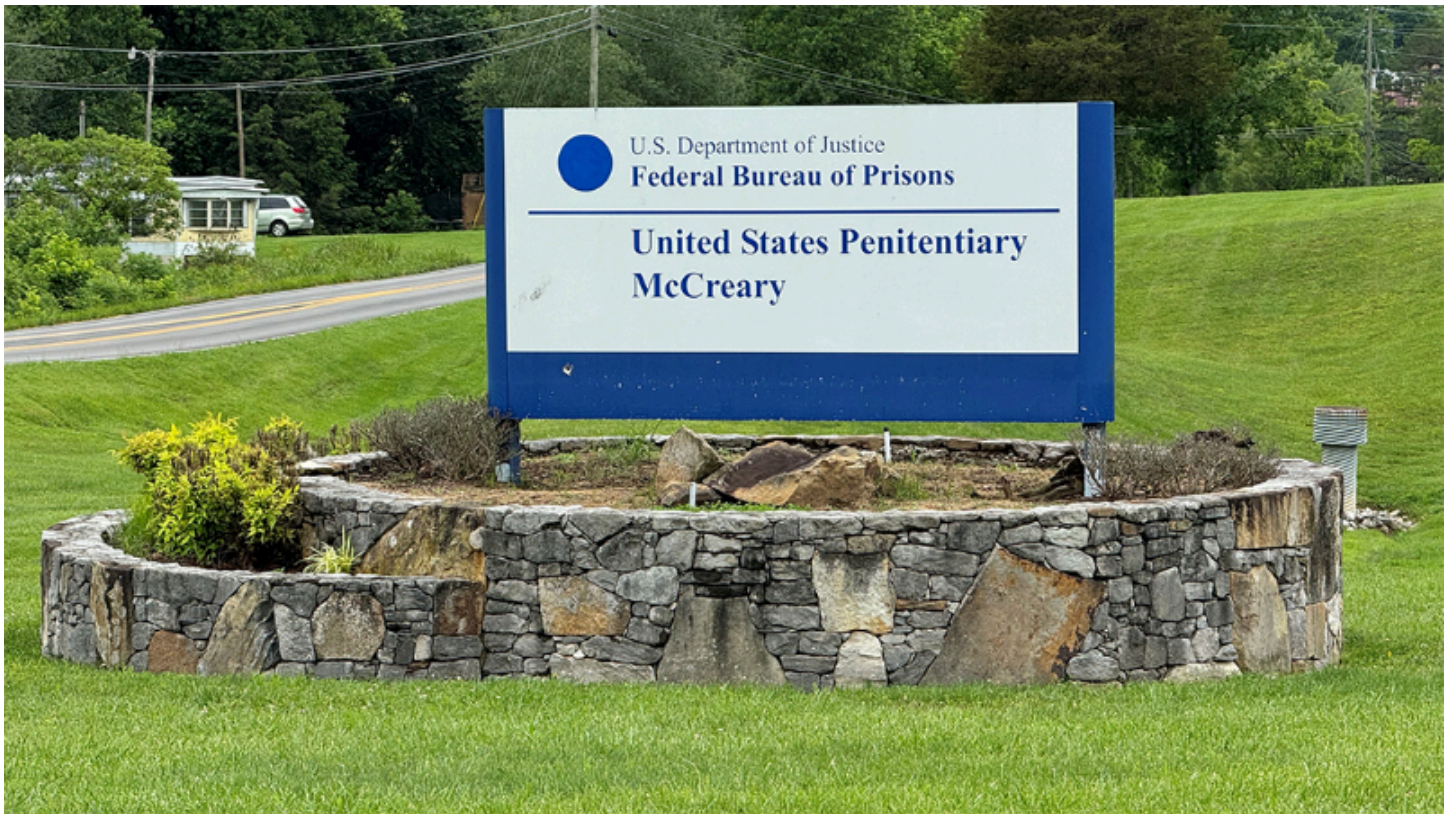
Issue	Sub-Issue	USP McCreary	FCI Marianna	FCC Pollock	MCC Chicago	FCC Allenwood	FCI Mendota
Safety and Security Concerns in Food Service Stemming from Long-standing Management Challenges	Contraband						
	Staffing Shortages						
	Security Cameras						
	Infrastructure						
Risks to Food Safety Caused by Food Storage Equipment Malfunctions and Sanitation Failures	Freezers and Refrigerators						
	Mobile Heating Carts						
	Sanitation						
Workplace Safety Concerns in Food Service	Precariously Stacked Food						
	Ice Accumulation on Floors						

At the conclusion of each inspection's site visit, we shared our findings with local institution managers. In advance of publication, we also provided the BOP with drafts of this product to ensure that all issues were communicated to senior BOP officials and to facilitate updates on the status of concerning areas. For findings that stem from long-standing, enterprise-wide concerns identified in the DOJ OIG's body of BOP oversight work, the OIG already has made recommendations that more broadly encompass the problems we identified through this project; accordingly, we do not make new recommendations in the areas of contraband, staffing shortages, cameras, or infrastructure.

For other areas of concern, we obtained confirmation from BOP officials that many of the problems were addressed prior to the publication of this product. For example, much of the malfunctioning major food storage equipment we identified during the inspections has now been repaired and thus we do not make specific recommendations in this product about those pieces of equipment. However, given the number of major food service equipment malfunctions we identified during these inspections, we believe that similar problems may exist enterprise-wide. Therefore, in August 2024 the OIG initiated an audit of the BOP's [Acquisition and Life-Cycle Management of Major Equipment Supporting Food Services](#). The OIG anticipates that a forthcoming report will provide greater detail on such issues and will make appropriate recommendations to address them. Throughout the content below, we have also included updates that the BOP shared on specific issues identified through these inspections.

Methodology

We selected the six institutions for inspection based on their relative scores on the OIG's prison inspection risk assessment tool, as well as the volume and nature of complaints submitted to the OIG regarding institution operations. While on site, we interviewed BOP employees and inmates, made physical observations of food and food storage areas, and reviewed security camera footage. We also reviewed records pertaining to staffing levels, sanitation, food purchase orders, funding requests for repair and maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, and employee injury and illness reports (see Appendix 1 for more details on the methodology).



U.S. PENITENTIARY (USP) MCCREARY



USP McCreary, Mid-Atlantic Region (BOP), 330 Federal Way, Pine Knot, KY 42635 | Male Offenders | USP: High Security, 1,420 Total Inmates | Camp: Minimum Security, 84 Total Inmates | Population Numbers as of June 4, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)

USP McCreary is a high-security institution with an adjacent minimum-security prison camp (Camp), both of which house male inmates. It is located in Pine Knot, Kentucky, in the BOP's Mid-Atlantic Region. During our inspection, we identified a number of significant issues with the institution's food service operations and, among the six institutions we visited, USP McCreary had the greatest number of issues and the most significant. For example, upon our arrival in the Camp kitchen we found an unsecured and unattended knife. Additionally, we found that the USP kitchen was dirty and had a pervasive smell of raw meat. Further, in a broken walk-in refrigerator with a temperature of 80 degrees F, we found a large amount of day-old prepared food that had been left in uncovered serving trays. We discuss these and other issues below.

Staffing Shortages, Contraband, and Security Cameras

At the time of our inspection, USP McCreary's Food Service Department was staffed at its authorized level (all 15 authorized positions were filled). However, the Food Service Administrator told us that, even with all authorized positions filled, he believes that the department is understaffed. Several Food Service Department employees also told us that, due to low staffing, there is often only one employee available to supervise inmates who work in the food preparation areas, which involves handling food service knives and other dangerous items, and this makes some of the employees feel unsafe. When observing a dinner service at the USP, we found no BOP employee was supervising inmate workers in the kitchen. This is a violation of BOP policy. In response to a draft of this product the BOP reported that USP McCreary had modified the schedules of Food Service Department employees to make more available to observe inmates working in the kitchen.

Illustrative of the lack of supervision, during our inspection we found a large unattended and untethered knife in the Camp kitchen. This is an obvious safety risk, as the knife could

be used as a contraband weapon and is a violation of BOP policy, which states that knives must be under the direct supervision of employees and tethered to a stationary object if they are to be used in unsecure food service areas.

Additionally, a BOP employee told us that when the knife is not in use it is stored in an unlocked desk drawer, as opposed to a locked cabinet as required by BOP policy. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP told us that relevant staff have received training on the appropriate management of tools.



An Unsecured and Unattended Knife in the Food Preparation Area of the USP McCreary Camp. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Red Box Added to Highlight the Knife)

We also found evidence that inmate workers had diverted excess food for their personal use. While seemingly a minor infraction, diverted food is considered contraband and can be used as a type of currency within a correctional environment. Further, there may be food safety risks if inmates consume illicitly acquired food that may not be maintained according to food safety standards.



Containers of Chicken Sandwiches That Inmates
Diverted at the USP. Source: OIG, June 2024

We were also concerned about the potential for inmates to divert food for personal use or commit other misconduct in the food service warehouse. This is due to the large volume of food stored in the warehouse and the challenges inherent in supervising or observing inmate activity inside a large space that does not have security cameras. As noted in past OIG reports, operational security cameras that produce clear footage are an important tool to help the BOP maintain institutional safety and security and provide evidence in criminal and disciplinary investigations. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP noted that its policy does not require cameras in food service warehouses, which are generally outside facility perimeters, and that inmates permitted to work in these spaces are minimum security inmates who routinely live and work with limited supervision, in accordance with security level guidelines and local procedures. Nevertheless, we believe that the lack of camera

coverage in large food service warehouse spaces can present an impediment to monitoring inmates in these spaces.

