

## **Inmate Classification System 30MM**

The purpose of this lesson is to refresh your knowledge and skills in the inmate classification system to assist you in making decisions that directly impact your duties in the supervision of inmates and the security of inmates, staff and institution.

The Department Operations Manual (DOM), Section 62010.2, states, "The purpose of this procedure is to provide a systematic process for the programming, housing and custody decisions used in the management of inmates." The DOM, Section 62010 provides the operational procedures to implement the statutory requirements of CCR Title 15.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 15, Article 10: Classification, Sections 3375 - 3378 is the statutory authority for the Director to establish the classification system. It contains all of the legal requirements for classification.

### **Goals of the Classification System**

The DOM, Section 62010.1, cites five goals of the classification system. They are:

- Placement of inmates in the *lowest custody level* consistent with case factors and public safety.
- Place inmates according to their *classification score based on objective information and criteria* unless case factors or departmental requirements indicate otherwise.

- Application of the classification process *uniformly* for all inmates in similar situations.
- Provision for *centralized control* over the classification process.
- Maintenance of an *ongoing classification system information database* for departmental research and evaluation.

### Benefits of the Inmate Classification System

- Placing inmates in the appropriate facility and custody housing creates a more safe and secure working environment.
- Using the classification committees allows you to have input to reassess changes in inmate needs and behaviors.
- Separating inmates involved in misconduct from inmates who are not behavioral problems assists in preventing program interruptions.
- The system provides an incentive for inmate good behavior. It allows inmates some control over their own placement through their behavior.

The four major benefits to staff from the Inmate Classification System are:

- 1) The systematic placement of inmates makes a more safe and secure work environment.
- 2) Staff have input in reassessing changes to inmate needs and behaviors.
- 3) Separating problem inmates helps to prevent program interruptions.
- 4) Inmates have an incentive for good behavior.

## How the Inmate Classification System Works

### Initial Classification at the Reception Center

Every inmate entering the Department of Corrections goes through a classification process at the Reception Center. The classification tool used for the initial classification at the Reception Center is the CDC Form 839.

The three factors used to compute an inmate's placement score are:

1). Background factors (Block B on the 839) include:

- Age at first arrest.
- Age at Reception.
- Term of Sentence in years.
- Street Gang or Disruptive group membership. (The two-letter code entered in this block signifies the gang affiliation. The single letter block indicates how the gang affiliation was verified).
- Mental Illness Level of Care.
- Prior jail or county juvenile time.
- Prior incarcerations.

2). Prior Incarceration Behavior (Block D on the 839).

Prior incarceration behavior takes into account the favorable and unfavorable/serious disciplinaries within the last 12 months of incarceration. If the behavior is favorable (no disciplinaries) points are taken away from the score. If there are serious disciplinaries, points are assessed.

In addition, the entire incarceration history is examined and points are awarded for all serious disciplinaries based on their seriousness and the number of occurrences. Note, a battery causing serious injury results in 16 points for each incident.

3) Mandatory Minimum Score (Block E on the 839).

Block E on the Form 839 lists the mandatory *minimum* scores that are assigned for various sentences and behaviors that are prescribed in CCR Title 15 as warranting an override of the placement of an inmate according to the classification score. These mandatory minimum scores are:

Condemned (inmates sentenced to death).	52
Life without possibility of parole.	52
CCR Title 3375.2.a.(7) life sentence for any of the following: multiple murders, unusual violence or execution-type murders or received high notoriety; multiple walkaways, an escape from a secure perimeter, or an escape involving force or threat of force.	28
History of escapes.	19
Warrants "R" suffix (convicted of rape or other sexual offenses where possibility of escape must be restricted to protect the public).	19
Violence exclusion (conviction or history indicates violent behavior could be a threat to the public if the inmate escaped).	19
Public Interest Case (high notoriety of case has generated public interest).	19
Other life sentence (parole possible).	19

**The Classification Placement Score**

The classification placement score entered in Block E is the primary factor in inmate placement. The scoring system provides a standard evaluation method for placing inmates *at the least restrictive institution* based on the inmate's custodial requirements. Inmates have an incentive to reduce their classification score to permit transfer from higher custody facilities to lower custody housing with increased privileges, freedom of movement and programming availability.

The Facility Classification Levels chart below shows the relationship of placement score to the type of facility the inmate is assigned.

