



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the State Inspector General

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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 Keen Mountain 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) response to the inspection.

Inspection Report: Keen Mountain Correctional Center
May 13, 2025, at 10:20 a.m.

Background

Keen Mountain Correctional Center is a Level IV maximum-security facility located in Oakwood, Virginia. The facility also includes a 200 bed Level II minimum-security open dormitory. The facility has an operational capacity of 1,151 male inmates. At the time of inspection, the facility housed 1,099 male inmates. Staff are authorized to carry non-lethal weapons within the security perimeter, and the housing unit control rooms were equipped with built-in gun ports. The facility maintains a K-9 program composed of 10 correctional officers and one sergeant. According to staff, the K-9 program serves as a vital deterrent to assaultive behavior. Over the past four years, the K-9s have bitten three inmates.

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 Warden, Assistant Warden, Major, and Housing Unit managers.

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.

The inspection encompassed nearly all major operational areas within the correctional center. Areas assessed included three housing buildings, one open dormitory, inmate dining halls, staff dining hall, kitchen, recreation areas, gymnasium, intake area, visitation area, laundry facility, vocational and educational classrooms, administrative offices, medical and dental section. The outer perimeter was also reviewed.

To supplement on-site observations, the inspection team reviewed various facility documents. These included a food establishment inspection report, program schedules/waitlist, program completion and removal records, implementation memorandums, the facility's Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) response plan, visitor logs, and surveillance system inventories. This documentation provided additional context and insight into facility operations and compliance practices.

Safety/Security

The facility had several security measures in place to ensure the safety of staff, inmates, and visitors. Screening procedures included the use of a visitor log, walk-through magnetometer, body scanner, x-ray machine, phone detection unit, and pat-down/frisk search. Security was further reinforced by 319 surveillance cameras, which consisted of 273 fixed-position cameras and 46 pan-tilt-zoom cameras providing extensive visual coverage throughout the facility. The perimeter was secured with double fencing topped with razor wire and supplemented with a motion detection system and surveillance cameras to monitor external movement. A roving patrol monitors the facility's exterior, and security was further supported by four observation towers. The facility had two access points: a main entrance and a secure sallyport. Fire extinguishers were readily accessible to staff throughout the facility. All extinguishers observed during the inspection were current and had documented monthly inspections.

Housing

The facility consisted of three cell-type housing units (A, B, and C) and one open dormitory (D). The facility operated a Restorative Housing Unit (RHU) within Housing Unit C. Housing Units A, B, and C were each four stories tall and shared an identical design and floor plan. Each unit contained four separate housing pods—two on each floor—and included an elevator and basement. The units were observed to be generally clean and well-organized. PREA hotline information was posted in both English and Spanish throughout the housing units.

Housing Units A and B housed general population inmates in all pods. Housing Unit C included two pods for general population, one pod for protective custody inmates, and one pod designated as RHU. Each housing unit contained a foyer area with a walk-through metal detector, ice machine, sick call drop box, staff restrooms, access-controlled stairwells, offices, and storage areas. Prior to entering each pod, the assigned correctional officer announced the presence of female staff and documented the inspection team's presence in the housing unit logbook.

Each pod was two stories tall with a central dayroom flanked by two tiers of cells along the outer walls. The pods—excluding RHU—were furnished with six to eight stationary tables with four seats each, two long benches, eight telephones, one JPay kiosk, one video visitation kiosk, two televisions, a microwave, a water fountain, a garbage can, a wall-mounted clock, locked bulletin boards, wall-mounted ironing boards, ceiling-mounted cameras, and a temperature gauge.

RHU contained 18 individual security tables with seats and two stationary tables with four seats each. Additional RHU amenities included two mobile phones, one visitation kiosk, a wall clock, two large floor fans, one wall fan, an x-ray machine, a desk, shelving stocked with extra inmate clothing, and 44 lockers used to secure inmate-restricted property.

Each cell throughout the facility was equipped with double bunks, mattress pads, pillows, linens, electrical outlets, lighting, a combination sink/toilet, a mirror, and an emergency call button. RHU cells were equipped similarly but designated for single occupancy.

At the time of the inspection, the elevator in Housing Unit C was non-functional and awaiting repair parts. However, there was no signage indicating the elevator was out of service. Additionally, two control booth windows were observed to be shattered but remained intact.

Inspectors noted multiple non-functioning showers across Housing Units A, B, and C. Two were actively undergoing repair. A few showers had black mildew-like substances in the grout, and two showed evidence of broken or missing tiles. Operational showers maintained adequate water pressure and temperature. All observed sinks, toilets, and water fountains were functional and leak-free. Pod temperatures were appropriate for the season. Except for one telephone in Housing Unit A-2, all other telephones and kiosks in Housing Units A, B, and C were fully

operational at the time of inspection. Staff reported a work order had been submitted the week before for the telephone in Housing Unit A-2.

