

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF**

MARION CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

INSPECTION DATE: DEC. 9, 2025



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INTRODUCTION

In the state's 2025-27 biennial budget bill, the 136th General Assembly created the Office of Correctional Facility Inspection Services (CFIS) within the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Established by Ohio Revised Code Section 109.39, CFIS – effective Sept. 30, 2025 – became the primary entity responsible for inspecting Ohio's state correctional institutions, privately operated correctional institutions and youth services facilities. Before that date, the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC), a joint committee of the General Assembly, was responsible for inspecting Ohio's correctional institutions and youth facilities. The General Assembly abolished the CIIC and re-constituted it as CFIS in the budget bill.

CFIS's duties are set forth in R.C. 109.39(A), which provides:

“There is, as a section within the office of the attorney general, an office of correctional facility inspection services. The office shall establish and maintain a continuing program of inspection of each state correctional institution used for the custody, control, training, and rehabilitation of persons convicted of crime and of each private correctional facility; any local correctional institution used for the same purposes; and any youth services facility. Each inspection shall include an evaluation of the inmate grievance procedure, compliance with meal requirements, at least one review of rehabilitative or educational programs, and any other compliance area the office determines is appropriate. Not later than the last day of January of each year, the office shall submit a report of its findings from the previous calendar year to the general assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code.”

CFIS is not required to provide a correctional institution or youth facility with advance notice of an inspection, pursuant to R.C. 109.39(A). In addition to its mandatory inspection duties, CFIS may assist the attorney general and correctional facility leadership in developing and evaluating programs to improve the condition or operations of the facilities it is required to inspect. R.C. 109.39(B).

Besides the CFIS inspections, each Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) facility undergoes an annual inspection and accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and an internal management audit (IMA). Although CFIS staff may review and refer to the ACA and IMA findings, CFIS inspections are separate and independent.

To institute the continuing program of inspection required by Ohio law, CFIS, shortly after its formation, began conducting an initial inspection of the DRC and Department of Youth Services (DYS) facilities that had not been inspected by CIIC in 2025. The initial inspections were designed, in part, to help CFIS familiarize itself with each facility, the warden and the staff. Further, each initial inspection allows CFIS to determine what additional data might be needed for future inspections and what inspection methodology is appropriate. This report details the initial inspection of the Marion Correctional Institution (MCI).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

On Dec. 9, 2025, CFIS completed an initial inspection of MCI. The warden’s administrative assistant, Michelle Curry, was notified the day before that CFIS inspectors would arrive at 9 a.m. the following day. CFIS inspectors were at MCI for about four hours. The CFIS team consisted of Dr. James Wesson, chief of inspections, and Deborah Drummond, lead inspector.

MCI is a minimum-/medium-security-level correctional facility for adult men located in Marion, Ohio. It has a maximum capacity of 2,623; on the day of the inspection, it housed 2,360. The facility opened in 1954.

MCI’s most recent internal management audit was conducted April 29 - May 1, 2025. The annual audit is conducted by an independent auditor, who examines a facility’s compliance with ACA’s 5th Edition Standards and the 2025 Ohio Standards and Observations, in preparation for the next ACA audit. All institutional work, industry and vocational education programs are also audited.

In the 2025 IMA, Marion Correctional was deemed in compliance with all 60 of the applicable mandatory ACA standards and 432 of the applicable 440 non-mandatory ACA standards. MCI was in compliance with 66 of the 74 applicable Ohio standards. MCI is scheduled for an ACA re-accreditation audit in February 2027. The table below illustrates MCI’s rate of compliance with ACA and Ohio standards over the past three years:

IMA Audit Scores	2025	2024	2023
ACA Mandatory	100%	98.3%	100%
ACA Non-mandatory	98%	98.6%	98%
Ohio Standards	87%	98.5%	97%

AREAS INSPECTED BY CFIS

Pursuant to R.C. 109.39, CFIS must inspect the grievance process, food services and an educational or a rehabilitative program. In addition, R.C. 109.39 empowers CFIS to inspect any other areas that it deems appropriate. While at MCI, the CFIS team also inspected:

- Medical services
- Recreation area
- Library/Law library
- Visitation area
- Transitional Programming Unit (restrictive housing)

In advance of their arrival, CFIS inspectors requested that the staff provide copies of the previous seven days’ administrative duty officer (ADO) reports and the 15 most recent grievances. Warden George Frederick welcomed the team upon its arrival. After introductions in the conference room, the inspection, led by Warden Frederick and his executive team, began.

MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Grievance process

DRC's grievance process, governed by Ohio Administrative Code Section 5120-9-31, consists of three steps. It begins with an incarcerated person (IP) filing an informal complaint resolution (ICR) with the supervisor of the area in which the IP has a concern. The IP has 14 calendar days from the date of the incident to file an ICR. The inspector of institution services (IIS) has 14 days to respond and has an option to file an extension. If the complaint is not resolved or the IP is dissatisfied with the inspector's decision, the IP can file a grievance to the IIS within 14 days of the ICR response. Or, in cases in which an IP believes that the warden or the IIS was personally and knowingly involved in a violation of a law, rule or policy – or condoned such a violation – the IP can file a grievance directly to the chief inspector.

The institutional inspector investigates a grievance to determine whether any DRC policy, rule or procedural guideline was violated – and either denies or grants the grievance. If the IP is not satisfied with the inspector's decision, the IP can appeal it to the chief inspector. The Office of the Chief Inspector, housed within DRC's central office, makes the final decision for every grievance appealed from the facility level. R.C. 5120.06.

Each IP is issued a tablet computer with access to ViaPath, the system used by IPs to file a grievance electronically. Paper grievance forms are also available for those who prefer a manual process. The grievance process is designed to help address IP complaints regarding any aspect of institutional life, whether the issue relates to the application of policies or procedures, the conditions of confinement or the actions of institutional staff.

During the inspection, the CFIS team confirmed that MCI staff were systematically logging and tracking grievances in ViaPath. The ICRs and grievances reviewed were responded to thoroughly, with each appropriately quoting the applicable DRC policy or administrative rule. CFIS saw no indications of retaliation against IPs who filed grievances. CFIS confirmed that IPs had access to ViaPath on their tablets. No violations of DRC policy were observed or reported.

Food services

The food-services area was inspected to ensure compliance with DRC Policy 60-FSM-02, Food Service Operations, and DRC 60-FSM-06, Safety and Health Protection for Staff and Incarcerated Individuals Assigned to Food Service.¹

Meal sampling

During the inspection, CFIS staff sampled a lunch of a country patty, mashed potatoes, gravy, pineapple, corn and carrots, white bread and margarine. Temperatures for all items served and for the portions sampled were within DRC Policy 60-FSM-02 (hot foods at or above 140 degrees, cold foods at or below 40 degrees).

¹ All DRC policies referenced herein are available at: <https://drc.ohio.gov/about/resource/policies-and-procedures/3-policies-and-procedures>.

Observations

The food-services area was clean and orderly, and the winter menu was posted. Staff and IP food-services workers were appropriately dressed in protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves). Uniforms were neat and appeared to be clean. The MCI food-services department offers the IN2Work program, designed to teach skills and provide certifications needed for careers in the culinary arts. Participants were actively engaged in meal preparation.

The kitchen tool room was inspected; all tools were accounted for. Tools not present were replaced with a chit, an object used to mark where the tool should be. A tool control log was being used to indicate the individual to whom a tool was assigned, serving as a safety check.

The back-dock area was clean and free of offensive odors. The area surrounding the trash compactor was free of debris. No rodents or pests were observed in the food-services area or on the back dock. Overall sanitation was appropriate and good, as proper disinfectants were being used to clean the area. CFIS verified that staff and IP food-services workers had completed sanitation and hygiene training, in compliance with 60-FSM-06, and that all had Safe Serv Certifications.