**Facility Classification Levels**

Level	Classification Score	Custody Designation
I	1-18	Minimum Support Facility (MSF), Camp, CCRC, Restitution Center, Community Prisoner Mother Program (CPMP), Community Access Facility (CAF), Community Correctional Facility (CCF), Modified Community Correctional Facility (MCCF)
II	19-27	Open dormitories with secure perimeter, may include armed coverage.
II	28-51	Secure perimeter with armed coverage and cells.
IV	52+	Secure perimeter with internal and external armed coverage and cells.

**Special Case Factors** (Block F on the 839)

This block deals with special holds and placement requirements placed upon the inmate at the Reception Center.

**Role of the Classification Staff Representative**

The Classification Staff Representative determines the appropriate housing in keeping with departmental needs, safety and security, the inmate's placement score and administrative determinants. The four factors used to make the housing assignment are 1) placement score, 2) special case factors and inmate program needs, 3) administrative determinant codes, and 4) special case factors.

**Placement Score** (from Block E on the 839)

The placement score is entered on the CDC 839 Form in Block E and is the fundamental element for an inmate's assignment. Any assignment not commensurate with the placement score is considered an irregular placement. Factors involving irregular placement are based on information in Blocks F and G of CDC Form 839.

**Special Case Factors and Inmate Program Needs** (Block F and Block G, 6, 7 and 9 on the 839)

All inmates are required to undergo academic and psychological testing/screening at the Reception Center. These scores help the Reception Center Classification Committee in deciding which institution would best support the *program needs* of the inmate. This testing/screening process also identifies inmates who meet the criteria for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other court directed

programs. You will have separate instruction on the Disability Placement Program (DPP-Armstrong), the Developmental Disability Placement Program (DDP-Clark) and the Mental Health Services Delivery System (MHSDS-Coleman).

Classification committees may add suffixes to the custody designation. An "R" suffix alerts staff of inmates who have specific sex offenses. An "S" suffix indicates the inmate is to be housed in a single cell accommodation.

**Administrative Determinant Codes** (Block G. 8. on the 839)

Institutional security, public safety and housing availability may occasionally require inmate placement at a facility which does not correspond with the inmate's classification score. Alternative placement and/or programs (either higher or lower custody levels) can be assigned which provide the maximum benefits permitted under the circumstances, according to the inmate's case factors.

Administrative determinants, which could result in irregular placement, include issues dealing with medical or psychiatric care, history of sex crimes or arson crimes, felony holds, warrants, etc., confidential placement in a city or county facility, life sentences without possibility of parole, life sentences involving multiple murders, unusual violence, death sentences, history of escape or attempted escapes, and high notoriety cases.

Some inmates may require protective custody due to former gang membership, acting as a witness in court or in a disciplinary hearing, displaying overt homosexual behavior or dress, any history of inmates victimizing a special needs inmate or involvement in a particular vocational program not available at the facility.

Other determinants that will affect housing placement include age (too young or too old), medical condition or simply not enough beds available consistent with the inmates classification score. This is known as "population override." Three letter codes are used to indicate administrative determinants that may be imposed to override inmate placement at facilities according to their classification score.

The following list of the three letter codes is found in CCR Title 15, 3375.2. Each code is a determinant that may be used to override a placement classification score.

AGE	Inmate's youth, immaturity, or advanced age.
ARS	Any conviction for arson.
BEH	Behavior indicates a successful placement at lower level facility than the classification score.
CAM	Camp placement recommended due to shortage of qualified inmates.
DEA	Currently or formerly sentenced to death.
DEP	Special placement ordered by Departmental Review Board.
DIS	Disciplinary record indicates a history of serious problems or threat to security of the institution.
ENE	Inmate has one or more enemies in the Corrections system or the nature of their offense is likely to make them victims (Notice of Critical Information—Confidential Enemies).
ESC	Inmate is a much greater escape risk or has threatened to escape.
FAM	Inmate has strong family ties to a particular area where other areas would cause hardship.
GAN	Documentation of inmate gang membership or association requires



	special attention.
INA	Documentation of inactive gang status requires special placement consideration.
HOL	Hold, warrant or detainer is likely to be exercised.
LIF	Life sentence requires placement at a higher level than classification score indicates.
MED	Medical condition requires continuing treatment.
OUT	Requires placement at a specific facility for out-to-court appearance. Used when release authority appearance is nearing.
POP	Used only by a Classification Staff Representative to indicate no beds available.
PRE	Inmate is pending release in a short time.
PSY	Psychological condition requires special treatment.
PUB	High publicity and notoriety creates public interest.
SCH	Inmate involved in academic program not available at a facility with classification level.
SEX	Inmate has history of sex crimes.
SOR	Inmate has bisexual or homosexual orientation.
TIM	Inmate has a long time to serve on sentence.
VIO	Current or prior conviction for a violent felony requiring higher-level placement.
VOC	Inmate is involved in a vocational program not available at classification level score facility.
WOR	Inmate has a work skill in a critical trade that warrants special placement consideration.