Each pod contained a secured closet for cleaning supplies and equipment, which was effectively shadow boarded for inventory control. Inspectors also observed standing water in the basements of all three housing units.

Housing Unit D was a two-story tall, open dormitory-style living area located within the main facility building. The dormitory was a self-contained unit with a maximum capacity of 200 Level II inmates. It included dedicated spaces such as a counselor's office, indoor recreation area, barber shop area, library, law library, classrooms, three pull-up bars, and three washers and dryers.

Living areas within the dormitory were equipped with bunk beds furnished with mattress pads and covers, pillows, linens, electrical outlets, wall lockers, foot lockers, garbage cans, and drinking fountains. All meals were transported from the dining hall to the dormitory in heated hotbox carts. Inmates housed in the dormitory had access to outdoor recreation; however, they are not commingled with inmates from higher security levels.

Common-use amenities included 12 telephones, two video visitation kiosks, two JPay kiosks, three televisions, two ice coolers, four microwaves, and locked bulletin boards. During the inspection, one inmate reported that a telephone intermittently malfunctioned due to loose wiring in the receiver. Facility staff promptly submitted a work order for repair. All other telephones, kiosks, and video visitation units within Housing Unit D were fully operational.

The sanitation and plumbing infrastructure consisted of 13 showers, six toilets, four urinals, and eight sinks. All showers exhibited a buildup of white soap residue. One shower was out of service pending repair. Four sinks had either the hot or cold-water button inoperable. Operational showers and sinks provided consistent water pressure and appropriate temperature. All toilets, water fountains, and functional sinks observed during the inspection were free of leaks.

Inmate commissary orders were delivered to the facility prepackaged. Deliveries were sorted by housing unit, with one of the four housing units receiving their commissary each day from Monday through Thursday. Additional deliveries were made on Fridays as needed. Inspectors did observe a commissary drop box that was not labeled.

Sanitation

The facility was observed to be generally clean and free of clutter throughout all inspected areas. Housing units and the open dormitory appeared properly sanitized. Each housing unit and dormitory had designated inmate workers responsible for daily cleaning tasks, including cleaning showers, sweeping, mopping, using detergent or a germicidal agent. Additionally, each housing

unit employed inmate workers certified as lift cleaners, who utilized a mechanical lift twice per month to clean high or otherwise inaccessible areas. All waste was properly contained and disposed of in a sanitary manner. No signs of pests or rodents were observed during the inspection. Common area toilets and sinks were sanitized as needed by inmate workers. Cleaning chemicals and equipment were available throughout the facility. Each pod and the dormitory had an assigned “closet man,” an inmate tasked with maintaining, issuing, and collecting cleaning supplies and equipment.

The facility was equipped with four commercial washers and dryers. At the time of the inspection, one of the commercial washers was out of service pending the arrival and installation of a back-ordered replacement part. Laundry operations were staffed by seven Level IV inmates. Additionally, four Level II inmates were assigned to transport laundry to and from the dormitory; however, inmates from different security levels did not comingle in the laundry area.

The laundry area was equipped with an x-ray machine used to scan all bags of laundry upon arrival and before departure. Extra inmate clothing items – including shirts, undershirts, boxers and shoes were stored in the laundry area. A large wall-mounted rack was used for drying mop heads. The laundry room also contained two sewing machine stations, which were used to repair torn mattress pads from this facility and Red Onion State Prison. Despite the presence of several large fans, the inspection team noted the temperature in the laundry area was 91°F, when the outside temperature was 71°F.

Food Services

The facility had two dining halls designated for inmate use and one dining hall designated for staff. Inmate meals were served in the inmate dining halls, except for Level II, RHU, and protective custody inmates, who received their meals in their respective housing units. Weekly menus were posted in the housing units. The facility utilized insulated, heated food carts to maintain food temperature during delivery.

A sanitation checklist was posted in the kitchen area, along with a documented daily and weekly cleaning schedule. Each inmate dining hall contained 30 stationary tables, seating four individuals per table. Both inmate dining halls and the kitchen were observed to be generally well-organized. However, floor drains in both the inmate dining halls and kitchen area appeared to contain accumulations of food debris and dirt. Gnats were observed around one drain in the preparation area. Additionally, one window in the inmate dining hall was cracked and held together with clear tape. Several lightbulbs in both inmate dining halls were non-functioning. The kitchen floor was observed to be wet, and a request was made to place a wet floor sign to prevent slipping.

