



# INTERNAL MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

**Applicability:**  Adult Operation Only  JUVENILE Operations Only  DEPARTMENT-WIDE

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**PROGRAM AND SERVICES:** Offender Companion Program

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## POLICY

The Offender Companion Program provides guidelines for offenders who have specialized training in monitoring for potential suicidal behavior in individuals they are observing who have been placed on crisis level status. The Offender Companion Program does not displace the clinic officer from conducting rounds at least once every 15 minutes of individuals who are on suicide watch.

## DEFINITIONS

Offender Companions: Offenders who have specialized training to perform suicide observation of other offenders.

Offender Companion Program Committee (OCPC): Committee responsible for implementation, management, and oversight of a facility's Offender Companion Program. The committee consists of the Deputy Warden of Programs, facility Classification Administrator, Chief of Security, and the facility's Behavioral Health Coordinator/Clinical Director.

## PROCEDURES

### I. Program Operation

- A. This program operates under the direction of the facility's Offender Companion Program Committee (OCPC) and is chaired by the facility's Deputy Warden of Programs. The OCPC has the responsibility of implementing the policies and procedures outlined in subsequent paragraphs.

### II. Selection Criteria for Offender Companions

- A. A sufficient number of Offender Companions are trained and maintained at each facility to provide for observation of individuals which are placed on crisis level status at any given time. The optimum number is determined by multiplying the number of crisis level beds that exist at a facility by the number of Offender Companion shifts in one (1) 24-hour period.
- B. Potential Offender Companions are nominated by local unit team staff members and those nominated are then sent to be screened for appropriateness by the facility's Behavioral Health Coordinator/Clinical Director or designee. Individuals approved by the Behavioral Health Coordinator/Clinical Director or designee are reviewed for approval by the OCPC and then sent to the Warden for final approval.
- C. Each Offender Companion applicant must meet as a minimum the following criteria:
  1. No R1 or R2 disciplinary offense convictions in the last six (6) months.
  2. No suicide attempts or serious self-injurious behaviors in the last five (5) years.

3. No medical or behavioral health restrictions which preclude the performance of duties. Examples of these restrictions include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Any behavioral health treatment classification of four (4) or higher
    - b. Any medical restriction regarding vision or hearing difficulty or prolonged sitting.
    - c. Final approval and/or exceptions to these criteria may occur as deemed appropriate by medical or behavioral health staff.
  4. No facility violence in the last two (2) years.
  5. No confirmed drug use in the last 12 months.
  6. No substantiated PREA incident involvement as a perpetrator in the last 10 years.
  7. No history of sexual battery while incarcerated.
  8. No sexual misconduct history in the last five (5) years.
  9. No validated security threat group members.
  10. Able to read and write clearly, and to understand instructions (as determined by behavioral health staff with educational staff consultation as needed).
- D. The Deputy Warden of Programs is to maintain a roster of all approved Offender Companions as well as a resource file on each companion.
1. The file is to contain all signed agreements, pertinent training documents, received applications, time sheets, and any applicable removal documentation.
  2. The lists of individuals available to serve as companions are available to the shift supervisor and the on-call Behavioral Health staff person.
- E. Individuals are allowed to maintain other types of employment while serving as an Offender Companion. Offender Companion Duties may take precedent over other employment held by an offender as determined by the shift supervisor with consultation by the OCPC.

### **III. Training for Offender Companions**

- A. All Offender Companions are to receive up to eight (8) hours of initial training, including
1. Four (4) hours of general behavioral health training provided by facility Behavioral Health staff (to include the requirements for HIPAA and PHI confidentiality standards),
  2. Two (2) hours of Behavioral Health suicide prevention training provided by facility Behavioral Health staff, and
  3. Up to two (2) hours of procedural training provided by facility security personnel.
- B. Core concepts of these trainings include, but are not limited to:
1. Understanding the importance of suicide prevention.
  2. Understanding the research pertaining to suicide in prisons.
  3. Recognizing possible risk and protective factors of individual suicide.
  4. Understanding how and with whom to communicate to prevent individual suicides.