Equipment Malfunctions, Workplace Safety Concerns, Infrastructure Deficiencies, and Sanitation Failures

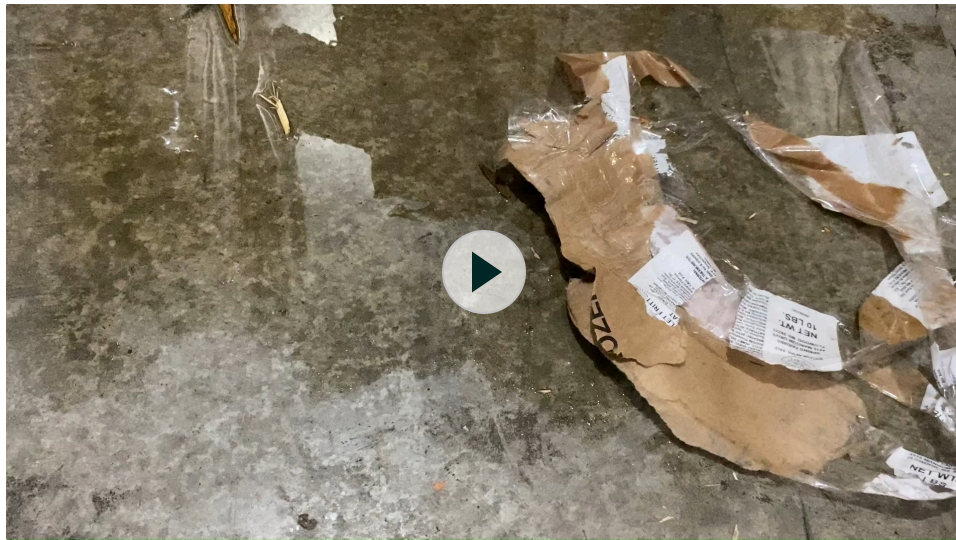
Of USP McCreary's three freezers in the food service warehouse, only one was operational at the time of our inspection. To ensure that there was sufficient space to store frozen foods, the institution was renting three mobile trailers at a cost of \$3,400 per month per trailer. According to a USP employee, the trailers had been rented for at least 2 months prior to our inspections. After reviewing a draft of this product, the BOP reported that the freezer had been repaired and that, sometime between April and May 2025, the freezer trailers had been returned to the vendor.



Three Mobile Trailers Rented by USP McCreary for Frozen Food Storage. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

Moreover, we identified issues with the one operational freezer. A USP McCreary employee told us that the cooling component was leaking refrigerant and had to be refilled frequently so the freezer could maintain an internal temperature at or below 0 degrees F, as required by BOP policy. At the time of our inspection, the freezer's internal thermostat showed 0 degrees F; but we also observed food

that appeared to have thawed and refrozen inside the freezer, as well as liquid on the ground. We were unable to determine whether the liquid was unfrozen condensation, liquified refrigerant, or some other liquid. These conditions were concerning to us as they potentially indicated the freezer was not consistently able to maintain temperatures at or below the BOP standard. Failing to maintain frozen food at a safe temperature may allow the growth of harmful bacteria and organisms, increasing the risk of foodborne illness to both staff and inmates.



Video inside the Warehouse Freezer, Showing Liquid on the Ground and Food That Appeared to Have Thawed and Refrozen.

Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

In a response to a draft of this product, the BOP maintained that the presence of water alone is not conclusive evidence of improper storage and posited that automatic defrost cycles or frequent door openings during warmer months can lead to moisture accumulations such as the ones we observed, without compromising food safety.

We also observed a significant amount of ice buildup at the freezer's threshold, which poses a slip-and-fall hazard to BOP employees and inmate workers when they enter and exit the freezer. A food service employee told us that they believed that the ice buildup was caused by a faulty seal on the freezer

door, which caused warm air to enter the freezer, creating condensation that refroze as ice.



Significant Ice Buildup at the Threshold of the Operational Freezer in the Food Storage Warehouse. Source: OIG, June 2024

Finally, as it relates to concerns with the one operational freezer, pallets with large amounts of food on them were precariously stacked, creating a serious safety hazard as they may fall on inmates and BOP employees when they are retrieving food.



Precariously Stacked Pallets of Food inside the Operational Food Storage Warehouse Freezer. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

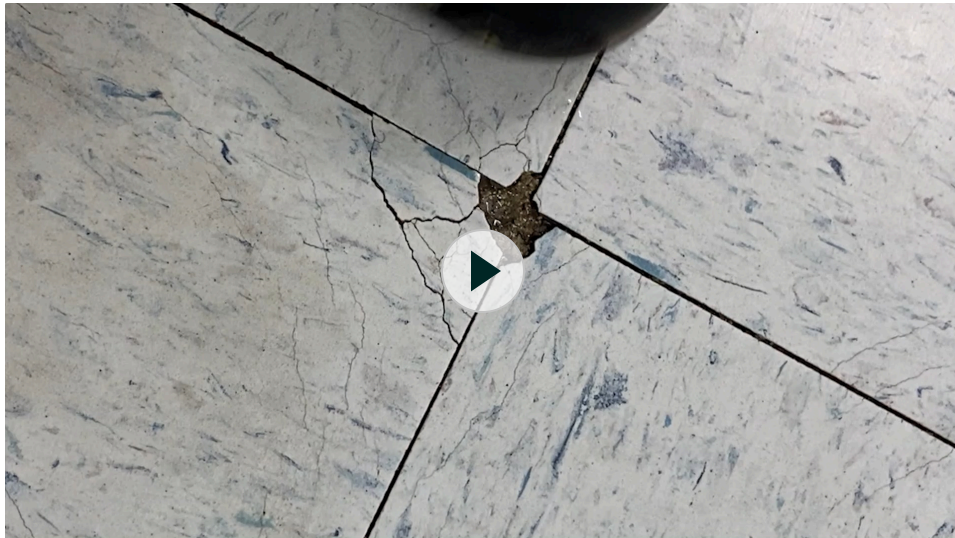
After our inspection, USP McCreary installed racks in its freezers to allow for better organization of pallets and to prevent food from being precariously stacked.

We identified additional concerns related to food service equipment functionality and infrastructure in food service areas. Specifically, in the Camp kitchen, the ventilation system was not operating as intended, causing significant steam build-up and humid conditions. Such humid conditions can foster the growth of mold and create unsafe working conditions for inmates and employees, as well as unsanitary food preparation areas. Further, indicative of humid conditions in the area, we observed multiple water stains and a hole in the ceiling. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the ventilation system; the BOP told us that the vent hoods had been repaired and were operational.



Water Stains and a Hole in the Ceiling of
the Camp Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024

In the USP inmate cafeteria, we saw the effects of water damage, including water seeping through broken floor tiles. At the time of our inspection, we were unable to determine the source of the water but noted a strong and unpleasant odor in the cafeteria. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the water seeping through the broken floor tiles, and the BOP told us that a cafeteria drain was repaired and floor tiles replaced. Further, in response to a draft of this product, the BOP acknowledged that when stagnant water gets trapped under damaged floor tiles it can create an unpleasant smell.



Water Bubbling up from the Tile Floor in the
USP Inmate Cafeteria. Source: OIG, June 2024

We also found serious sanitation issues in the USP kitchen, which was dirty and had a pervasive smell of raw meat. Further, in a broken walk-in refrigerator we found a large amount of day-old prepared food that had been left in uncovered serving trays. The Food Service Administrator believed that inmates who worked in food service the day prior had hidden the food in the refrigerator to avoid the work of disposing of the food and cleaning the trays. Although the Food Service Administrator told us that there was no intention of serving this leftover food to inmates, the presence of this volume of food, which was held at a temperature of 80 degrees F at the time of our inspection, created myriad food safety and sanitation concerns. According to the BOP's response to a draft of this product, the inoperable walk-in refrigerator is not being used to store food and there is no longer a raw meat odor in the kitchen area.



Day-old Prepared Food Found in a Broken Walk-in Refrigerator. Source: OIG, June 2024



Day-old Prepared Food Found in a Broken Walk-in Refrigerator. Source: OIG, June 2024

Finally, we found that there was no soap in the inmate worker bathroom in the USP kitchen. Food Service Department employees told us that soap is available for inmate handwashing but that inmates have to request it from an employee. This is because the soap the institution purchased could not be used in the bathroom soap dispenser. The lack of readily available soap in a bathroom used by inmates who prepare food is an obvious sanitation concern and undermines institution efforts to comply with BOP policy, which requires inmates who work in food service to employ proper handwashing techniques. In response to a draft of this

product, the BOP reported that hand soap has been placed in all restrooms in the Food Service Department at USP McCreary.



FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION (FCI) MARIANNA



FCI Marianna, Southeast Region (BOP), 3625 FCI Road, Marianna, FL 32446 | Male and Female Offenders | FCI: Medium Security, 917 Total Inmates | Camp: Minimum Security, 261 Total Inmates | *Population Numbers as of June 2, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)*

FCI Marianna is a medium-security institution for male inmates with an adjacent minimum-security camp for female inmates. It is located in Marianna, Florida, in the BOP's Southeast Region. During our inspection, we did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe. We did, however, identify issues with food service operations, which we discuss below.

