



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the State Inspector General

Michael C. Westfall, CPA
State Inspector General

P.O. Box 1151
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Telephone (804) 625-3255
www.osig.virginia.gov

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin,

The Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) conducted an unannounced inspection of Bland Correctional Center. This report includes a summary of the factors listed in *Code of Virginia* § 53.1-17.6 (B), recommendations, safety and compliance classification, recommended timeline for the next inspection, and the Virginia Department of Corrections (Department) Director's response to the inspection.

Inspection Report: Bland Correctional Center
May 15, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Background

Bland Correctional Center is a Level I-II medium-security facility located in Bland, Virginia. The campus consists of approximately 2,232 acres and first opened its doors in 1946. The facility has an operational capacity of 675 male inmates. At the time of inspection, 598 male inmates were housed at the facility. The population is primarily managed in a dormitory housing unit style environment. Bland Correctional Center is a designated Agribusiness Department site and works closely together with the Department for the benefit of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Inspection Scope

This inspection was not intended to assess compliance with legislative or regulatory requirements, nor assess compliance with Department policies, though both were considered where relevant. The facility inspection was conducted with the Assistant Warden, Major, Chief of Housing and Programming, and other Department staff members. The Warden was also on

site throughout the inspection. The inspection included discussions with staff, management, and inmates, along with observations of the facility's physical environment and daily operations. Areas reviewed during the inspection included seven general population housing units, a Restorative Housing Unit (RHU), inmate dining hall, staff dining hall, recreation areas, intake area, visitation room, laundry area, programs and services building, administrative offices, medical, dental, commissary, gymnasium, music room, law library, chaplain's room/religious library, and the outer perimeter. Additionally, the facility includes several buildings both inside and outside the secure perimeter that are currently not in use and were not inspected. The Agribusiness area of Bland Correctional Center was not inspected during this visit.

Safety/Security

The facility had several security measures in place, including a visitor log, two body scanners, walk-through magnetometer, X-ray machine, and pat-down/frisk searches to screen staff, inmates, and visitors. This facility is equipped with 188 surveillance cameras, including multiple Point/Tilt/Zoom (PTZ) cameras. At the time of inspection, 20 cameras were noted as not functioning properly. The perimeter was secured with double perimeter fencing (with electronic motion detection) topped with razor wire and supplemented with cameras to monitor external movements. The perimeter security is further enhanced with five watch towers and a roving patrol. To enhance internal security, the facility had two body scanning units located at two different entry point locations. Fire extinguishers were accessible to both staff and inmates throughout the facility, and all but two observed during the inspection were up to date with complete monthly inspections. An inmate reported that the housing units are not safe due to no fire alarms, no water sprinklers, and no fire exits. Additionally, the inmate reported that the inmates are exposed to coal dust and asbestos.

Housing

Inmate housing consisted of seven general population housing units and one RHU. Housing Units 1 and 3 were open dormitories and Housing Units 2 and 4 were a combination of open dormitories and individual pod units featuring single, double, or quadruple housing styles. Trailer Housing Units 1, 2, and 3 were open dormitory settings with single or double bunking options. The seven units had community-style restroom facilities which included showers, commodes, sinks, and mirrors. Upon intake, inmates are provided with linens, mattresses and pillows. Storage boxes, lockers, and shelves are provided for storage of personal items. Each RHU cell was equipped with one commode and one sink. Prior to entering each housing unit, the presence of a female was loudly announced.

The three trailer housing units were an open dormitory setting with single and double bunks and can accommodate up to 24 inmates each. They were equipped with two phones, one video visitation, and one JPay kiosk. They also included two toilets, one urinal, three sinks, and two showers. The showers and sinks in the three trailer housing units were operational with consistent water pressure and appropriate temperature. The trailer housing units were climate

controlled by an HVAC system, and the temperature was appropriate for the season. Overall, the trailer housing units were clean and well organized; however, inspectors noted an accumulation of dust on air vents and the duct system. There were recreational opportunities such as board games, various paints for painting, and books within the trailers and tables that displayed important implementation memos and calendars. The outdoor recreational space was equipped with various weightlifting and exercise equipment.

