



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the State Inspector General

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June 10, 2026

The Honorable Abigail Spanberger
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Spanberger,

The Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) conducted an unannounced inspection of Halifax Correctional Unit #23. 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 (VADOC) response to the inspection.

Inspection Report: Halifax Correctional Unit #23
March 4, 2026, at 9:45 a.m.

Background

Halifax Correctional Unit #23 is a Level I minimum-security facility located in South Boston, Virginia. Inmates at this facility are engaged in structured work assignments and other special programs. The facility consists of a main campus and an annex building; however, at the time of the inspection, the annex was closed for renovations. The facility has an operational capacity of 68 male inmates. At the time of inspection, 77 male inmates were housed at the facility. The facility currently does not have a Restorative Housing Unit.

Inspection Scope

The inspection was not intended to assess compliance with legislative or regulatory requirements, nor assess compliance with VADOC policies, though both were considered where relevant. The facility tour was completed with the Captain and Lieutenant. The inspection included a walkthrough of the facility, observation of operations, and discussions with facility

staff and inmates. The areas examined during this inspection included administration, basement area, commissary, recreation, laundry area, food services, medical unit, housing, educational and vocational programming, and visitation.

The inspection methodologies employed during the assessment were multifaceted and designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the facility's operations and environment. The inspection team used a variety of methods to gain an understanding of daily life and operations at the facility. These included inquiries and conversations with staff and inmates, as well as extensive on-site observations. Inspectors observed how staff and inmates interacted and paid attention to how procedures were followed throughout the facility.

To complement on-site observations, the inspectors reviewed a range of facility documents. These included a food establishment inspection report, records of completed and pending work orders, data on counselor and educational program enrollments and completions, and current recreation schedules. This documentation offered valuable context and deeper insight into the facility's operations and compliance practices.

Complaint, Grievance, and Administrative Remedies Procedures

Inmates have access to the facility's complaint, grievance, and administrative remedies process. Standardized forms for submitting complaints or grievances are available in the file cabinet outside of the housing unit. Completed grievance forms can be submitted via secure drop boxes, which are located outside of the housing pods. A memorandum containing instructions for accessing the inmate grievance hotline was posted above the grievance mailbox. Additionally, a bulletin board located between the two housing pods displayed general facility information and included a memorandum providing details about the grievance hotline, along with the regional ombudsman's name and physical address, all which were visible to inmates. Since the creation of the OSIG Ombudsman Unit, two complaints have been filed with OSIG, and they have since been closed.

Educational and Rehabilitative Programming

The facility offers a range of educational and rehabilitative programs designed to support skill development and successful reentry. Academic services include GED preparation for inmates working toward high school equivalency. Vocational opportunities include a Flagger Training Program, ServSafe certification, and vocational technology courses such as building and maintenance, held twice per week. Counseling and cognitive-behavioral programs available to inmates include Inside Out Dads, Decision Points, Reentry Money Smart, and Thinking for a Change, all of which focus on improving decision-making, financial literacy, and pro-social thinking skills. Some additional specialized programs available at the facility include Veterans Support groups, Resources for Successful Living, and the Road to Success program.

Work Programs

All eligible inmates are required to work or participate in an approved educational or vocational training program. The facility offers a variety of work assignments including positions in housekeeping, Virginia Department of Transportation Road crews, farm or yard crews, building and grounds maintenance, food service, recreation, and other special assignments such as barbers, librarians, and teacher's aides.

Food Services

The facility has two cafeterias, one designated for staff and one for inmates. During the lunch period, inspectors observed the meal service process. Meals were served on divided compartment trays that appeared to be in satisfactory condition. The lunch meal on the day of inspection consisted of peanut butter and jelly, lunch meat, bread, mustard, and carrots. Cold meals for inmates assigned to outside work details are transported in coolers. Inmates working in the kitchen were observed wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves and hair nets.

Outside the kitchen, there were three storage freezers used for additional cold storage. During the inspection, inspectors observed that one freezer had ice buildup on the ceiling and noted that freezing condensation was creating heavy frost, which can restrict airflow and force the unit to work harder, potentially leading to cooling issues or food spoilage. Inspectors also noted the draw-through fan in the downstairs kitchen area was not operational. Facility staff were notified of the issue and stated that the freezer was a relatively new appliance and that they would investigate the matter further.

