



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #237

Reduce Third Shift Tower Staffing Positions (Corrections -- Adult Corrections)

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 122, #3]

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Corrections currently has 56 guard towers staffed on a 24-hour per day, seven with 285 positions at 14 of its adult correctional institutions.

GOVERNOR

Delete \$2,617,000 GPR in 2015-16 and \$3,503,300 GPR in 2016-17 and 60.0 GPR positions annually the Department's general program operations appropriation associated with reduced third shift staffing in guard towers. The funding amounts include an increase of \$41,900 in 2015-16 and \$42,000 in 2016-17 associated with increased fuel and maintenance costs for vehicle perimeter patrol.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The bill would delete staffing and funding associated with 60 positions for third shift staffing in guard towers. Third shift staffing is generally the time period between 11pm to 7am, or similar hours. While the 60.0 positions have not yet been specified, based on the identified reductions to tower staffing patterns, the following table identifies the associated institutions, and the salary and fringe benefit reductions:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
Columbia Correctional Institution	-5.0	-\$221,500	-\$295,400
Dodge Correctional Institution	-5.0	-221,500	-295,400
Fox Lake Correctional Institution	-7.0	-310,200	-413,600
Green Bay Correctional Institution	-7.0	-310,200	-413,600
Jackson Correctional Institution	-2.0	-88,700	-118,200
Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution	-9.0	-398,800	-531,800
Oshkosh Correctional Institution	-9.0	-398,800	-531,800
Racine Correctional Institution	-3.0	-133,000	-177,300
Stanley Correctional Institution	-2.0	-88,700	-118,200
Waupun Correctional Institution	<u>-11.0</u>	<u>-487,500</u>	<u>-650,000</u>
	-60.0	-\$2,658,900	-\$3,545,300

2. According to the Department of Administration, the reduction would "reflect reduced hours of staffing at guard towers at correctional institutions, while utilizing technology and strategic ground patrol to maintain security." Reductions were determined by calculating the number of positions associated with the reduced number of third shift posts at 10 institutions and applying the average correctional officer salary and fringe benefits (-\$2,658,900 in 2015-16 and -\$3,545,300 in 2016-17). The bill also provides \$41,900 in 2015-16 and \$42,000 in 2016-17 associated with increased fuel and maintenance costs for vehicle perimeter patrol.

3. The reduction in tower staffing was not included in the Department's agency budget request. A similar proposal was introduced in the 1995-97 Governor's biennial budget recommendations. As enacted, the 1995-97 biennial budget act retained the 60 positions initially recommended for deletion, but the Department was required to allocate the funding reductions to other departmental activities, and report back to the Committee regarding where the reductions had occurred. The Department submitted a report on the reductions (mostly by holding open vacant positions) and indicated that Corrections was working with the Department of Administration "to establish a project to develop recommendations for the future utilization of institution towers and identify potential alternatives to the use of towers." The Department indicates that a preliminary project report was drafted but it was not finalized or submitted to the Committee.

4. It may be argued that the Governor's recommendation is similar to other provisions in the bill related to requiring agencies to find ways streamline services and create efficiencies. The Department indicates that:

"The main benefit of not staffing towers during third-shift is budgetary. . .

DOC would not be requesting the removal of some third-shift tower staffing if it felt that there was an increased risk to staff, inmates, or public safety. Staffing the towers during third-shift is an unnecessary security redundancy. Additionally, there will still be perimeter security for the institutions during this time as all institutions losing tower positions will have an armed patrol vehicle or an internal patrol officer. . .

Towers can be safely closed during third-shift. Inmates are counted and locked in their cell during third-shift. One of the only times an inmate is out of their cell during third-shift is in an emergency situation such as a medical emergency."

5. Regarding the increased use of perimeter security and/or technology, the Department indicates it is still assessing the specific needs at each location: "For example, we may add a perimeter vehicle at one location while another might require an improvement to a camera, lighting, or other technology."

6. It should be noted that the bill deletions would reduce the number of third shift posts for institutional towers, so that not all the towers would be unstaffed during the third shift hours and gatehouse towers would remain staffed. Further, the Department indicates that there have been only two inmate escape attempts over the past twenty years during third-shift hours, and in both cases, tower officers were not involved in the identification of the problem or the apprehension of the inmates. To the extent technology may be better utilized and allow a decreased reliance on staffing, the Committee could approve the Governor's recommendation. [Alternative 1]

7. On the other hand, some may argue that more escapes have not been attempted due to the existence of staffed towers. Further, the public has a perception of safety as a result of the guard towers. As a result, arguments can be made that risks may increase with the fewer fully staffed towers. As such, the provision could be deleted. [Alternative 3]

8. Balancing an interest to streamline services with the perception of safety concerns, the Committee could modify the Governor's recommendation to delete a fewer number of tower guard positions by one of the following. [Alternatives 2a, 2b, or 2c]

	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
All Institutions	-20.0	-\$856,600	-\$1,142,600
All Institutions	-30.0	-\$1,329,100	-\$1,772,300
All Institutions	-40.0	-\$1,831,800	-\$2,442,100
Change to Bill to Delete -20.0 FTE	40.0	\$1,760,400	\$2,360,700
Change to Bill to Delete -30.0 FTE	30.0	\$1,287,500	\$1,730,700
Change to Bill to Delete -40.0 FTE	20.0	\$785,200	\$1,061,200

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to delete \$2,617,000 GPR in 2015-16 and \$3,503,300 in 2016-17 and 60.0 GPR positions annually the Department's general program operations appropriation associated with reduced third shift staffing in guard towers.

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by deleting a fewer tower guard positions, by one of the following:

a. Delete \$856,600 GPR in 2015-16 and \$1,142,600 GPR in 2016-17 and 20.0 GPR positions annually associated with reduced third shift staffing in guard towers.

ALT 2a	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$4,121,100	40.00

b. Delete \$1,329,100 GPR in 2015-16 and \$1,772,300 GPR in 2016-17 and 30.0 GPR positions annually associated with reduced third shift staffing in guard towers.

ALT 2b	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$3,018,200	30.00

c. Delete \$1,831,800 GPR in 2015-16 and \$2,442,100 GPR in 2016-17 and 40.0 GPR positions annually associated with reduced third shift staffing in guard towers.

ALT 2c	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$1,846,400	20.00

3. Delete provision.

ALT 3	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$6,120,300	60.00

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