The four other general population housing units each accommodated between 116 and 140 inmates, depending on the housing style. Both housing unit styles had a top and bottom floor and included a central dayroom that provided inmates with access to up to five phones, one JPay, and one video visitation kiosk. The facility was going through a lock-down in one housing unit for contraband so all phone communication was deactivated; therefore phones, JPay, and video visitation kiosks connectivity were not validated during the inspection. Cable television was available to the inmates along with a library, tables, and indoor games for recreation. The dayrooms also featured bulletin boards which contained announcements, implementation memos, and posters. Inmates were provided with access to a microwave and ice machine in these communal areas. These housing units were not equipped with climate-controlled HVAC units due to the age of the facility. The facility relied on mechanical ventilation for temperature control. Inmates are provided with coolers of ice and frozen water pouches during mealtime when temperature exceeds 95°F.

Housing Units 1 and 3 were open floor dormitories. Housing Unit 2, Top (North, South) was also an open dormitory setting and mirrored the other open dormitory housing units. The inmates were housed in either single or double bunks along the interior of the building with single bunks down the middle. The open-floor dormitory housing units featured up to eight industrial wall fans for temperature control and ventilation. An inspector also observed many inmates utilizing individual fans purchased from the commissary for additional temperature control. Additionally, the large bay windows were adjustable for added airflow inside the housing units. At the time of the inspection, the indoor temperature was appropriate for the season. The bathrooms were equipped with up to three showers, three toilets, two urinals, and five hand sinks with mirrors. At the time of the inspection, one shower in Housing Unit 2, Top-North and two showers in Housing Unit 3, South building were not functional. The remaining showers in these housing units were operational with consistent water pressure and appropriate temperature. Some lights in Housing Unit 1 were missing or non-functioning and one wall fan was inoperable at the time of the inspection.

Housing Units 2, Bottom and Housing Unit 4 featured individual cells. These rooms were split into either single, double, or four quadruple-style rooms. Like the open dormitory setting, these buildings were not equipped with HVAC units. Therefore, the housing units relied on mechanical ventilation for temperature control and airflow. Each cell had a window that could be

adjusted for additional airflow. The bathrooms in these two housing units included up to two showers, two urinals, two commodes, and four hand sinks with mirrors. No paper towels were present in the bathrooms in Housing Unit 2 which was brought to a staff member's attention and corrected on site. At the time of the inspection, many of the shower lights were not functioning and a work order was initiated. The showers in Housing Unit 2, bottom and Housing Unit 4 were operational with consistent water pressure and appropriate temperature.

Overall, Housing Units 1, 2, 3, and 4 appeared to need deep window cleaning and repair. Many windows appeared to be dirty and cracked or damaged. The Warden indicated that due to the age of the facility, it was very difficult to find replacement windowpanes. An inspector also noted many lights that were either burned out or dim. Inmates informed inspectors that they experienced extreme temperatures during summer months. One inmate also reported he liked the housing at this facility better than other larger facilities.

The RHU included its own property area, a medical area, and could hold up to 62 inmates. This unit featured its own outdoor recreational area, library, and commissary options for the inmates housed in this unit. Inmates placed in the RHU units had access to video and programming opportunities. Some of the inmates housed there were categorized as Alternative-General Population (Alt-GP) or Protective Custody (PC). This space also housed the infirmary ward and isolation cells. The outdoor recreation areas were observed to need deep cleaning along the fence line due to the accumulation of bird droppings.

Sanitation

Each housing unit had a designated inmate worker responsible for sweeping and mopping the area daily using detergent or a germicidal agent. All waste was properly contained and disposed of in a sanitary manner. Common area commodes and sinks were sanitized as needed by inmate workers. An inspector also observed dark colored mildew-like substances in the grout of the tile in some of the housing unit bathrooms. Additionally, dusty air vents were observed throughout the housing unit living areas and bathrooms.

The laundry building contained multiple commercial sized washing machines and dryers, two sewing areas, and extra clothing for inmates. On the date of inspection, one washing machine was out of service and two mouse traps were observed on the floor. Laundry services wash inmate clothing and bedding, as well as any institutional laundry, such as mop heads and cleaning towels for the kitchen. In the laundry area, an inspector noted two inmate restrooms and one staff restroom did not have warm or hot water.

Food Services/Commissary

The facility had two dining halls, one designated for inmates and the other for staff. Inmate meals were served in the inmate dining hall, which included seating with a maximum capacity of approximately 547 inmates, four wall mounted fans, and two wall mounted fly control devices.