**Special Case Factors** (Block G.3.-5 on the 839) include:

- Administrative Segregation Unit (Ad-Seg) for inmates who endanger institutional security or for safety of themselves or others.
- Protective Housing Unit (PHU) for inmates whose safety would be endangered by general population placement.
- Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU) for inmates with diagnosed psychiatric disorders not requiring hospitalization and whose conduct threatens the safety of themselves or others.
- Security Housing Unit (SHU) for inmates whose presence in the general population presents a threat to the safety and security of the institution.

The Classification Staff Representative assigns an inmate to a particular institution. Even though you are not involved in this process, the information on the CDC Classification Score Sheet, which is located in the inmate's case file, can be valuable to you in supervising a new inmate assigned to your unit. Knowing an inmate's gang affiliation, for example, can help you avoid rival gang incidents.

Other items of information that would be useful to you in supervising an inmate include serious disciplinary history, evidence of mental illness, term, special case factors including R suffix. All of these items provide information about an inmate's previous behavior which may help a peace officer prevent situations that may lead to problems in supervising the inmate.

## Classification Committees at the Institution

Classification is a continuous process. CCR Title 15, 3375 (a) states, "The classification process shall be uniformly applied, commencing upon reception.... and shall continue throughout the time the individual remains under the director's jurisdiction."

Each institution has three classification committees with specific functions to perform. They are:

- the Initial Unit Classification Committee,
- the Unit Classification Committee, and
- the Institution Classification Committee.

### Initial Unit Classification Committee

The Reception Center will assign a degree of custody to determine the inmate's housing assignment/activity and supervision needs.

Each institution has an Initial Unit Classification Committee to initiate a suitable program for each new inmate within 14 days after arrival at the institution.

Institution requirements may necessitate additional local designations, but shall conform to the department's requirement for each degree of custody used. The senior custodial officer on duty designates the initial custody for new arrivals at the institution and may *temporarily increase* an inmate's custody *at any time* it becomes necessary to protect the security and good order of the institution. At the next regular meeting, a classification committee must review any increase in the classification score. *Any reduction* of an inmate's custody shall be made only by the classification committee action.

The Institution Classification Committee at each institution shall assign a *degree of custody* to each inmate. This custody designation refers to the amount of supervision needed for the inmate's housing assignment and activity needs. The DOM requires the degree of an inmate's custody shall be reasonably related to legitimate local interests as determined by the Warden of each prison.

### Composition

Chaired by a Facility Captain or CC III with a CCII, CCI, Inmate Assignment Lieutenant, Educational or Vocational Program representative and other staff as required.

### Functions

- Review the case factors and the Classification Staff Representative endorsements for housing placement.
- Designate the degree of custody necessary to control the inmate.
- Initiate an educational, vocational or work/training program and privilege group designation.
- Review the case factors and assist the inmate to understand the institution expectations, available programs and resources.

## Unit Classification Committee

### Composition

A custody captain chairs it with the same staffing requirements as the Initial Classification Committee. Anyone may be asked to serve on a classification committee if their expertise is needed for a particular inmate's classification.

## **Function**

Each program unit establishes a Unit Classification Committee to provide routine, on-going Program Classification of inmates. CRC Title 15 requires that each inmate will have a classification committee review within 12 months after the initial classification upon arrival at the institution and annually thereafter.

## **Institutional Classification Committee**

### **Composition**

This is the highest-level classification committee at the institution. It is chaired by at least an Associate Warden with a psychiatrist or physician, custody captain, CC III or II, an Inmate Assignment Lieutenant and an educational or vocational education program representative as members. Other staff may serve as required.

### **Function**

- Reviews all Ad-Seg placements at initial placement and at regular intervals.
- Reviews all inter-institutional transfer recommendations in problem cases where the Department or public welfare is at stake.
- Reviews all cases referred by subordinate institutional classification committees.
- Refers cases to the Chief of Classification Services Division or the Departmental Review Board for resolution of cases that cannot be resolved at the institution level.