Basement/Recreation

The facility maintains a multi-purpose area located in the basement. This space is utilized for a variety of functions, including religious services and general dayroom activities. The area is equipped with telephones, tables, and a video kiosk. In addition, the basement level includes restrooms, personal laundry, and shower facilities.

During the inspection, water was observed accumulating on the floor outside the basement shower. The accumulation of water may be attributable, in part, to a leak from the nearby spigot. It was also noted that one of the sinks in the same area was not operational.

Housing

The facility consists of a single housing unit divided into two pods, A Side and B Side. The dormitory-style housing is equipped with ceiling fans; however, the facility does not currently have air conditioning. Each housing pod is furnished with televisions, telephones, JPay stations, video kiosks, and bulletin boards. The facility does not have a dedicated Restrictive Housing

Unit; however, holding cells and cool-down rooms are located on both sides of the front entrance to the dining hall. The Annex building is currently closed for renovations.

Medical

The facility provides basic on-site medical services, including nurse and physician sick call evaluations. The medical unit conducts daily sick-call assessments, administers medications, monitors individuals with chronic health conditions, and coordinates off-site specialty or emergency medical services when clinically necessary. Pill calls are conducted each morning and afternoon. Any inmate who has a medical concern must complete an Inmate Request Form and place it in the designated medical box located in the housing unit. A doctor visits the facility every other week, and inmates who wish to be seen must first be evaluated by a nurse. The nurse will determine whether a doctor's appointment is necessary and schedule it if appropriate.

Safety and Security

The facility uses standard safety and security measures, including perimeter controls, restricted access, and internal monitoring. All visitors are required to sign the logbook, pass through a metal detector, and undergo a pat-down search. These procedures apply to everyone entering the facility.

Visitation

The visitation area is a large multi-purpose room that is also used periodically for programming. The room contains six seating areas equipped with tables and chairs. Visitors enter a separate entrance and pass through metal and cellphone detection equipment. The facility maintains strict security procedures throughout the visitation process. Video visitation stations are located within the housing units.

Additional Information

As validated by the Department's Research Unit on March 25, 2026:

- **Staffing:** The facility employs a total of 90 staff, with 19 vacancies. At the time of the inspection 20 security staff and six non-security personnel were present. Five staff members received disciplinary action within the past year. The average tenure of correctional staff was 7.5 years. *VADOC provided the staff-to-inmate ratio at the facility; however, due to security concerns, this information will not be publicly reported.*
- **Lockdowns:** Over the past three years, the facility underwent 13 lockdowns, with the most recent scheduled full lockdown occurring on September 4, 2025.

- **Physical/Sexual Assaults/Deaths:** Between March 5, 2025, and March 4, 2026, the facility reported no serious physical assaults and no incidents involving a sexual component among staff or inmates. A review of the three-year period from March 5, 2023, through March 4, 2026, also showed no serious physical or sexual assaults. The facility recorded zero inmate deaths and zero staff deaths during both the most recent one-year review period and the corresponding three-year period.
- **Visitations:** Between March 5, 2025, and March 4, 2026, the facility scheduled 372 in-person visitations, with 72 cancellations during that period (includes visitations cancelled prior to the visitor showing up at the facility). In-person visitations were reported as denied for several reasons, including lack of photo identification, invalid identification, improper attire, a K-9 alert, or an adult visitor accompanying a minor without a notarized permission form. Visitors were also denied in-person visitation based on the outcome of their online application submitted to the Central Visitation Unit at DOC Headquarters.

The facility also scheduled 1,998 video visitations and recorded 96 video visitation cancellations. Video visits may be cancelled under certain circumstances, including a visitor electing to cancel the session (with or without rescheduling); visitors being improperly attired or removing clothing during the visit; the use of profanity, loud, or hostile communication; any use or display of drugs, alcohol, related paraphernalia, or signs of intoxication; any use or display of weapons or involvement in unlawful or criminal activity; and any recording or filming of the visit by the visitor or any third party.