Staffing Shortages, Contraband, and Security Cameras

At FCI Marianna, the Food Service Department was staffed at 78 percent (14 of 18 authorized positions filled); however, only 12 employees were available to work as 2 were on administrative leave pending disciplinary action. (By May 2025, the BOP reported that all 18 of the Food Service Department positions were filled.) To cover the vacant positions, employees were performing the functions of multiple positions. The Warden acknowledged the department's staffing challenges and told us that employees can become exhausted when overworked and that, in his

opinion, “a lot of things can be missed and go unnoticed” when there is a staffing shortage.

Illustrative of the Warden’s statement, we found that Food Service Department employees were not appropriately tracking the use of knives and other sharp tools at the FCI, which is a serious safety risk as these tools could be used as contraband weapons. It is also a violation of a BOP policy, which states that all knife usage must be tracked via a shadow board with markers that indicate when a knife is in use and who has it. As can be seen in the image below, the required markers of two knives and five other sharp tools were absent from the shadow board at the time of our inspection. According to the Warden, the missing markers were replaced.



Knife Box Shadow Board With Missing Tracking Markers for Two Knives and Five Other Sharp Tools. Source: OIG, June 2024

The Food Service Administrator told us that, in addition to his departmental leadership responsibilities, he was also accepting and inspecting warehouse deliveries for quality and for potential contraband, a task usually performed by a foreman (the position was vacant). Inspecting these deliveries for contraband was made more difficult because the pallet x-ray machine that examines large food shipments for contraband had not been working for at least 2 years prior to our inspection. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP noted that BOP policy does not require the use of pallet x-ray machines and that institutions do not rely solely on them to

examine incoming food shipments for contraband. Additionally, the BOP's response stated that manual searches are more effective than pallet x-ray machines at identifying small items concealed within large pallets of food. Notwithstanding the value of manual searches, we believe that pallet x-ray machines can still assist the BOP in preventing the introduction of contraband. This sentiment was shared by the responsible employee we interviewed during our inspection who confirmed that manual inspections of food shipments do occur but also told us that that inspections of incoming food shipments would be more thorough if the institution's pallet x-ray machine were operational. As of May 2025, the x-ray machine was still broken, but efforts were underway to source parts for a repair.



Inoperable Pallet X-ray Machine in the Food Storage Warehouse.
Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

Another security-related issue in food service was a lack of security cameras inside the food service warehouse. This is concerning because the warehouse is a large space with areas in which inmates can commit misconduct including through the diversion of food or the introduction of contraband, without detection. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP noted that its policy does not require cameras in food service warehouses, which are generally outside facility perimeters, and that inmates permitted to work in these spaces are minimum security inmates who routinely live and work with limited supervision, in accordance with security level guidelines and local procedures. Nevertheless, we believe that the lack of camera coverage in large food service warehouse spaces can present an impediment to monitoring inmates in these spaces.

Equipment Malfunctions, Workplace Safety Concerns, Infrastructure Deficiencies, and Sanitation Failures

We identified concerns with the ability of food service equipment to maintain required temperature as evidenced by the BOP's own temperature gauges and our own observations, although OIG's temperature measuring tools were unable to record reliable independent temperature readings in the freezer and refrigerator environments. Of the 11 refrigerators we inspected in food service areas at the institution, we found that BOP equipment readings indicated 4 refrigerators did not appear to maintain temperatures in compliance with BOP standards (at or below 41 degrees F for refrigerators). Specifically, BOP equipment displayed temperatures of 54, 48, 47, and 43 degrees F in 4 of the refrigerators we inspected. The apparent failure of this equipment to maintain temperatures at BOP standards was concerning because storing food above those temperatures may allow the growth of harmful bacteria and organisms, increasing the risk of foodborne illness. In the case of one refrigerator, the Warden told us that the temperature reading was unreliable because the internal

thermostat was not correctly calibrated, and other employees explained that the temperature might be elevated on that refrigerator because people regularly opened the door when entering or exiting it. For another of the four refrigerators with elevated readings, we also observed that the door did not close completely, which we believe could have contributed to its elevated temperature.

With respect to the freezer equipment, of the five we inspected, no BOP equipment readings indicated temperatures out of compliance with BOP policy (at or below 0 degrees F for freezers) at the time of our inspection. However, we observed that the door to one freezer did not close completely. Inside this walk-in freezer, we observed that ice build-up on the floor, created a slipping hazard for BOP employees and inmate workers. In addition, the food in this freezer had extensive ice build-up on food packaging—potential evidence that warmer air had entered the space and created condensation that refroze as ice. We believe that all these conditions indicate that this freezer may not have consistently maintained temperatures in compliance with BOP standards and may have jeopardized the quality of the food it contained.

After our observations, the Warden told us that the thermostat had been recalibrated on the first refrigerator with elevated temperatures and that replacement doors for the other refrigerator and the freezer had been received and would be installed during our visit. According to the BOP, as of April 2025 all refrigerators and freezers were operational.



Significant Ice Buildup on Food Stored in a Freezer.

Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

While inspecting freezers, we found some food that was well past its “use-by” date. Specifically, we found boxes of chicken wings with a use-by date of May 8, 2022, and boxes of roast beef with a use-by date of November 6, 2023. We note that BOP food service policy refers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the definitions of use-by dates for food safety considerations; according to the USDA, use-by dates are not a safety date, but instead the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. Further, the USDA states that a product “should still be safe and wholesome if handled properly until time spoilage is evident.”

Given that the chicken wings and roast beef were packaged and frozen, we did not make an independent assessment about food safety or spoilage.

We also found that FCI Marianna has no air-conditioning system and the ventilation system in the kitchen was broken at the time of our inspection. Combined with the outside temperature and the heat produced from an operating kitchen, this infrastructure and equipment functionality issue caused temperatures inside the kitchen to rise to 93 degrees F during our inspection.

At the time of our inspection, FCI Marianna's Warden told us that he was aware of the high temperatures in the FCI kitchen and said that a new motor to fix the exhaust fan was on order. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the exhaust fan and the BOP told us that repairs have been made.

Additionally, in response to a draft of this product, the BOP stated that in November 2024 FCI Marianna was approved to procure an air-conditioning system for its food service areas; the BOP was developing an initial solicitation for bids as of May 2025.

In addition to excessive heat in the FCI kitchen at the time of our inspection, we identified one additional workplace safety issue in the food warehouse: a pallet of food was precariously stacked, creating a serious safety hazard as food packages could fall on inmates and BOP employees working in the area.

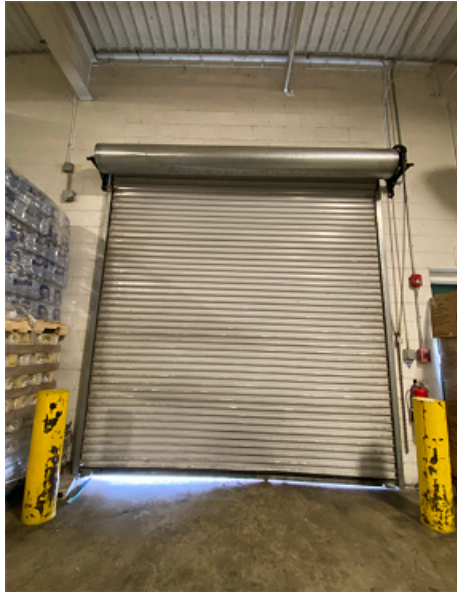


Precariously Stacked Boxes of Food in the Food Storage Warehouse.

Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)

Finally, we identified three sanitation issues that created unhygienic conditions in food service areas. First, we found that the food service warehouse receiving door did not fully close, which could have allowed the introduction of insects and rodents and cause food safety concerns (we did not identify evidence of rodent intrusion of food containers in the warehouse during our on-site observations). Second, we found a pair of shoes stored near a kitchen surface. This is in violation of BOP policy, which requires that personal belongings such as jackets and shoes be stored in designated areas away from food preparation, storage, and serving areas.

Third, we also found what appeared to be a used hairnet on a drying rack in the dishwasher room. After our inspection, the BOP repaired the warehouse door.



Top Left, Food Service Warehouse Receiving Door That Could Not Fully Close; *Top Right*, a Pair of Shoes Found on Top of a Kitchen Surface Inside the Food Service Area; *Bottom Right*, A Used Hairnet Resting on a Drying Rack in the Dishwasher Room. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Red Box Added to Highlight the Used Hairnet and Product Names and Logos Blurred)



FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX (FCC) POLLOCK



FCC Pollock, South Central Region (BOP), 1000 Airbase Road, Pollock, LA 71467 | Male Offenders | FCI: Medium Security, 1,526 Total Inmates | Camp: Minimum Security, 156 Total Inmates | USP: High Security, 985 Total Inmates | *Population Numbers as of June 4, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)*

FCC Pollock is composed of three facilities housing male inmates: a high-security U.S. Penitentiary (USP), a medium-security Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), and a minimum-security prison camp (Camp). FCC Pollock is located in Pollock, Louisiana, in the BOP's South Central Region. During our inspection, we found food areas under control of the Food Service Department to be clean and did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe. We did, however, identify issues with food service operations, which we discuss below.