If the inmate is determined to be inappropriately placed, a transfer recommendation is made to the Classification Systems Representative and the Institutional Classification Committee for transfer.

### Other Classification Committees

Camp and Re-entry facilities provide routine classifications for inmates assigned to these programs. There is also a Departmental Review Board, which serves as a final reviewing authority when placement decisions are appealed by Wardens or Regional Administrators.

### How the Classification System Works at the Institution

Every inmate must have a classification committee review 12 months after the inmate arrives at the reception center and at least annually thereafter. A classification review is necessary during any six-month period when favorable points are granted or unfavorable points are assessed which could cause the inmate's placement score to fall outside the facility security level.

It is a standardized process for assessing each individual inmate's placement needs. CDC Form 840 is the form used by the institution classification committees to compute the inmate's placement score and to make any determinations regarding reclassification of the inmate's placement status.

The classification committee may determine a lower security level placement or it may increase the security level placement.

The three factors used to determine an inmate's annual review placement score are 1) favorable inmate behavior, 2) unfavorable inmate behavior, and 3) mandatory minimum score.

**Favorable inmate behavior**

On the CDC 840 Form Block C, points are assessed for inmate behavior resulting in continuous minimum custody, no serious disciplinary action, and for average or above performance in work, school or vocational program.

**Unfavorable inmate behavior**

Block D on the CDC Form 840 is used for consideration of serious disciplinaries received by the inmate since the last classification review. These are categorized as:

- 1) Division A-1 and A-2 which involve offenses (A-1) or attempted offenses (A-2) with credit forfeitures of 151 to 360 days such as murder, attempted battery with a deadly weapon, rape/sodomy, escape with violence, taking of a hostage, and arson involving damage to a structure. Each occurrence receives 8 points.

Division B, C, and D include offenses with a credit forfeiture of 61 to 150 days such as attempted battery on a peace officer not involving use of a weapon, aiding or abetting an escape, theft or destruction of property over \$400 in value, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, being under the influence of intoxicant, refusal to provide a urine sample, extortion, bribery, mutual combat, and participating in a riot or unlawful assembly. Each occurrence receives 6 points.

Division E and F include offenses with credit forfeitures up to 60 days. These include such things as theft, damage or destruction of property under \$400 value, consensual sex acts, forgery or falsification of a document, gambling, and any misdemeanor offense. Each occurrence

receives 4 points. When the serious misbehavior includes other factors, additional points are assessed.

- 2) Battery or attempted battery on a non-prisoner (8 points for each occurrence).
- 3) Battery or attempted battery on an inmate (4 points for each occurrence).
- 4) Distribution of drugs (4 points for each occurrence).
- 5) Possession of a deadly weapon (16 points for each occurrence).
- 6) Inciting a disturbance (4 points for each occurrence).
- 7) Battery causing serious injury (16 points for each occurrence).

All of these behaviors are added together to generate a total unfavorable behavior score for an inmate. For example, if an inmate stabbed a correctional officer, the inmate would have committed an A-1/A-2 offense (1x8 pts), which is battery on a non-prisoner (1x8 pts) and since the inmate possessed a deadly weapon (1x16 pts) to commit the battery causing serious injury (1x 16), the inmate would end up with a total of 48 unfavorable points.

#### Mandatory Minimum Score

Block G on the CDC Form 840 has the same mandatory minimum scores for placement as are on the CDC Form 839. These range from 19 points to 52 points and will be the deciding factor if the highest score is greater than the preliminary



score computed from the inmate's favorable or unfavorable behavior. The placement score in Block G constitutes the classification committee's recommendation for the inmate's security level of placement.

### The Classification Staff Representative and Special Case Factors

The various committees determine each inmate's classification score, work and training incentive group and privilege group category status, educational level and needs, vocational training and skills assessments, institutional level, housing needs, work or program assignment, custody designation, and any other "special needs" considerations that may apply to a particular inmate's situation or concerns.

"Special needs" placements include the following:

- Restricted custody suffix (R) for inmates with specific sex related convictions.
- Administrative Segregation Unit (Ad-Seg) for inmates who endanger institutional security or for safety of themselves or others.
- Protective Housing Unit (PHU) for inmates whose safety would be endangered by general population placement.
- Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU) for inmates with diagnosed psychiatric disorders not requiring hospitalization and whose conduct threatens the safety of themselves or others.
- Security Housing Unit (SHU) for inmates whose presence in the general population severely endangers the lives of other inmates, staff or security of the institution.