During the inspection, inmates were observed working in the kitchen during lunch preparation. All food service workers were wearing appropriate food safety equipment, including gloves, hair nets, and aprons. Meals were served on compartmented trays with white lids, as needed. The observed lunch service included tacos, rice, macaroni and cheese, and a cookie. The cooler and freezer units serving the kitchen were clean, well-maintained, and operating within appropriate temperature ranges. Staff meals were served in the staff dining hall, which along with the food service areas, was observed to be clean and orderly.

Medical Services

The facility's medical unit consisted of a triage area, examination room, observation unit, pharmacy, staff lounge, dental area, office, and storage space. The observation unit consisted of four beds and two isolation cells. Staff reported that inmates submitting sick call requests were seen within 24 hours. Nurses are assigned to each of the housing units and conduct sick call Monday through Friday in the units. Blood sugar testing, diabetic medications, and other regularly prescribed medications are also administered in the housing units. A nurse practitioner is available Monday through Thursday, and telemedicine appointments are conducted up to three times per week. An optometrist visits the facility once per month. Dental services are supported by a regional dentist who is on site twice a week. A dental hygienist is present daily.

Gymnasium/Recreation

The gymnasium featured a standard-sized basketball court with movable metal bleachers. On the side of the gymnasium was a large secure cage containing mops, mop buckets, brooms, and trash cans. On the day of the inspection, the gymnasium had been temporarily converted into a mass dental clinic operated by Jet Dental.

The facility maintained five separate outdoor recreational areas to support physical activity while ensuring the appropriate separation between inmate populations. A detailed recreational schedule was posted, which included designated times for the Level II inmates to access outdoor recreation without being comingled with the Level IV inmates. At the time of the inspection, one of the outdoor recreational areas was unavailable due to the fence being repaired. The available outdoor facilities included two weightlifting areas, a baseball field, two standard-sized basketball courts, a volleyball court, and a soccer field.

The recreation storage room contained a wide variety of sports equipment, including softball bats, team jerseys, umpire shirts, scoreboards, whisk brooms, ball/strike counters, footballs, softballs, soccer balls, basketball, volleyballs, heavy/slam balls, cones, frisbees, and cornhole bags.

Visitation Room and Intake Area

The visitation area consisted of an open visitation room, a contactless visitation room, a video visitation room and a changing room. The area was clean, well lit, and monitored by a correctional officer. The open visitation room contained multiple tables and chairs, along with a water fountain. One wall featured a detailed outdoor scenic mural, contributing to a more welcoming atmosphere.

The intake area, where inmates are processed after entering the facility was clean and had semi-private space for receiving incoming inmates. During intake, inmates underwent an initial screening process; were searched; and issued undergarments, standard uniform clothing, and hygiene products. Inmate property was mailed separately from the previous facility and typically arrived several days after the inmate's admission. Staff indicated that using a commercial shipping vendor to send inmate property rather than transporting it with the inmate during transfer has led to an increase in inmate complaints about delays in receiving their property.

Programs/Services Area

This facility offered a variety of vocational and educational programming to support inmate rehabilitation and skill development. The program and services area contained several well-equipped classrooms and skill-based workshops which supported both vocational and educational opportunities.

Vocational opportunities included Masonry Level I and II, Electricity, and Custodial Maintenance/Sanitation training. These training programs have demonstrated measurable success since January 1, 2024, with the following completion figures:

- Masonry Level I: 30 graduates.
- Masonry Level II: 11 graduates.
- Custodial Maintenance/Sanitation: 32 graduates.

As of the inspection date, program enrollment and waitlist figures were as follows:

- Masonry Level I: 8 enrolled; 76 on waitlist.
- Masonry Level II: 12 enrolled; 0 on waitlist.
- Electricity: 14 enrolled; 68 on waitlist.
- Custodial Maintenance/Sanitation: 19 enrolled; 32 on waitlist.

In addition to vocational programming, the facility offered Adult Basic Education and General Educational Development (GED) instruction. At the time of the inspection, 177 students were actively enrolled in GED classes, with 81 inmates on the waitlist. Additional rehabilitative

programming included substance abuse classes, Ready to Work, and Thinking for a Change. All of which support inmate personal development and reentry readiness.

Complaint, Grievance, and Administrative Forms

Written complaint forms, regular grievance forms, and emergency grievance forms were available and accessible to inmates within their assigned housing units. Emergency grievance forms were maintained in each housing unit control room and had to be requested directly from staff. Once completed, the emergency grievance form was required to be submitted to a staff member for immediate processing. The facility utilized a housing unit representative system, whereby a designated inmate was responsible for requesting forms (excluding the emergency grievance form) on behalf of the housing unit. Inmates could then obtain these forms from the unit representative and submit the completed forms for processing. Staff reported that the most common complaints and grievances were related to food portions, medical services, and dental services.