Staffing Shortages, Contraband, and Security Cameras

At FCC Pollock, the Food Service Department was staffed at 96 percent (27 of 28 authorized positions filled); however, 3 employees were on limited duty due workplace injuries. FCC Pollock's acting Complex Warden (who normally serves as the

Warden of the FCI) told us that managing food service operations with the available employees had been a challenge. In addition, Food Service Department employees told us that they would feel safer if there were more employees available to supervise high-security inmates when they communally eat in the USP cafeteria.

Another security concern in food service was the absence of cameras inside the warehouse, making supervision of inmates who work in that large space difficult. At FCC Pollock and other institutions we inspected that also had large warehouse spaces, these circumstances created an environment in which inmates had greater opportunities to potentially commit misconduct, including the diversion of food or facilitating the introduction of contraband. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP noted that its policy does not require cameras in food service warehouses, which are generally outside facility perimeters, and that inmates permitted to work in these spaces are minimum security inmates who routinely live and work with limited supervision, in accordance with security level guidelines and local procedures. Nevertheless, the lack of camera coverage in large food service warehouse spaces can present an impediment to monitoring inmates in these spaces.

We identified one additional contraband risk area relevant to food service at FCC Pollock. Specifically, multiple keys had been issued for secure knife cages, which is a violation of BOP policy stating that only one key should be issued for a food service knife cage. We were concerned that the issuance of multiple keys made it more difficult to ensure accountability of food preparation knives and increased the likelihood that inmates could misuse them as contraband weapons. We raised this concern to the Food Service Administrator, who confirmed that there should be only one key that opens each knife box. While we were still on site, he told us that the issue had been addressed.

Equipment Malfunctions, Infrastructure Deficiencies, and Workplace Safety Concerns

We identified concerns with the ability of food service equipment to maintain required temperatures, as evidenced by the BOP's temperature gauges and our observations, although the OIG's temperature measuring tools were unable to record reliable independent temperature readings in the freezer and refrigerator environments. Of the 6 freezers and 11 refrigerators we inspected in food service areas, BOP equipment's internal temperature readings showed that five freezers and two refrigerators did not appear to maintain temperatures in compliance with BOP standards (at or below 0 degrees F for freezers and at or below 41 degrees F for refrigerators) established for food safety. Specifically, BOP equipment displayed temperatures of 16.8, 16, 12.1, 8.4, and 6 degrees F, respectively for the five freezers, and temperatures of 54.7 and 46 degrees F respectively for the two refrigerators. The apparent failure of this equipment to maintain BOP standard temperatures was concerning because storing food above required temperatures may allow the growth of harmful bacteria and organisms, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.

According to the BOP, at the time of our inspection, there was a leak in the condenser of one of the freezers, preventing it from maintaining correct temperatures. As of April 2025, the BOP told the OIG that this condenser leak had been repaired. Further, in response to a draft of this product, the BOP reported that food service freezers and coolers had been repaired and that they are regularly serviced. In addition, the BOP stated that it maintains temperature logs and that some freezers and refrigerators allow for remote temperature monitoring.

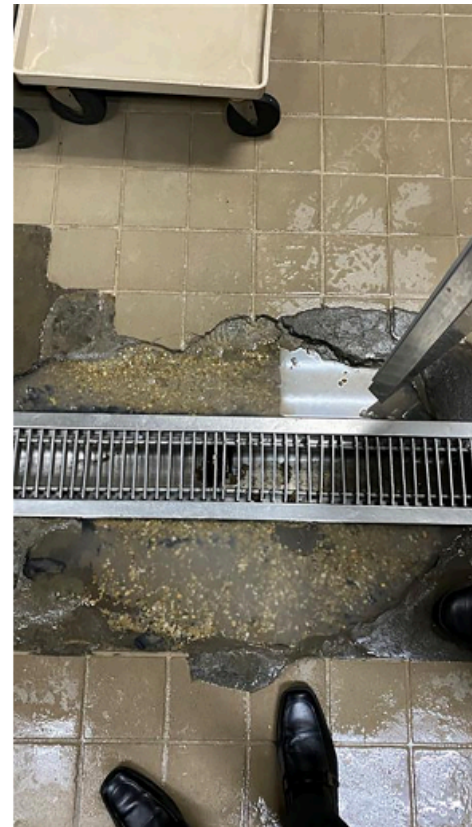
We identified additional food service equipment functionality issues, infrastructure deficiencies, and workplace safety concerns in the USP kitchen and food service areas. First, the air-conditioning system was inoperable, contributing to a

temperature of 86 degrees F in the food preparation area. The acting Complex Warden told us that Food Service Department employees and inmate workers take regular water breaks to cool down and reduce instances of heat exhaustion. A department employee told us that the kitchen was “extremely hot” and that the inmates were “working in brutal heat.” According to the acting Complex Warden, replacement parts were ordered to repair the broken air-conditioning system and were expected to arrive 1 day after the inspection concluded. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP reported that the air-conditioning system was repaired on July 26, 2024. Further, the BOP said that FCC Pollock developed a “Heat Stress Prevention Procedure” to be followed by employees and inmates when exposed to elevated temperatures both indoors and outdoors.

Second, we found many damaged and missing floor tiles in the dishwasher area and around large cook kettles in the USP kitchen. Several employees told us that staff have sustained slip-and-fall injuries on the uneven kitchen floor tiles, particularly when the tiles were wet. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the floor tiles, and the BOP provided photographs showing that the area around the broken floor tiles had been patched and leveled.



Left and Right, Degraded Floor Tiles near Large Cook Kettles in the Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024



Left and Right, Degraded Floor Tiles near Dishwashers in the Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024

Third, wall-mounted electrical boxes were uncovered and wires were exposed. While we did not test the exposed wire endpoints to determine whether they were still electrified, BOP policy states that each electrical box must have a cover,

faceplate, or fixture canopy. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the uncovered boxes and exposed wires and the BOP provided photographs showing that the boxes and the wires had been covered.

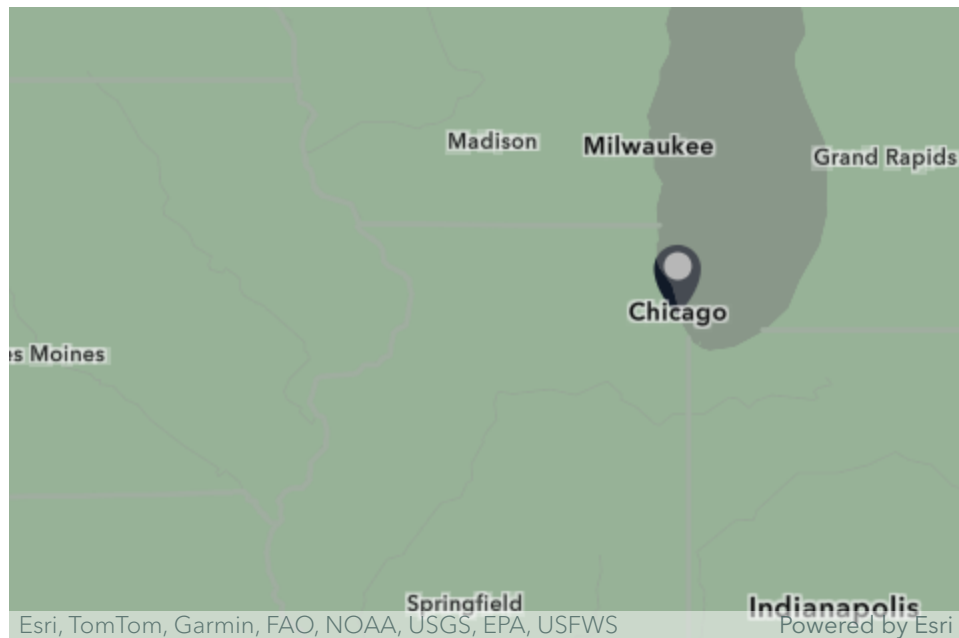


Left, Exposed Electrical Wires Without a Safety Plate in the Secure Cafeteria Serving Area, Right, Exposed Electrical Wires Without a Safety Plate in the Kitchen Area. Source: OIG, June 2024

Finally, we found that the heating components for 9 of 15 mobile carts, used to deliver food to inmates who are fed in their cell or housing unit, were broken. When an institutional disruption occurs, generally due to inmate misconduct, inmates are unable to eat in the cafeteria and must be fed in their cells or housing units. The packaging and transport of this food takes time: if food intended to be served hot is delivered in an unheated cart, it may arrive lukewarm or cold. We did not identify in the delivery of prepared food delays of a duration that could create food safety risks. The acting Complex Warden was aware of the broken equipment and told us that the institution was in the process of repairing the carts. The BOP subsequently provided us evidence that new heating components had been installed on the carts.



**Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC)
Chicago**



MCC Chicago, North Central Region (BOP), 71 West Van
Buren Street, Chicago, IL 60605 | Male and Female Offenders
| Administrative Security, 578 Total Inmates | Population
Numbers as of June 4, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)

MCC Chicago, an administrative-security institution for male and female inmates of all security levels, is located in Chicago, Illinois, in the BOP's North Central Region. During our inspection, we found areas under the control of the Food Service Department to be clean and did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe. We did, however, identify issues with food service operations, which we discuss below.