Staff dining was provided in a separate dining hall adjacent to the inmate dining hall. Snack and drink machines were also available in the staff dining hall. The Food Service Director supervised approximately 80 inmate workers that prepared over 2,100 meals a day for inmates and staff.

To maintain food temperature during transportation to alternate housing locations (such as medical and RHU), the facility used insulated food carts. Weekly food menus were posted in the housing units. One inmate indicated he liked the food at this facility. Meals were served on compartmented trays with white plastic lids to cover the food, as needed. At the time of the inspection, the dining hall air vents had dust accumulation, some windows were observed to be damaged, and there were many four-foot light bulbs that were either out or dim. There were also multiple plastic covers missing from the lighting fixtures. Also observed were various kitchen pipes leaking or taped/wrapped up and paint peeling. An inspector observed and immediately reported to staff that a deep fryer electrical conduit had come loose, and the wires were exposed; staff entered a work order to have it repaired. The common fare area was large and contained various food items to include granola bars, textured vegetable protein, flour, canned goods, Jello, pasta, and quick oats.

Inspectors observed inmates working in the food service area during lunch preparation, all of whom, except one, were wearing appropriate food safety equipment including gloves, hair nets, and aprons. An inspector noted one inmate handling food without gloves. Lunch service was observed and consisted of a steak and cheese submarine with a roll, vegetable, and potatoes. The cooler and freezer serving the dining halls were clean, well-maintained, and operating at appropriate temperatures. During the inspection, inspectors observed multiple expired food items (bags of lemonade, lemons, and peppers from 2022 and 2023) located in an outdoor freezer and other food items in the kitchen that were expired. The Food Service Director was notified, and staff indicated this would be addressed. An inmate reported the kitchen area had rats and roaches; however, no signs of either were observed by the inspection team.

The Commissary area was spacious and included bottled soda, bags of snacks and packaged items, and an ice cream bin cooler. An inspector observed multiple dead ants inside the ice cream bin cooler which was brought to the attention of staff during the facility inspection debriefing.

Large Gymnasium/Recreation

The facility included a building that housed a large indoor gymnasium and weight room. The facility also provided a large outdoor field area for various recreational opportunities such as baseball, softball, and basketball. The gymnasium featured a standard-sized basketball court, several movable tables and chairs, and a pool table for recreational activities. The facility had a band program that was available for inmates. This building was not equipped with HVAC and utilized industrial fans to circulate air and regulate temperature. One inspector noted that one fan in the weight room was making excessive noise and needed repair. Staff was aware of the broken

fan and a work order had been submitted. Also observed was paint peeling from the walls of the gymnasium. Located in the outdoor recreational area were older weight sets which appeared rusted and in need of replacement.

Visitation Room and Intake Area

The visitation room was spacious and equipped with movable tables and plastic chairs. One wall featured a detailed underwater mural, adding a welcoming atmosphere to the space. The room was clean but had some non-functioning light bulbs and monitored by video cameras. Inmates in RHU have access to non-contact visitation.

The intake area provided a clean and semi-private space for receiving new inmates. Upon arrival, inmates are searched using three individual stalls. At that time, they are issued undergarments, uniform clothing, and hygiene products. Inmate property is mailed separately from the previous facility and typically arrives several days after the inmate's arrival. According to staff, inmates are present when incoming property is opened and inventoried. The uniform storage room was observed to be clean and well-organized.

Administration Buildings

The administrative building contained several departments including human resources, buildings & grounds, accounting, and the farm department. The law library included computers, typewriters, and a selection of legal resources. This space also included a staff break room with a vending machine, kitchenette, and a large conference room for meetings.

Programs/Mental Health Services Building

The programs and mental health services building included several classrooms, a cool down room, mental health classrooms, mental health clinician offices, and a chaplain's office. The cool down room is a designated therapeutic space designed to support individuals in managing heightened emotions or stress. Access to the room may be initiated either by the inmate themselves or through a staff referral. Once inside, inmates may remain in the space for up to four hours, during which they can engage in calming and therapeutic activities intended to promote emotional regulation. Staff members are present and available to provide support or conversation as needed. To maintain the therapeutic environment, commissary items are not permitted in the room. The facility offered Adult Basic Education – General Educational Development (GED), Introduction to Computers, and Computer Literacy instruction.