- Correctional Critical Case Management System (CCCMS) Housing for inmates displaying borderline mental illness that does not warrant placement in a mental facility or psychiatric services environment.
- Enhanced Outpatient Care (EOP) for inmates requiring placement in a licensed health care facility.
- Developmentally Disabled Program (DPP) for inmates with mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy requiring placement where institutional programs are available to accommodate the housing, work and program needs of these developmental disabilities.

The Classification Staff Representative completes Block I on the CDC Form 840 and determines the appropriate housing in keeping with departmental needs, safety and security, the inmate's placement score and administrative determinants.

### Inmate Rights in the Classification Process

The CCR, Title 15, Section 3375(b) stipulates an inmate has the right to a classification process that is uniformly applied by a knowledgeable committee that considers the inmate's needs, interest, desires and behavior. Each inmate's classification status will be considered individually and the inmate will be given written notice of the hearing at least 72 hours in advance.

If the inmate is not given 72 hours written notice, the hearing will be postponed.

An in-absentia classification hearing may be held only when an inmate refuses to appear before the committee or when the inmate is physically incapable of appearing or is determined by a psychiatrist to be mentally incompetent to comprehend the proceedings.

### You and the Classification Process

Your role in the classification process is documentation of inmate behavior. Your documentations allow the members of the hearing committee to add your facts and observations of the inmate's behavior to the other case factors when they make their decisions about the inmate's classification.

All observations, especially Counseling and Informational Chronos, Disciplinary Reports and Confidential Reports, carry weight when determining inmate placement and program needs. Your reports are used to assist the committees to assess the safety, security, medical and psychological concerns based on your observations of the inmate's behavior. For example, CDC 115s, Disciplinary Rule Violation Reports, may lead to increased Custody Level by increasing the Classification Score case factor.

You must report all types of criminal behavior. Observations relating to sexual misconduct, street or gang activity, extortion activity, strong-arm theft, vandalism, drug activity, murder or attempted murder, assault, arson, possession of explosives, or conspiracy of these acts and much more, constitute criminal inmate activity. If we fail to document such things appropriately, we fail to provide the

classification system with the accurate, comprehensive information necessary to ensure that inmates are re-housed correctly.

Consequences of failing to document behavior:

- Inmates housed in lower level settings than appropriate because of lower classification scores than they deserve.
- Increased crime rate within the prison (gangs, drugs).
- Inmate safety compromised (enemies, victimization).
- Security compromised (escapes, arson, staff assaults).
- Inmates programmed inappropriately (medical, psychological, disability, developmental disability not recognized).
- Education, vocational education, training interrupted or denied.