Staffing Shortages and Contraband

At MCC Chicago, the Food Service Department was staffed at 87 percent (seven of eight authorized positions filled); however, one food service employee was temporarily working a non-food service post. At the time of our inspection, the Food Service Administrator told us that, with the existing employee complement, Food Service Department employees had to frequently work compensatory hours to ensure that all shifts were staffed and that it had become difficult to ensure that there were employees available to cover a shift if a colleague takes planned or unplanned leave. A department employee

also told us that they felt outnumbered in relation to the number of inmates they were required to supervise. By May 2025, the BOP reported that all eight of the Food Service Department positions were filled.

Like other institutions we inspected, MCC Chicago does not have security cameras in its food service warehouse. However, unlike the other institutions, MCC Chicago's warehouse is located 10 miles from the institution and inmates do not work there, thus mitigating the risk associated with a lack of cameras. We did identify one contraband-related concern in a food storage area adjacent to the kitchen. Specifically, nutmeg—which contains naturally occurring chemicals that may cause intoxication if consumed in large amounts—was stored in an unlocked container that could be accessed by inmates who work in food service. This is in violation of BOP policy, which requires nutmeg to be locked inside a cabinet to prevent misuse. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP said that MCC Chicago no longer maintains nutmeg at the institution.



Unsecured Nutmeg in a Food Storage Area Adjacent to the Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Red Box Added to Highlight the Nutmeg and Product Names and Logos Blurred)

Infrastructure Deficiencies

At the time of our inspection, MCC Chicago's kitchen was undergoing major renovations to address structural problems caused by broken pipes and improper floor drainage. During the renovation, MCC Chicago planned to replace several ovens, cook kettles, and a dishwasher. Due to ongoing renovations, at the time of our inspection all inmate meals were being prepared in a temporary kitchen and delivered to inmate housing units. The BOP initially anticipated a \$300,000 budget for the kitchen renovation; however, at the time of our inspection, costs had risen to over \$700,000 due to the volume of necessary repairs. Although the BOP was able to renovate the kitchen at MCC Chicago, it has been unable to make other major repairs at institutions across its enterprise. This is because the BOP has a large and growing list of unfunded modernization and repair needs and has historically failed to request funding to address them. As of 2024, the BOP estimated that it had a \$3 billion backlog of unfunded infrastructure repairs across all of its institutions.



MCC Chicago's Ongoing Kitchen Renovation. Source: OIG, June 2024

Due to the ongoing kitchen renovation, at the time of our inspection portable ovens were the only equipment available for food preparation. As a result, the institution could not always prepare and cook certain items required by the BOP's National Menu. For example, without a stovetop or a cook kettle, food service employees and inmates could not prepare

rice or beans and without a fryer, they could not deep-fry chicken. The Food Service Administrator told us that he did his best to ensure that the inmates received reasonable alternatives. For example, the institution was able to bake potatoes in lieu of rice and prepare oven-baked chicken in lieu of traditionally fried chicken. According to the BOP, the MCC Chicago renovation project was completed in November 2024. In addition to the replacement of the drainage system and floor, the project included the installation of 12 ovens, a mixer, a dishwasher, 4 cook kettles, and a waste disposal system.



Ovens in the Temporary Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)



Example of a Meal That Could Be Prepared in the Temporary Kitchen:
Fish Patty Sandwich, Baked Potato Wedges, and Peas. Source: OIG, June
2024 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)



Ovens in the Renovated Kitchen. Source: BOP,
April 2025 (Product Names and Logos Blurred)



**Federal Correctional Complex (FCC)
Allenwood**



FCC Allenwood, Northeast Region (BOP), Rt. 15, 2 Miles North of Allenwood, Allenwood, PA 17810 | Male Offenders | USP: High Security, 251 Total Inmates | FCI #1: Medium Security, 1,209 Total Inmates | FCI #2: Low Security, 1,002 Total Inmates | *Population Numbers as of June 4, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)*

FCC Allenwood is composed of three facilities housing male inmates: a high-security U.S. Penitentiary (USP), a medium-security Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), and low-security FCI. FCC Allenwood is located in Allenwood, Pennsylvania, in the BOP's Northeast Region. During our inspection, we found areas under the control of the Food Service Department to be clean and did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe. We did, however, identify issues with food service operations, which we discuss below.

Staffing Shortages, Contraband, and Security Cameras

At FCC Allenwood, the Food Service Department was staffed at 89 percent (33 of 37 authorized positions filled); however, 2 employees filling authorized positions were unavailable because they were on administrative leave. Given this staffing situation, some department employees had to work additional hours to fill vacant department posts.

In the FCI kitchen, we found drop ceilings that enabled inmates to hide food and food service items. Employees told us that they have consistently found stolen food inside the drop ceiling space and they believe that inmates are transporting food items from the kitchen to other areas of the FCI. While seemingly a minor infraction, diverted food is considered contraband and can be used as a type of currency within a correctional environment. Further, there may be food safety risks if inmates consume illicitly acquired food that may not have been maintained according to food safety standards. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP stated that staff now conduct more frequent searches in areas that have drop ceilings.



Drop Ceiling in the FCI Kitchen Where
Inmates Hide Food. Source: OIG, June 2024

As with other institutions we inspected, there were no security cameras inside the food service warehouse. However, inmates did not work in this area, thus mitigating the risk associated with a lack of cameras. While inside the warehouse, we found that a significant amount of ice had accumulated at the threshold to the freezer, posing a slip-and-fall hazard to employees entering the freezer to retrieve food. A Food Service Department employee told us that the accumulation of ice had been an ongoing issue. We also identified this same

issue at USP McCreary, where a food service employee told us that a faulty seal on a freezer door caused warm air to enter the freezer, creating condensation that refroze as ice. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP said that it had addressed the ice accumulation issue at FCC Allenwood by replacing faulty gaskets on the freezer door and posting signage to remind employees to secure the door.



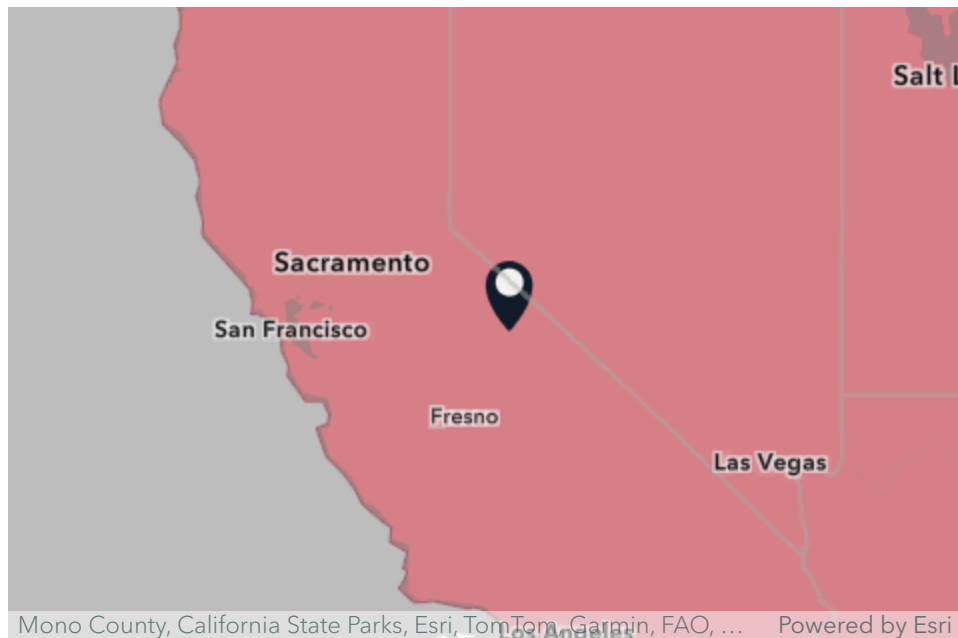
Ice Buildup on the Floor near the Entrance to a Freezer in the Food Storage Warehouse. Source: OIG, June 2024



A Meal Served at the USP. Source: OIG, June 2024



FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE (FCI) MENDOTA



Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) Mendota, Western Region (BOP),
33500 West California Avenue, Mendota, CA 93640 | Male Offenders | FCI:
Medium Security, 766 Total Inmates | Camp: Minimum Security, 112 Total
Inmates | *Population Numbers as of June 4, 2024 (Week of the Inspections)*

FCI Mendota is a medium-security FCI with an adjacent minimum-security prison camp (Camp) for male inmates. It is located in Mendota, California, in the BOP's Western Region. During our inspection, we did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe. We did, however, identify issues with food service operations, which we discuss below.

Staffing, Contraband, and Security Cameras

At FCI Mendota, the Food Service Department was staffed at 70 percent (12 of 17 authorized positions filled). FCI Mendota's Food Service Administrator told us that Food Service Department employees must, at times, work for compensatory hours, in addition to their normal workday, to fill vacant posts. However, even with the use of compensatory hours, employees told us that there are often not enough department employees to cover all shifts. When there is an employee shortage, the institution closes the independent food service operation at the Camp and prepares all inmate meals at the FCI. Meals are then transported from the FCI kitchen directly

to the Camp housing unit, where inmates eat instead of in the Camp's cafeteria.

Although this feeding arrangement was not occurring at the time of our June 2024 inspection, staff and inmates told us that it regularly occurred prior to our inspection. Following our inspection, in July, an FCI Mendota employee told us that Camp inmates were once again being fed in their housing unit due to a lack of employees available to supervise the Camp food service operation. The employee suggested that the presence of food and food waste in the housing unit contributed to an increased presence of rodents and other insects, creating unsanitary conditions.