In all housing units except Housing Unit D, completed written complaint and regular grievance forms were deposited in a designated locked drop box located outside the inmate dining halls. Housing Unit D maintained a drop box within the dormitory that was used for general mail, written complaints, and regular grievances. Each housing unit also had a separate drop box designated for sick call requests. Additional administrative forms were available to inmates and 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 commonly used for inmates to request appointments, information, or other services.

Additional Information

As validated by the Department's Research Unit:

- **Staffing:** The facility employed 242 security staff and 92 non-security staff at the time of inspection, with 25 security and five non-security positions vacant. Over the past year, eight staff members received disciplinary action. The average tenure for correctional staff was 11 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 11 fully submitted lockdowns over the past three years, including four in the last year. The most recent scheduled lockdown occurred April 3 – 10, 2025. The most recent unscheduled lockdown occurred June 28 – July 6, 2024.

- **Physical/Sexual Assaults/Deaths:** The Department reported 16 physical assaults on inmates in the past three years, including six in the last year. Two sexual assaults were reported in the past three years, with zero in the last year. Three inmate deaths were reported in the past three years, including one within the past year. Two occurred at the local hospital, with causes determined to be cardiovascular disease and drug overdose. The third occurred at the facility and was attributed to cancer. No staff deaths have occurred over the past three years.
- **Visitations:** In the past year, the facility received a total of 2,128 requests for in-person visits, of which 649 were cancelled. During the same period, there were 24,495 requests for video visits, with 2,716 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 that the facility:

- Replace the broken windows in the inmate dining hall and the housing unit control booths to enhance the safety and security of both inmates and staff.
- Ensure that “Out-of-Service” signage is clearly posted whenever an elevator is down for repair or maintenance, to ensure staff and inmate safety.
- Replace missing and broken shower tiles and develop a reoccurring inspection plan to ensure timely identification and repair of damage. Maintain a reserve supply of shower tiles and grout for prompt repair.
- Establish a routine schedule for inspecting and cleaning all showers to prevent the buildup of soap residue and mildew within the grout.
- Develop a systematic plan to identify and replace non-functioning lights in the dining halls.
- Implement a regular inspection and cleaning schedule for floor drains in the kitchen, food service, and dining hall areas.
- Develop and implement strategies to lower ambient temperatures in the laundry area, such as installing roof insulation and reflective roofing, adding awnings or sunshades to sun-exposed windows and openings, and incorporating indoor plants or vertical green walls where feasible to enhance natural cooling.
- Identify the source of standing water in the housing unit basements and implement a mitigation plan to prevent recurrence.

Inspectors Comments

We would like to express our appreciation to the facility’s leadership and staff for their cooperation and support during the inspection. Our team was particularly impressed by the

responsiveness of the staff, who initiated corrective actions on certain issues while the inspection was still underway. This level of engagement reflects a commendable commitment to facility operations and a strong sense of professionalism and pride in maintaining a safe and well-managed environment.

Facility Classification

Tier III – This facility had adequate conditions of confinement and programming options requiring an inspection within the next 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 Keen Mountain 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. The cracked window in the inmate dining hall and the damaged control booth windows have been scheduled for replacement. Additionally, signage protocols have been updated to ensure that "Out-of-Service" notices are clearly posted on non-functional equipment, including elevators.

To improve sanitation and maintenance, a recurring inspection schedule has been implemented for all showers, and a reserve supply of tiles and grout has been secured to expedite repairs. Floor drains in the kitchen and dining areas are now subject to routine cleaning, and pest control measures have been enhanced to address the presence of gnats.

In response to concerns about lighting, non-functioning bulbs in the dining halls have been replaced, and a monthly inspection schedule has been established. The source of standing water in the housing unit basements is under investigation, and mitigation efforts will follow based on the findings.

VADOC is also evaluating strategies to reduce ambient temperatures in the laundry area, including improved ventilation and insulation options. Meanwhile, the facility continues to maintain high standards of cleanliness and operational efficiency across all areas.

We are proud of the vocational and educational programming offered at Keen Mountain Correctional Center, including Masonry, Electricity, and Custodial Maintenance training. These programs have demonstrated measurable success and continue to support inmate rehabilitation and reentry readiness.

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 III classification.

OSIG 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 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 Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Corrections
Holly Cline, Chief of Staff, Virginia Department of Corrections