Eligible inmates are encouraged to participate in employment opportunities, rehabilitation, reintegration, and training programs. Available programs included: Anger Management, Co-Occurring Disorders, Distress Tolerance Skills Group, Grief and Loss Issues, Mindful Moments, Citizenship Journal, Intensive Re-entry Program, Saint Francis PUPS Program, S.A MAT Journal, S.A. 12 Step Program, Masonry Level I & II, Welding, Precision Measuring, Electrical Maintenance, Plumbing, Small Engine Repair, Waste Water Operator, Building Maintenance &

Repair, Hotel & Restaurant Cook, Farm Worker (Meat/Dairy), Custodial Technician, Pesticide Certificate, OHSA-10 Certificate and HVAC. On the day of the inspection, staff reported 87 inmates were out at work.

Medical Services

Bland Correctional Center offered routine and emergency medical services to all the inmates. These services included medical and nursing services, dental services, mental health services, and nutritional services. Nursing coverage is provided 24 hours a day. A nurse practitioner is on site every Tuesday and Wednesday, and a contract physician offers on-site services up to three times every two weeks and is available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A state dentist provided dental coverage one or two days per week, while a dental assistant and dental hygienist are assigned to the facility. A contract optometrist was also provided to meet the eye/vision needs of the population. On the day of the inspection, five inmates were observed in the waiting room for scheduled medical appointments.

Complaint, Grievance, and Administrative Forms

Written complaint forms, regular grievance forms, sick call forms, and emergency grievance forms were available and accessible to inmates within their assigned housing unit security booth. Inmates were instructed to inform the assigned security booth officer of their request, and the officer will provide the appropriate form. Completed forms were placed in the designated locked drop box located inside the dining hall. While emergency grievance forms must be delivered directly to a staff member. Staff reported most grievances in the past month were regarding dental services and all grievances have been resolved.

Additional available forms included: general inmate request, trust–savings withdrawal, trust–GTL withdrawal, withdrawal requests, law library requests, reasonable accommodation, personal property add/drop, property list, indigent services, job application, commissary menu, commissary special order, inmate evidence request, and witness request forms. The general inmate request form was used for inmates to request appointments, information, or other services. Since the creation of the OSIG Ombudsman Unit, nine complaints have been filed regarding this facility.

Additional Information

The facility provided initial statistical data which was then validated by the Department's Research Unit.

- **Staffing:** The facility employs 272 staff members with eight security and two non-security positions vacant. Over the past year, eight staff members received disciplinary action. The average tenure for correctional staff was seven years. *The Department provided the staff-to-inmate ratio at the facility; however, due to security concerns, this information will not be publicly reported.*

- **Lockdowns:** The facility has experienced 19 lockdowns over the past three years, including eight in the last year. The most recent scheduled lockdown occurred on June 1, 2025. The most recent unscheduled lockdown occurred March 7, 2025.
- **Physical/Sexual Assaults/Deaths:** The Department reported four inmate-on-inmate serious assaults, and zero sexual assaults withing the last three years. A serious assault includes an injury that requires urgent and immediate medical treatment and restricts the person’s usual activity. Two inmate deaths were reported in the last three years, both expiring at outside medical facilities. One death was due to a stroke and the other remains pending with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. The facility reported zero staff deaths in the last three years.
- **Visitations:** In the past year, the facility received a total of 1,690 requests for in-person visits, of which 12 were cancelled. During the same period, there were 6,089 requests for video visits, with 548 cancellations. Cancellations for both in-person and video visits occurred for a variety of reasons, including facility lockdowns, inmate refusals, or denials due to enhanced sanctions, policy violations, or procedural issues.

Recommendations

Based on the items observed during this inspection, OSIG recommends this facility:

- Ensure the required written preventive and corrective maintenance plan includes the regular inspection of showers for functionality and damage (i.e. broken tiles, peeling grout, busted or leaking pipes), the identification and replacement of non-working lights and hot water in all restrooms in accordance with American Correctional Association (ACA) institutional operations relevant to safety and emergency procedures (5-ACI-3B-08) and the Department’s Operating Procedure 301.3 to include submitting appropriate maintenance work orders when needed and maintenance goals completed within respective timeframe after creation.
- Ensure food rotation (first in—first out) and disposal is followed and routinely inspected in accordance with the Department’s Food Service Manual, Chapter 6, Sanitation and Safety.
- Schedule a maintenance procedure to ensure that all bars, locks, windows, doors, and other security devices, such as security cameras, are fully operational in accordance with the American Correctional Association’s (ACA) security and control performance standards (5-ACI-3A-12).