With regard to contraband mitigation procedures in the Food Service Department, we found that FCI Mendota complied with BOP policy for the management and tracking of knives and other dangerous tools and that all knives and kitchen tools were stored and tracked appropriately in the FCI and Camp. However, we found a large, sharp piece of metal, which could be fashioned into a weapon, on top of the locked knife cage in a locked tool room adjacent to the FCI's kitchen.



A Large, Sharp Piece of Metal Found on Top of the Locked Knife Cage in a Tool Room Adjacent to the FCI's Kitchen. Source: OIG, June 2024

We also found that inspecting food deliveries for contraband at FCI Mendota has been made more difficult because its

pallet x-ray machine had not been working for at least 2 years prior to our inspection. In response to a draft of this product, the BOP told the OIG that BOP policy does not require the use of pallet x-ray machines and that institutions do not rely solely on them to examine incoming food shipments for contraband. Additionally, the BOP's response stated that manual searches are more effective than pallet x-ray machines at identifying small items concealed within large pallets of food, and we note that a responsible employee from FCI Mendota told us during our inspection that manual inspections of food shipments do occur. Notwithstanding the value of manual searches, we believe that pallet x-ray machines can still assist the BOP in preventing the introduction of contraband.



Dead Rodent behind the Pallet X-ray Machine in the Food Warehouse.
Source: OIG, June 2024 (Red Box Added to Highlight the Dead Rodent)

FCI Mendota was the only institution among the six we inspected that had security cameras in its main food storage warehouse. However, a smaller satellite warehouse adjacent to the Camp did not have any security cameras. An employee told us that they believed that it would be beneficial to have security cameras inside the satellite warehouse for enhanced safety and security.

Equipment Malfunctions and Workplace Safety Concerns

At the time of our inspection, one of the two freezers inside the food storage warehouse was inoperable and employees told us that it had been inoperable for almost a year. To ensure that there was sufficient space to store frozen foods, the institution was renting two mobile freezer trailers at a cost of \$1,000 per month per trailer. According to the BOP, within 2 weeks of our inspection, the inoperable freezer was repaired and the mobile freezer trailers were returned to the vendor that provided them. As of April 2025, the BOP reported that all of FCI Mendota's freezers were operational.

Within the warehouse freezer that was operational at the time of our inspection, pallets of food were precariously stacked, creating a serious safety hazard as food packages could fall on inmates and BOP employees working in the area. The BOP reported that this issue has been addressed and provided a photograph from May 2025 evincing that food is stacked safely in a warehouse freezer.



Boxes of Food Precariously Stacked, Leaning inside a Freezer.

Source: OIG, June 2024 (Red Box Added to Highlight the Precariously Stacked Pallets of Food and Product Names and Logos Blurred)

Finally, at the time of our inspection we learned that only one of the institution's mobile food delivery carts had an operational heating component. As a result, for those inmates who had food delivered to them in their housing units or cells, as opposed to a cafeteria, there was an increased likelihood that food intended to be served to them hot may have been served lukewarm or cold. We did not identify in the delivery of prepared food delays of a duration that could create food safety risks. Nonetheless, this was a potential concern at the Camp, where, as described above, inmates regularly must be fed in the housing unit because there are often not enough employees available to operate the Camp's independent kitchen and cafeteria. In April 2025, we asked the BOP for an update on the heating carts and the BOP told us that FCI Mendota had six operational carts with working heating components.

Appendices

Standards

The DOJ OIG conducted these inspections in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation (December 2020).

Purpose and Scope

The OIG has determined that it can enhance the effectiveness of its oversight, as well as its ability to alert the BOP of concerns, by conducting short-notice and unannounced inspections of BOP institutions, as appropriate. In June 2024, we focused unannounced, concurrent inspections on the administration of food service at six selected institutions given the serious food service-related issues we identified during prior inspections of other institutions.

On Tuesday June 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), the OIG simultaneously notified all six selected institutions of its intention to begin its inspections by 11 a.m. EST.¹ At the latter time, teams of four OIG employees each simultaneously initiated on-site inspections at the selected institutions. The inspections were conducted through Thursday, June 6.

Our scope was the state of food service operations at the time of our inspections, although, for certain portions of our analysis our scope included roughly the year that preceded our inspections, beginning in 2023. We also considered information, provided by the BOP after the inspections, that described BOP efforts to address the issues we identified during the inspections.

Methodology

We selected U.S. Penitentiary (USP) McCreary, Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Marianna, Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Pollock, Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) Chicago, FCC Allenwood, and FCI Mendota for inspection based on their relative scores from the OIG's prison inspection risk assessment tool, as well as the volume and nature of complaints submitted to the OIG regarding institution operations. To better understand the administration of

¹ USP McCreary and FCC Allenwood are located within the EST Zone, and the inspections were initiated at 11 a.m. local time. MCC Chicago, FCC Pollock, and FCI Marianna are located within the Central Standard Time Zone, and those inspections were initiated at 10 a.m. local time. FCI Mendota is located within the Pacific Standard Time Zone, and that inspection was initiated at 8 a.m. local time.

food service at each of the six institutions, we observed food service operations, interviewed inmates and employees, and reviewed and analyzed relevant food service records.

Observations

The six institutions we inspected housed inmates at all of the BOP security levels, which includes administrative, high, medium, low, and minimum. While on site, we observed food service equipment, food storage warehouses, food preparation and dining areas, and lunch and dinner services. We also recorded temperatures of food served hot. We tested prepared-food temperatures, as well as ambient temperatures in food storage areas, including freezers and refrigerators. Due to the cold temperatures within freezers and refrigerators, the OIG's temperature measuring equipment was unable to record reliable independent temperature readings. As a result, we had to rely on the internal temperature readings of the BOP's equipment. Further, we did not perform specialized testing to definitively determine, for example, the potential presence of mold and other hazardous substances. Finally, we reviewed security camera footage to assess Food Service Department operations and to assess the degree to which security cameras provided visual coverage of food service areas.

Interviews

At each of the six BOP institutions, we conducted on-site interviews with inmates who worked for the Food Service Department, inmates housed in general population, inmates housed in restrictive housing, and inmates who received diets based on religious or medical restrictions. We also interviewed Wardens, Associate Wardens, Food Service Administrators, Assistant Food Service Administrators, Facilities Managers, Cook Foremen Supervisors, Warehouse Foremen, Contract Specialists, and other employees responsible for food service operations.

Document Review and Analysis

For each of the six BOP institutions, we reviewed food service-related records, including staffing data, sanitation inspection reports, food purchase orders, funding requests maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, and employee injury and illness reports.

Appendix 2: DOJ OIG Related Work

For prior OIG reporting on the BOP's **infrastructure management challenges**, see DOJ OIG, [Audit of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Efforts to Maintain and Construct Institutions](#), Audit Report 23-064 (May 2023), oig.justice.gov/reports/federal-bureau-prisons-efforts-maintain-and-construct-institutions.

For prior OIG reporting on the **BOP's staffing challenges**, see DOJ OIG, [Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Justice—2022](#) (December 2022), oig.justice.gov/reports/top-management-and-performance-challenges-facing-department-justice-2022.

For prior OIG reporting on the **insufficiency of BOP security camera systems**, see DOJ OIG, [Management Advisory Memorandum: Notification of Needed Upgrades to the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Security Camera System](#), Evaluation and Inspections (E&I) Report 22-001 (October 2021), oig.justice.gov/reports/management-advisory-memorandum-notification-needed-upgrades-federal-bureau-prisons-security.

For the inspection report on **Federal Medical Center Devens**, see DOJ OIG, [Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Medical Center Devens](#), E&I Report 25-009 (December 2024), oig.justice.gov/reports/inspection-federal-bureau-prisons-federal-medical-center-devens.

For the inspection report on **Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Lewisburg**, see DOJ OIG, [Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Correctional Institution Lewisburg](#), E&I Report 24-113 (September 2024), oig.justice.gov/reports/inspection-federal-bureau-prisons-federal-correctional-institution-lewisburg.

For the inspection report on **FCI Sheridan**, see DOJ OIG, [*Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Correctional Institution Sheridan*](#), E&I Report 24-070 (May 2024), oig.justice.gov/reports/inspection-federal-bureau-prisons-federal-correctional-institution-sheridan.

For the inspection report on **FCI Tallahassee**, see DOJ OIG, [*Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Correctional Institution Tallahassee*](#), E&I Report 24-005 (November 2023), oig.justice.gov/reports/inspection-federal-bureau-prisons-federal-correctional-institution-tallahassee.

For the inspection report on **FCI Waseca**, see DOJ OIG, [*Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Correctional Institution Waseca*](#), E&I Report 23-068 (May 2023), oig.justice.gov/reports/inspection-federal-bureau-prisons-federal-correctional-institution-waseca.

For the report that discusses infrastructure issues at **MCC New York**, see DOJ OIG, [*Limited-Scope Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Strategies to Identify, Communicate, and Remedy Operational Issues*](#), E&I Report 23-065 (May 2023), oig.justice.gov/reports/limited-scope-review-federal-bureau-prisons-strategies-identify-communicate-and-remedy.

