

Taskforce Flaxton

To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Taskforce Flaxton
HPRM: Submission - Anonymous submission please

To Whom It May Concern

Firstly, I offer my apologies for late submission. I hope my comments may be included in your considerations.

The subject of this email is a substantial and ongoing risk of corruption. I have no direct evidence of actual corruption, but for reasons which I will explain, I think the particular risk needs to be better managed. I believe the present situation to be untenable.

Correctional Officers must periodically re-qualify their proficiency in certain core competencies. One such competency is "Control & Restraint". Although for many years, this has been re-qualified on a 3 yearly basis, in recent times the re-qualification interval has been shortened to 1 year.

The current arrangements are that re-qualification is achieved within 1 shift, with an assessment session including refresher training during which each officer must physically demonstrate proficiency. Both the training and the assessment are performed by selected officers who have been internally qualified by QCS as trainers. In all other respects, the trainers are generally at-level colleagues of the officers undertaking re-qualification. They ordinarily work side by side with these staff.

The consequences of failing the re-qualification (and failing any subsequent re-tests) is that the officer is not proficient to carry out their day-to-day custodial duties. Ultimately, they require requalification to maintain their employment as custodial officers. Thus, their continued employment hangs on the judgement of a colleague with whom they ordinarily work, and in some cases, socialise. Add to this situation the observation that the failure rate is near to zero. In the case of my correctional centre, I cannot recall any recent failures. While QCS has a type of fitness standard for the purposes of recruitment, there is no on-going standard of fitness which custodial officers are required to maintain.

I have often advocated for (at the least) external 3rd-party assessors for all mandatory training (including Control & Restraint). The current situation has been in place for many years.

In my role as a Workplace Health and Safety / Injury Management adviser, my concern is that the risk of corruption that I have outlined above is a real threat to custodial staff being truly proficient to respond to situations where there is a threat to the life or safety of staff or prisoners.

I submit the above for your consideration.

My wish is that this submission be an anonymous submission.

kind regards

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