5. Learning how to respond to potentially suicidal individuals.
  6. Understanding the emergency response to a suicide attempt.
  7. The importance and requirements of confidentiality.
  8. The importance and requirements of appropriate documentation and communication of observations while on duty.
- C. All Offender Companion candidates must pass a written exam (achieve a score of 80% or better) at the completion of initial training to demonstrate appropriate incorporation of training information.
- D. Offender Companions also receive up to two (2) hours of refresher training quarterly to review procedures/policies, discuss clinical issues, and supplement training. Quarterly refresher training is to be provided by the facility's Behavioral Health (BH) Coordinator/Clinical Director, or designee. At least once annually, security staff is to be included in the quarterly training to provide updates/refresher training on security related procedures.

#### **IV. Duties of the Offender Companion**

- A. The use of Offender Companions is supplemental to the supervision supplied by KDOC security staff and are implemented as approved by the OCPC. Offender Companions are never utilized for observation of individuals on crisis level three (3) status, therapeutic restraints, or forced psychotropic medication incidents.
- B. Offender Companions are not expected to perform any duties not related to their duties while on watch. They must not function as porters, clinic aides, etc.
- C. Once an individual has been placed on crisis level monitoring, the shift commander consults with the BH Coordinator/Clinical Director, or designee (to include the "on-call" behavioral health staff when the BH Coordinator/Clinical Director or designee are off-grounds or unavailable), to determine if an Offender Companion is warranted and necessary. If one is determined to be necessary, an Offender Companion is identified and notified via the shift office to take his/her position at the cell front. The cell front position consists of a window-height chair and a small table being placed directly in front of the cell so the individual on crisis level status is in full view of the Offender Companion.
1. The psychiatric provider responsible for a crisis level order may determine that an Offender Companion is contraindicated and, therefore, may not be utilized for crisis level observation services specific to their order.
    - a. If the psychiatric provider determines an Offender Companion is not to be used, the provider must explicitly include this limitation as part of the crisis level order.
    - b. The order restricting the Offender Companion from being used, must be included with each subsequent renewal for the crisis level placement
  2. An individual's MDT may make a general recommendation that an Offender Companion is not recommended when that person is placed on a crisis level due to the nature and/or symptoms of the individual's psychiatric disorder. The MDT is then to ensure that an alert is placed in that offender's medical record indicating the restriction. The OCPC is also to maintain a master list of all such individuals with this alert.
- D. Offender Companions maintain constant observation of the individual they are assigned to observe, and complete documentation of their observations at a minimum of every 10 minutes via the Offender Companion Crisis Level Watch Sheet (Attachment A). Completed forms are stored in the docuware file of the individual being observed due to crisis level status. Entries are to be limited to simple behavioral observations such as:
1. Crying, laughing, smiling, frowning, etc.

2. Individual stated . . . (and then quote the offender).
3. Individual sitting on bed.
4. Individual laying down with visible respirations.
5. Individual is talking (about . . .).
6. Individual is yelling/pacing/standing/etc. and is/isn't engaging in acts to harm him/herself.

#### **V. Supervision of Offender Companions While on Duty**

- A. Offender Companions require in-person supervision by security staff trained in crisis response procedures.
- B. Supervision is provided by the Officer in Charge (OIC) assigned to the area in which the crisis level watch is being provided.
  1. The officer responsible for the individual(s) on crisis level status must remain in the same area as that in which the Offender Companion is stationed and must remain within hearing distance with no locked doors between the staff member and the Offender Companion.
  2. The supervising officer conducts in-person checks of the Offender Companion at intervals no greater than 15 minutes. The supervising officer initials the Offender Companion's observation report (Attachment A) upon completion of each of their checks, and document distinct observations on the Offender Companion's observation report as appropriate.
  3. In all cases, when an Offender Companion alerts staff to an emergency situation, staff must immediately respond to the crisis level watch area and take necessary action to prevent the individual on crisis level status from incurring injury or death.
    - a. Each facility must identify, as part of the training and ongoing post-orders, how trained Offender Companions contact security staff during their observation duty. The Offender Companion performing observation duties must have access to a means to immediately summon staff help (emergency whistle, verbal shouting, etc.).
    - b. Offender Companions are to be removed from the immediate area to a safe, separate area while security is responding to the emergency situation so that they have no access to, or involvement with any offender or officers during the resolution of the emergency event.
    - c. Once the emergency is resolved, the Offender Companions may be allowed to resume their observations per the orders of the shift commander.