Appendix 3: BOP Policies Cited

Relevant Program Statements		
Food Service Requirements and Policies	<u>Food Service Manual</u> April 2024	<u>www.BOP.gov/policy/progstat/4700_006.pdf</u>
Employee and Inmate Occupational Safety and Requirements	<u>National Occupational Safety and Health Policy</u> April 2024	<u>www.BOP.gov/policy/progstat/1600_011.pdf</u>

Appendix 4: The BOP's Response to the Draft Report



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Office of the Director

Washington, DC 20534

June 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALLISON RUSSO
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL
EVALUATION AND INSPECTIONS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "William K. Marshall III", is positioned above the typed name.

FROM: William K. Marshall III, Director

SUBJECT: Response to the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Report:
Concurrent Inspections of BOP Food Service Operations
(A-2024-007)

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) thanks the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for its thorough evaluation and appreciates the opportunity to formally respond to the report entitled, "Concurrent Inspections of BOP Food Service Operations (A-2024-007) (Report)."

Food service and safety are top priorities for the BOP. Accordingly, each facility inspected has taken corrective action steps since the site inspections occurred, as summarized below in the section on corrective actions. Additionally, prior to the submission of this response, BOP provided OIG with appropriate documentation of each facility's efforts to correct issues identified during the site inspections.

Furthermore, as noted below, BOP also responds to OIG's findings related to staffing challenges, infrastructure maintenance and repairs that may contribute to the identification of concealed contraband, and the need for upgraded camera systems. BOP values the opportunity to address these additional concerns.

Staffing Shortages

The Report indicates that OIG has previously “reported that staffing shortages and employee allocation are among the chief and longstanding operational challenges that affect safety and security at BOP institutions,” and notes that OIG “identified staffing challenges in the Food Service Departments at all six institutions” inspected.

Appropriately staffing positions is a top priority for the Agency to ensure the well-being of BOP’s dedicated staff and the safety of those in BOP’s care and custody. However, BOP acknowledges that staffing is an ongoing challenge. Over the past ten years, the BOP’s staffing has decreased significantly. In 2014, the BOP employed 19,238 corrections officers. As of February 2025, the BOP employed 15,992 corrections officers. Last year, BOP added nearly 4,000 new hires that, when coupled with about 2,800 separations, left a net gain of almost 1,200 new employees.

That stated, BOP will not permanently resolve the staffing crisis without funding to continue filling vacant positions, increased pay to retain employees, and additional positions to ensure safe staffing levels.

Infrastructure

The Report refers to previous OIG reporting on the BOP’s infrastructure issues which has found that many of the BOP’s physical facilities have infrastructure issues due to a growing list of unfunded maintenance and repair needs.¹

BOP maintains over 46,000 acres of land with more than 3,600 buildings that make up over 120 institutions. BOP has a maintenance and repair backlog of over \$3 billion in unfunded projects. Infrastructure issues present security concerns, like damaged masonry providing opportunities for inmates to conceal contraband, or broken fixtures that can be fashioned into weapons. The failure of these systems not only increases operational costs but also creates vulnerabilities that could endanger the safety of both staff and inmates.

In order to address its infrastructure needs, BOP has developed a comprehensive Five-Year Capital Plan for its major Maintenance and Repair (M&R) projects. This plan is structured to ensure that all critical needs are systematically addressed. The plan is categorized into several key repair categories, each focusing on specific aspects of infrastructure and facility maintenance. By breaking down the repair needs into these specific categories by fiscal year, the BOP’s Five-Year Capital Plan would methodically tackle each area, ensuring that necessary repairs and upgrades are completed in a timely and efficient manner. This structured approach not only addresses immediate repair needs but also supports planning for future maintenance, thereby promoting the long-term sustainability and functionality of the facilities.

¹ Department of Justice Top Management and Performance Challenges 2024. See [Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Justice-2024 | U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General](#).

The prioritization of the Five-Year Capital Investment Plan projects is based on the following criteria:

- Safety system projects (e.g., fire alarm, sprinkler replacement, fire pump, and duress systems projects) are necessary to create a safe environment for both staff and inmates.
- Security projects are necessary to maintain secure institutions to confine inmates and protect the public.
- Infrastructure projects ensure maximum efficiency of the BOP's physical plants, resulting in safe, humane, and secure institutions.
- Bedspace impact projects are crucial to managing the inmate population by identifying and resolving offline bedspace.

Additionally, BOP awarded a contract in August 2023 to assist with creating a facilities masterplan by compiling an analysis of infrastructure requirements and developing methodologies that will provide the funding priorities for critical requirements. The tool is being implemented using current data from the unfunded projects list. The M&R Project Prioritization Framework Tool serves to objectively evaluate outstanding M&R projects by assessing institutional, building, and asset-level data and provides scored and ranked projects by priority of funding. BOP will fully utilize the tool for prioritizing the M&R Capital Investment Plan beginning July 1, 2025.

With respect to the infrastructure issues found during the Food Service site inspections, OIG cites findings including broken water pipes and other water drainage issues resulting in floor damage, but also acknowledges that the facilities took action to address these issues:

- USP McCreary repaired two freezers that were broken at the time of the site inspection, ensuring proper functioning of all three freezers at that facility, and returned the three mobile trailers being used to store frozen food at the time of OIG's site inspection; addressed humid conditions in the kitchen by repairing the ventilation system; repaired/replaced broken floor tiles in the kitchen area; and repaired the cafeteria drain to curtail further water damage.
- FCI Marianna repaired the ventilation system in the kitchen, which was broken during the time of the site inspection and reported that an HVAC project, which was approved on November 12, 2024, is in the acquisition phase for initial solicitation.
- FCC Pollock repaired Food Service freezers and coolers and ensured that they are regularly serviced by the Facilities Department; completed repairs to the air conditioning system by installing new chilled water coils, as of July 26, 2024; and repaired floor tiles in the dishwasher area that were damaged or missing at the time of the site inspection.

- MCC Chicago's kitchen renovation project was completed in November 2024 and included several replacements, such as a pulper unit, hydra extractor, twelve ovens, dishwasher, drainage systems, steam kettles, mixer, and sprinkler heads.
- FCC Allenwood replaced faulty freezer door gaskets to address ice accumulation at the threshold to the freezer in the warehouse.
- FCI Mendota repaired the freezer found inoperable during the time of the site inspection and reported that both of its two food service warehouse freezers are currently operational.

OIG also found that FCI Marianna and FCC Pollock kitchen temperatures were "very hot," noting a temperature of 93 degrees at FCI Marianna and 86 degrees at FCC Pollock. BOP policy describing target temperatures notes that "[a]ll spaces will be maintained as close to the targeted set point as possible," but recognizes that it may be impractical to control temperatures in some spaces, "due to issues such as the age of the cooling and heating systems." See Program Statement 4200.12, Facilities Operations Manual, Ch. 16, Section 4.b., p. 5-6.

Additionally, BOP notes that commercial kitchens, such as those found in restaurants and similar establishments, are generally designed solely for food preparation and not for prolonged human occupancy. Further, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not have a specific maximum temperature mandated for kitchens.² Nonetheless, BOP is committed to the safety of staff and the inmates in its custody, and notes that repairs to the cooling systems in the two facilities identified (FCI Marianna and FCC Pollock) are currently underway. Additionally, to mitigate potentially dangerous working conditions, both facilities have developed "Heat Stress Prevention Procedure" documents, which outline procedures to be taken by staff and inmate workers when exposed to elevated temperatures both indoors and outdoors.

Contraband

In its Report, OIG raised concerns regarding non-functioning pallet x-ray machines at FCI Mendota and FCI Marianna and referred to an OIG June 2014 report entitled "Audit of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' September 2011 Procurement of X-Ray Equipment Under Contract GS-07F-0182T" (OIG Audit Report 14-27) ("2014 Report") in which the OIG "identified significant concerns about the BOP's sole reliance on the x-ray machines that it had purchased because of limitations on their ability to identify contraband." Also in the 2014 Report, OIG recommended that "BOP consider conducting periodic and unannounced external testing of the effectiveness of using pallet x-ray machines to prevent the introduction of contraband." OIG acknowledges that, as of January 2015, BOP had successfully implemented all recommendations from the 2014 OIG Report.

While pallet x-ray machines are a tool available to detect contraband, BOP operations do not rely solely on them for this purpose. In practice, more effective methods, such as thorough visual inspections of shipments, have proven more reliable in identifying small or concealed items. This is especially true for dense materials like canned goods and frozen products, where x-ray

² See [Heat - Standards | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#).

technology often performs inadequately. See Program Statement 4500.12, Trust Fund/Deposit Fund Manual, page 114.

Furthermore, there is no clear evidence that the presence or functionality of pallet x-ray machines significantly reduces the introduction of contraband. In fact, the 2014 Report highlights this limitation, noting that even when the location of concealed contraband was known, it could not be identified through scanned x-ray images. See 2014 Report, p. 10. The 2014 Report further cautions that overreliance on x-ray technology can create a false sense of security and potentially increase the risk of contraband entering the facility if not supplemented by other inspection methods.

OIG also states in its report on the concurrent site inspections that, “[n]otwithstanding the value of manual searches, we believe that pallet x-ray machines can still assist the BOP in preventing the introduction of contraband.” While BOP does not disagree, current BOP policies do not mandate the use of a pallet x-ray machine. See Program Statement 4500.12 and Program Statement 5500.14, Correctional Services Procedures Manual. That stated, although Program Statement 4500.12 does not mandate the use of such machines, the policy explains that pallet x-ray scanners, “[w]hen properly used... effectively supplement other security procedures and prevent and limit the introduction of contraband into Federal Prisons.” See Program Statement 4500.12, p. 113-114.