Recommendations

Based on observations made during the inspection, OSIG recommends the following:

- Implement and enforce policies that maintain facility populations at or below operational capacity to improve overall security for both staff and inmates, enhance safety and wellbeing, and improve rehabilitative efforts and program effectiveness.
- Remove the accumulated ice buildup on the freezer ceiling and investigate the underlying cause, such as potential airflow issues, inadequate defrost cycles, or compromised door seals. Implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence and ensure proper freezer performance and food safety.
- Address and correct the water accumulation on the floor outside the shower in the basement to prevent slip hazards and potential water damage.
- Repair the non-functioning basement sink to restore proper operation.
- Repair or replace the non-functioning draw-through fan in the downstairs kitchen area to ensure proper ventilation and system performance.

Inspectors Comments

We extend our sincere appreciation to the leadership team and staff for their cooperation and support throughout the duration of this inspection. The inspection team was particularly impressed by the positive rapport demonstrated between staff and inmates. It is evident that the facility fosters a constructive, respectful, and well-maintained environment.

Facility Classification

Tier III – The facility has adequate conditions of confinement and programming options requiring a subsequent inspection within 36 months.

Virginia Department of Corrections Response

The VADOC appreciates the thorough inspection of Halifax Correctional Unit and welcomes the opportunity to work with OSIG to identify areas of improvement. All recommendations have been addressed as set forth below:

A population management plan has been implemented and enforced to maintain facility populations at or below operational capacity. This initiative is intended to enhance overall security for both staff and inmate population, improve safety and well-being, and increase the effectiveness of rehabilitative programs and services. To support these objectives and maintain an appropriate population balance, the facility will request the assignment of additional Level 1 inmates from Central Classification Services (CCS).

Accumulated ice was removed from the freezer ceiling to restore proper operating conditions. An investigation was conducted to determine the root cause of the ice buildup, and it was determined that the door seals were worn and required replacement. Arrangements were made to replace the defective seals to prevent future occurrences. Additionally, staff were educated on proper freezer door operation and the importance of ensuring doors are fully closed after use to minimize moisture intrusion and prevent ice accumulation on the freezer ceiling.

The issue of water accumulation on the floor outside the basement shower was addressed and corrected to reduce the risk of slip-and-fall incidents and prevent future water damage. A waterproof floor mat was purchased and installed in the affected area to improve traction and contain excess moisture. Additionally, staff were educated on the hazards associated with wet floors and reminded of the importance of promptly identifying and addressing slip hazards to maintain a safe environment for staff and inmate population.

The non-functioning basement sink was evaluated in an effort to restore proper operation. Following an assessment of the plumbing system, it was determined that an underground pipe serving the sink is broken. Repair of the issue will require excavation and replacement of the damaged pipe. The broken pipe issue has been referred to the Capital

Construction Unit (CCU) for repair. At this time, CCU has not provided a projected date for the excavation and repair work. Facility staff will continue to monitor the situation and coordinate with CCU to ensure the necessary repairs are completed as soon as possible.

The non-functioning draw-through fan in the downstairs kitchen area was evaluated to assess its operational status and ensure proper ventilation and system performance. Following the evaluation, it was determined that the fan and/or motor has failed and requires replacement. Arrangements have been made to replace the defective fan and/or motor to restore adequate ventilation, maintain proper air circulation, and support a safe and functional kitchen environment

The VADOC appreciates OSIG's recognition of the cooperation and support demonstrated by the leadership team and staff during the inspection. VADOC remains committed to continuous improvement and will continue implementing enhancements to uphold the standards reflected in OSIG's Tier III classification.

OSIG's appreciates the assistance provided by the Virginia 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 Bonnie Krenz-Schnurman, Chief of Staff to Governor Spanberger
Jay Jones, Attorney General of Virginia (via Chief of Staff Nicky Zamostny)
Travis Hill, Chief Deputy Attorney General of Virginia
Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services
House Committee on Public Safety
Corrections Oversight Committee
Joseph Walters, Director, Virginia Department of Corrections
Jermiah Fitz, Chief Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Corrections