#### **VI. Offender Companion Shifts**

- A. Offender Companions shifts operate on an "on-call" basis in which individuals are may be expected to present for duty with very little warning or preparation. The duration of an Offender Companion's shift is four (4) hours, with a new companion being contacted and placed on duty at the end of the four (4) hour period. In unusual circumstances, an Offender Companion's shift may be extended to five (5) hours but never extends beyond five (5) hours within a 12-hour period.
- B. The companion may be relieved once each hour for a period of 10 minutes by an available officer. At this time the officer signs off on the observation sheet and relieves the Offender Companion for personal needs (i.e. coffee break or rest room break).
- C. Once assigned to provide observations, the Offender Companion is to be paid for the full four (4)-hour period (or actual time worked if it exceeds four (4) hours), even if he/she is not required to work the full period.

## VII. Removal of Offender Companions

- A. Any staff, including contract staff, may remove an Offender Companion from their scheduled detail at any time upon witnessing any unethical or inappropriate behavior. A new Offender Companion is to be immediately assigned by the shift commander to replace the observer whom was removed from their scheduled shift.
  - 1. Offenders who are relieved of their shift due to misconduct are held responsible for their actions as outlined in KDOC disciplinary procedures which may involve the individual receiving a disciplinary report (DR) prepared by KDOC staff.
- B. An Offender Companion may submit a request to his unit team counselor to be removed from the program at any time. Removals based on requests from offenders are not considered grounds for penalty or other disciplinary action.
- C. An Offender Companion may be removed from the program by the OCPC for any infractions or violations of the Offender Companion program, or for any other facility or security related concerns associated with the individual's performance on or off the job.
  - 1. If at any time an Offender Companion no longer meets the minimum selection criteria outlined in Section II.C., the Offender Companion is to be removed from the program and cannot be selected again until such time as s/he meets criteria.
  - 2. Offenders who are relieved of their employment as an Offender Companion due to misconduct are held responsible for their actions as outlined in KDOC disciplinary procedures.
- D. In all instances in which an offender has been removed from the Offender Companion Program, it is the responsibility of the Deputy Warden of Programs to ensure that appropriate documentation has been completed and maintained. Offenders removed due to inappropriate behavior/misconduct may only be considered for reinstatement in the program if they meet all criteria outlined in Section II.C. and have received the approval of the Warden.
- E. Offender Companions that are transferred to another facility are to have their status/certification and file transferred to the receiving site for consideration/inclusion at the facility's Offender Companion program (if it has one).

## VIII. Debriefing

- A. When an Offender Companion has been used, the Officer in Charge (OIC) notifies the facility's Behavioral Health Coordinator (BHC)/Clinical Director (or designee) of the name (and offender number) of all companions used during the OIC's shift and provides a brief report of any substantive situations that occurred as part of the Companions' duties.
- B. Once per week, the BHC or designee is to conduct a group-based debriefing session, which is open to all offenders currently assigned to Offender Companion detail. The purpose of the session is to review significant occurrences during the previous week, and to provide support for offenders regarding their experiences as Offender Companions.
- C. Offenders may decline to participate in any debriefing activity without recourse, but the Behavioral Health Coordinator/Clinical Director (or designee) must document that the debriefing was offered and subsequently declined by the Offender Companion.

**NOTE:** The policy and procedures set forth herein are intended to establish directives and guidelines for staff and offenders and those entities that are contractually bound to adhere to them. They are not intended to establish State created liberty interests for employees or offenders, or an independent duty owed by the Department of Corrections to employees, offenders, or third parties. Similarly, those references to the standards of various accrediting entities as may be contained within this document are included solely to manifest the commonality of purpose and direction

as shared by the content of the document and the content of the referenced standards. Any such references within this document neither imply accredited status by a Departmental facility or organizational unit, nor indicate compliance with the standards so cited. The policy and procedures contained within this document are intended to be compliant with all applicable statutes and/or regulatory requirements of the Federal Government and the state of Kansas. This policy and procedure is not intended to establish or create new constitutional rights or to enlarge or expand upon existing constitutional rights or duties.

**REPORTS**

None.

**REFERENCES**

None.

**HISTORY**

None.

**ATTACHMENTS**

<b>Attachments</b>	<b>Title of Attachments</b>	<b>Page Total</b>
A	Crisis Level Status Observation Report Sheet	1 page