Security Cameras

While the Report notes that security camera coverage at BOP institutions is a longstanding BOP-wide concern, OIG acknowledges that “BOP has made progress in upgrading camera systems and adding cameras at its institutions.” In its inspections, OIG found that five of the inspected facilities did not have security cameras inside food storage warehouses. However, BOP policy does not require the presence of cameras in food service warehouses, as they are generally outside the facility perimeter. Additionally, inmates who work in Food Service warehouses, outside the secure perimeter of a facility, as was the case in the inspected facilities, are minimum security inmates who routinely live, work, and program with limited supervision, in accordance with security level guidelines and local institutional procedures.³

Corrective Actions Taken by the Six Inspected Facilities

USP McCreary

The Report highlighted several important improvements at USP McCreary's Food Service Department following the site inspection. For example, USP McCreary has addressed concerns regarding understaffing and safety hazards, making the facility a safer and more efficient environment.

³ See Program Statement 5100.08, Inmate Security Designation and Custody Classification, Ch. 2, p. 6: “**OUT CUSTODY**. The second lowest custody level assigned to an inmate requiring the second lowest level of security and staff supervision. An inmate who has **OUT** custody may be assigned to less secure housing and may be eligible for work details outside the institution's secure perimeter with a minimum of two-hour intermittent staff supervision.”

The Food Service Department at USP McCreary was fully staffed as of June 15, 2024, immediately following OIG's site inspection. USP McCreary also implemented 12-hour shifts for Cook Supervisors, guaranteeing the presence of two staff members whenever inmates are working in the kitchen.

Safety has also seen considerable improvement. The Food Service Administrator at the USP ensured an unattended knife that posed a safety risk was removed and all relevant staff received training on proper equipment safety protocols. Additionally, to curtail inmate diversion of food for personal use, USP McCreary has introduced daily area and pat searches by Food Service Department staff.

USP McCreary also made several operational improvements. Two additional freezers are now functional, eliminating dependency on rental trailers and ensuring ample space for frozen food storage. Additionally, racks were installed in the freezers to allow for the proper storing of pallets and reducing the risk of them becoming safety hazards.

The broken walk-in refrigerator, which posed a serious health concern, has been closely monitored, and maintenance staff have been instructed to conduct daily checks for food storage temperatures, recorded on daily temperature logs. This proactive measure has prevented further incidents since the inspection.

Furthermore, the humid kitchen conditions have been improved through repairs to the ventilation system, along with fixing broken floor tiles and a damaged cafeteria drain, all of which were accomplished in 2024 after OIG made the facility aware of these issues.

To tackle sanitation issues and ensure cleanliness remains a top priority, Food Service Department supervisors reminded staff via emails of daily cleaning standards. Lastly, addressing hygiene needs, hand soap has been placed in all restrooms within the Food Service Department, and daily checks are conducted to maintain the supply.

FCI Marianna

Significant advancements have occurred within the FCI Marianna Food Service Department since the time of the site inspection, demonstrating FCI Marianna's proactive approach and commitment to addressing OIG's identified concerns.

Staffing has achieved full capacity with all 18 authorized positions filled as of May 17, 2025.

While OIG previously identified non-operational equipment, including a pallet x-ray scanner, FCI Marianna is actively in the process of obtaining necessary repairs. Critical updates to Food Service equipment have also been made, with all refrigerators and freezers now fully functional following calibration and installation of replacement parts.

Moreover, FCI Marianna has tackled challenges related to ventilation and temperature control. Although air conditioning and ventilation issues were initially flagged, recent repairs, along with

an approved HVAC project, are on the path to resolution. To safeguard staff and inmates from elevated temperatures, FCI Marianna has implemented a robust “Heat Stress Prevention Procedure.”

Lastly, improvements have been made to the Food Service warehouse, with the receiving door now fully operational, enhancing security in operations.

FCC Pollock

The Report identified several critical issues at FCC Pollock that required attention. In response, FCC Pollock has shown a proactive and responsible approach to addressing OIG’s findings.

For example, FCC Pollock promptly addressed an OIG finding that multiple keys had been issued for knife cages, violating BOP policy regarding secure knife storage. Specifically, FCC Pollock addressed this concern by designating a single key set for Food Service access and replacing all knives with safer dough cutters.

Additionally, the inspection revealed temperature control issues in five freezers and two refrigerators, with non-compliance to BOP standards. FCC Pollock has since repaired all five freezers and two refrigerators. FCC Pollock now utilizes TempTrak software for real-time temperature monitoring and maintains temperature logs for 90 days.

OIG also found the air-conditioning system to be inoperable during its inspection. In response to these findings, FCC Pollock completed essential repairs, including new chilled water coils, by July 26, 2024, and created a “Heat Stress Prevention Procedure” to protect staff and inmates from heat-related risks.

Furthermore, OIG noted damaged and missing floor tiles and uncovered electrical boxes in the kitchen area. FCC Pollock responded effectively by patching and leveling the flooring and ensuring all electrical boxes are now properly covered.

Lastly, OIG found broken heating components in mobile food carts used to deliver meals to inmates. FCC Pollock has since installed new heating components on these carts.

MCC Chicago

During OIG’s site inspection, OIG found “the Food Services Department to be clean and did not identify any obvious indications that the food served to inmates was unsafe.” However, OIG did identify operational concerns and MCC Chicago has since made significant strides in enhancing its Food Service Department.

MCC Chicago’s Food Service Departments staffing has now improved from 87% to 100%, ensuring the kitchen operates at peak efficiency.

Furthermore, MCC Chicago successfully completed extensive renovations in November 2024. These upgrades included the installation of modern equipment such as twelve new ovens, a state-

of-the-art dishwasher, new drainage systems, and enhanced safety features like new sprinkler heads.

FCC Allenwood

Since OIG's inspection, FCC Allenwood has made several improvements in the Food Service Department's operations to ensure a secure and well-functioning environment for inmates and staff.

Currently, the Food Service Department boasts a staffing level of 92.6%, with plans to reach 94.44% by June 15, 2025, as an additional staff member is set to start. This increase in staffing is part of ongoing recruitment initiatives targeting both Food Service and entry-level positions.

Addressing safety concerns raised during inspections, FCC Allenwood has implemented searches in areas with drop ceilings in the FCI kitchen, which occur each time inmates are released from the area. While the ceilings remain, these proactive measures help mitigate the risk of contraband being concealed in these spaces. Additionally, FCC Allenwood has successfully tackled ice accumulation issues in the warehouse freezer by replacing faulty door gaskets. Furthermore, clear signage has been posted to remind staff to ensure the cooler door is securely closed, enhancing overall safety and efficiency.

FCI Mendota

During its inspection, OIG did not identify any concerns with unsafe food, however, OIG did note concerns with FCI Mendota's operations, which FCI Mendota has since worked to address.

The Report identified that during the time of the site inspection, the Food Service Department at FCI Mendota was staffed at 70%. However, current staffing levels have improved to 76%, with a commitment to reaching 100% staffing soon. FCI Mendota will continue to post further job announcements to obtain qualified candidates. FCI Mendota believes this dedication to adequate staffing is crucial for maintaining quality service and food safety.

Additionally, during the OIG's inspection, a large piece of sharp metal was discovered atop the locked knife cage in the kitchen area. FCI Mendota has since conducted thorough searches and audits to ensure the safety and accountability of all knives and tools.

Moreover, FCI Mendota's pallet x-ray machine had been non-functional for two years, but progress is being made. Specifically, a technician assessed the machine in May 2025, and parts are on order. In the meantime, FCI Mendota is resourcefully seeking comparable parts from other unused scanners.

Sanitation was another critical focus during the inspection. A dead rodent was found behind the x-ray machine, highlighting the need for better pest control. Monthly inspections are now routine, and additional rodent traps and physical barriers are being installed to enhance FCI Mendota's defense against infestations.

FCI Mendota has also effectively addressed noted safety hazards. Previously, pallets of food in the warehouse freezer were stacked precariously. This issue has been resolved through reorganization, ensuring a safer working environment for both inmates and staff. Additionally, all Food Service Warehouse freezers are operational without reliance on rented units, addressing OIG's concern that only one of the facility's two freezers was operational during the site inspection, resulting in the facility's rental of two frozen-food trailers for food storage.

Finally, only one of the mobile food delivery carts had a functioning heating component at the time of inspection. FCI Mendota has now rectified this concern, with six carts operational and routinely inspected to ensure the carts remain in good working condition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, BOP is appreciative of OIG's inspection and evaluation of its Food Service Departments and values this opportunity to make improvements in its operations as well as demonstrate its commitment to the well-being, safety, and security of both BOP staff and inmates.

Appendix 5: OIG Analysis of the BOP's Response

The OIG provided a draft of this product to the BOP for its comment. [The BOP's response is here.](#) In its formal response, the BOP acknowledged the issues identified in this product and described actions that it has already taken to rectify the findings. The OIG acknowledged many of these efforts in the final product and will continue to include assessments of food service operations as part of future OIG inspections to ensure that issues such as those identified during these inspections are addressed throughout the BOP.