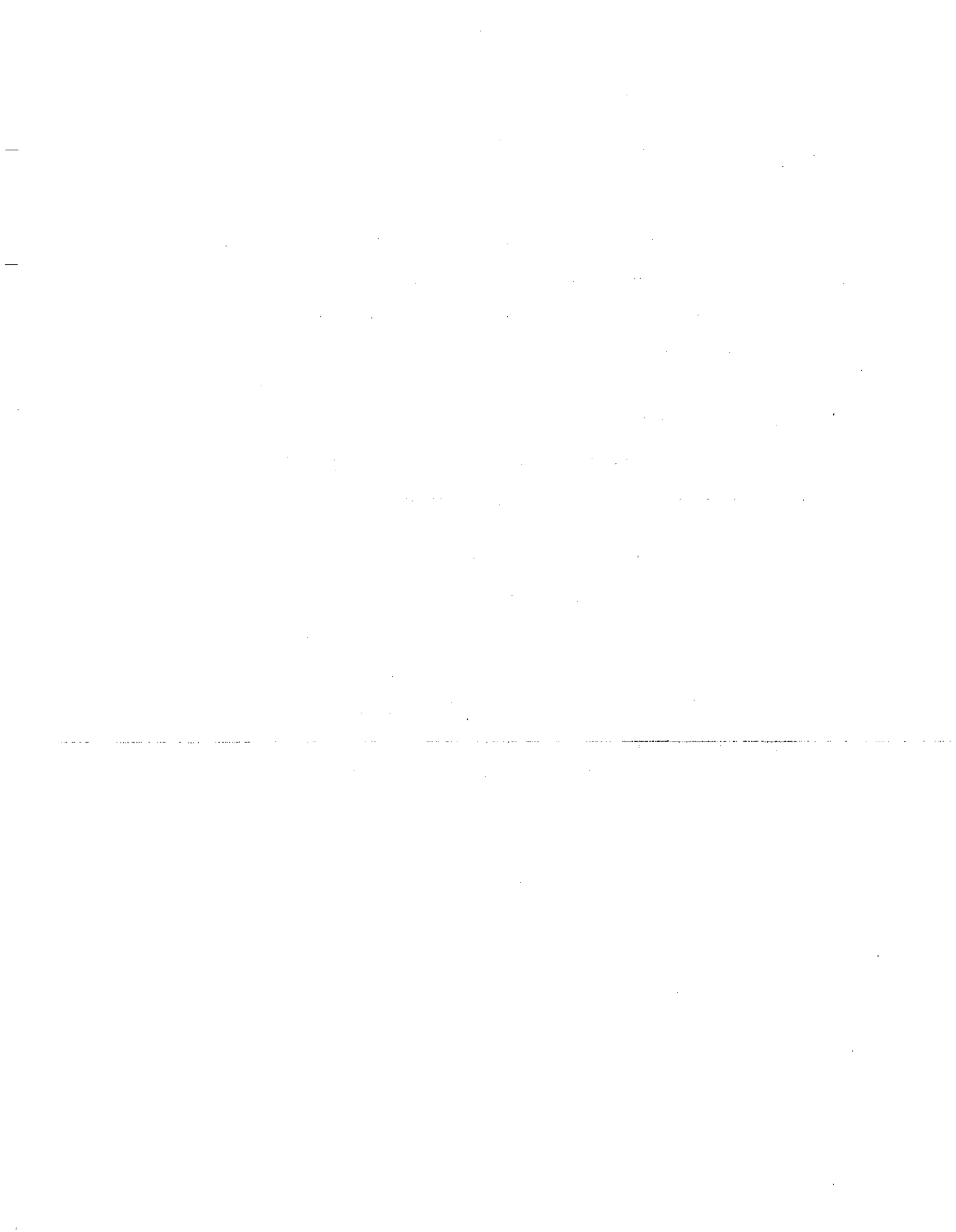
Documentation is the key to classification referral. A well-written, accurate report related to criminal behavior, unusual behavior, or behavior which increases an inmates chance to be victimized is critical when used as the main document for referral to not only classification committees for program changes or transfers, but also to the Board of Prison Terms, to the Classification Service Representative when the inmate transfers, or when a segregated housing term is being determined. It is also critical when the institution's Investigative Services Unit is building a case for the District Attorney to prosecute a felony offense.

## Summary

If we do not work together as a team to properly monitor, supervise, document and classify inmates with the utmost care and accuracy, we make our job of supervising inmates much more difficult. When we are required to supervise inmates who are inappropriately housed, safety and security of the institution and the public, the inmates and the staff are affected.

By observing and documenting inmate behavior, we provide the information necessary for classification committees to make sound decisions. The classification system is good, but it only works when we:

- Practice good supervision by continuously monitoring inmate behavior.
- Diligently document inmate behavior with appropriate reports.
- Actively participate and work with the Correctional Counselor, MTA, and mental health staff by sharing information.
- Most importantly, know that we can and do make a difference in inmate classification.



# INMATE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM QUIZ

Course Code: C50402M  
Course Hours: 1.00

(UPDATED 08/2005)

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Allowing inmates some control over their own placement through their behavior is one of the benefits of the inmate classification system.

True / False

2. What factors are used to compute an inmate's placement score?

- a. prior incarceration behavior      d. education  
b. background      e. A, B, and C are correct  
c. mandatory minimum score

3. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ is the primary factor in inmate placement.

4. Inmates housed here at the California Institution for Women have classification scores from 38 to 58.

True / False

5. All inmates entering the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation go through a classification process at the reception center. They are required to undergo academic and psychological testing/screening.

True / False

6. A \_\_\_\_\_ suffix alerts staff of the inmate having specific sex offense; a \_\_\_\_\_ suffix indicates single cell housing.

7. Which of these is not a special case factor?

- a. PSU      b. AD-SEG      c. IHU      d. SHU      e. PSU

8. How many classification committees does each institution have?

- a. 4      b. 3      c. 2      d. 1

9. Inmates will see the initial Classification Committee after his/her arrival at the institution within \_\_\_\_ days.
10. Inmates will see the Unit Classification Committee after their initial classification within \_\_\_\_ months and annually thereafter.
11. "Triple CMS" or CCCMS stands for: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Your role as correctional staff in the classification process is documentation of \_\_\_\_\_.