- Ensure the written housekeeping plan is effectively implemented throughout the institution and the cleaning activities are being supervised at all times to ensure that the work performed is proper and thorough in accordance with ACA's housekeeping and maintenance performance standard (5-ACI-5D-05).
- Conduct a feasibility study to introduce Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) or other heating/cooling mechanisms in the large housing units to optimize indoor temperature control and enhance overall comfort of inmates and staff in accordance with ACA's environmental conditions performance standard (5-ACI-2D-10).
- Verify compliance with applicable federal, state, and/or local fire safety codes within the housing units (i.e. if code requires fire alarms, sprinkler, emergency exits) in accordance with ACA's safety and emergency fire safety and fire codes standards (5-ACI-3B-01 and 5-ACI-2A-02) and in accordance with the Department's Fire Safety and Response Plans Directive 303.
- Consider conducting air quality testing (coal dust/asbestos) in housing units to ensure the health and well-being of inmates and staff.

Inspectors Comments

We would like to extend our appreciation to the leadership team and staff for their cooperation and support during this inspection. Our team was particularly impressed by the access to a multitude of vocational opportunities for inmates to ensure a successful transition back into the community.

Facility Classification

Tier II – This facility has substandard conditions of confinement as identified in the inspection report, which requires an inspection within 18-36 months.

Department of Corrections Response

The Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) appreciates the Office of the State Inspector General's (OSIG) comprehensive and constructive inspection of Bland Correctional Center. We are encouraged that the report reflects the facility's commitment to safety, security, and the provision of rehabilitative programming in a well-managed environment.

Several of the recommendations outlined in the report have already been addressed. Maintenance work orders have been submitted to repair non-functioning showers, restore hot water in designated restrooms, and replace missing or dim lighting throughout the housing units and common areas. The exposed electrical conduit in the kitchen has been secured, and repairs to leaking pipes and damaged fixtures are underway.

To improve sanitation and safety, the facility has enhanced its housekeeping protocols. Dust accumulation on vents and mildew-like substances in bathroom grout are being addressed through deep cleaning procedures. Commissary and food service areas have been inspected, and expired food items have been removed. Staff have reinforced food rotation practices in accordance with the Department's Food Service Manual.

In response to concerns regarding temperature control, Bland Correctional Center is one of seven facilities included in a \$76 million funding request for HVAC upgrades. In the interim, the facility continues to provide supplemental cooling measures, including industrial fans, ice coolers, and individual inmate fans.

The Department is reviewing fire safety compliance across all housing units, including the presence of alarms, sprinklers, and emergency exits. All housing units have been verified to meet applicable federal, state, and local fire safety codes in accordance with ACA Standards and Directive 303. A complete asbestos abatement was finalized in all housing units following a 1995 survey, and there is no current risk to staff or inmates. The coal boiler operations comply with the Federal Clean Air Act and Virginia regulations, with emission controls and annual inspections in place.

Security enhancements are ongoing, including the repair of non-functioning surveillance cameras and the inspection of locks, windows, and other security devices. Preventive maintenance plans are being updated to ensure timely inspections and repairs.

We are proud of the vocational and educational programming offered at Bland Correctional Center, including Masonry, Welding, HVAC, Small Engine Repair, and the Saint Francis PUPS Program. These programs support inmate rehabilitation and successful reentry into the community.

VADOC remains committed to continuous improvement and appreciates OSIG's recognition of the facility's professionalism and responsiveness. We will continue to implement enhancements where needed while upholding the standards reflected in OSIG's Tier II classification.

OSIG appreciates the assistance provided by the Department of Corrections during this inspection. Please contact me with any questions at 804-625-3255 or corrine.louden@osig.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Corrine A. Loudon
Chief Deputy Inspector General

cc: The Honorable John Littel, Chief of Staff to Governor Youngkin
Justin Vélez-Hagan, Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Youngkin
Kate Stockhausen, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff
Jason Miyares, Attorney General of Virginia
Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services
House Committee on Public Safety
Corrections Oversight Committee
Chadwick Dotson, Director, Virginia Department of Corrections
Dave Robinson, Chief of Corrections Operations, Virginia Department of Corrections
Holly Cline, Chief of Staff, Virginia Department of Corrections