Educational or rehabilitative program

DRC, through the Ohio Central School System (OCSS), offers educational programs designed to meet the needs of IPs. The programs include adult education courses, vocational training and technical training, all of which incorporate technology in the programming. Collectively, the programs are designed to enhance IP employability upon release. On the date of the inspection, MCI's academic and career programs included:

- Education:
 - Adult basic education (academic)
 - General educational development (GED)
 - Pre-GED (academic)
- Career/Technical
 - Advanced job training through Marion Technical College
 - Auto technician
 - Barber school
 - Welding
 - Ohio Penal Industries
 - Production agriculture class
- Apprenticeships:
 - Animal trainer
 - Cook
 - Janitor
 - Landscape management
 - Materials coordinator

MCI's literacy, GED and post-secondary educational programs provide ample opportunities for IPs and are aligned with their needs. The vocational training offered aligns with the current job market. CFIS verified the instructors' qualifications; no violations of ODRC 57-EDU-08, Education Staff Credentials, were observed or reported. MCI's educational materials and technology were up-to-date. Staff members were appropriately logging and tracking enrollment and attendance. Accommodations were available to IPs with learning disabilities. MCI was in compliance with DRC educational policies; no violations were observed or reported.

NON-MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Medical services

CFIS toured and inspected MCI's medical department and spoke to the staff. The department has a dental area, pill call area, examination rooms and an infirmary. There is office space to accommodate the medical staff (doctor, administrators and nurse practitioners). IPs were receiving medical treatment during the inspection, and the area was extremely clean. Appropriate health-care and preventative-care signs were posted.

Recreation

CFIS toured and inspected the recreation department and spoke with the director. The area was clean and well-maintained and appeared to encourage IP health. MCI's recreation department offers an outdoor rec area, weight training and exercise equipment, a full-length basketball court and a basketball league, arts-and-crafts, and a music room. All equipment was in good order, with no issues observed or noted. Appropriate cleaning disinfectants were being used. Restrooms were inspected and found to be sanitary, with toilets, sinks and water fountains in good working condition. No violations of DRC 77-REC-01, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

Library /Law library

MCI has an adequate and organized library, including a law library. In the library, IPs can access Ohio Means Jobs, which provides specialized employment services, such as re-entry resume assistance. The general population can also access LexisNexis, in the library and on their tablets. The librarian was knowledgeable and took pride in her work. Re-entry information and hours of operation were posted. No violations of DRC 58-LIB-01, Comprehensive Library Services, were observed or reported.

Visitation area

MCI has indoor and outdoor visitation areas. The indoor area provides IPs and their families a setting that encourages interaction with family members, especially children. The visitation area was clean and organized. Seating was appropriate for family engagement. A vending area was available for visitors to purchase snacks. MCI offers daily visitation from 8 to 10:30 a.m., noon to 3:30 p.m., and 5 to 8:30 p.m. No violations of DRC 76-VIS-01, Incarcerated Person (IP) Visitation, were observed or reported.

Transitional Programing Unit (TPU)

The TPU, a restrictive housing area, was clean and orderly. IPs in the unit had access to their tablets. CFIS inspectors reviewed the unit staff's sign-in log, DRC 6011, which showed that rounds were being conducted by executive staff according to DRC Policy 50-PAM-02. No sanitation issues were reported or observed. Cells that were inspected were in appropriate condition.

The CFIS team reviewed 10 DRC 4118 reports. A DRC 4118 documents the essential daily functions of IPs, including acceptance or refusal of meals, personal hygiene and recreational activities. Each DRC 4118 is signed or initialed by an MCI staff member as confirmation that the IP has received these necessities. The DRC 4118s were completed appropriately, including dates, times and staff initials documenting the care given. The TPU was appropriately staffed with correctional officers, a sergeant and a lieutenant. CFIS spoke to several IPs in the unit; none reported any concerns that would constitute a violation of DRC policy.

MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTION MATTERS

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Congress passed the PREA in 2003 to provide for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in federal, state and local institutions. PREA also provides information, resources, recommendations and funding to protect incarcerated people from sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all DRC institutions, including privately operated and juvenile correctional facilities.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP), the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system. CFIS reviewed MCI's PREA reports from that system and found no substantiated cases. PREA signs were appropriately posted throughout the facility (e.g. housing units, recreation area, library, visitation area, education area, front entrance and medical services). Contact information for a local rape-crisis center was posted. No violations of DRC policy were observed or reported.

Staff recruiting and retention

Marion's vacancy rate was greater than 10%. Information regarding hiring events and job openings was posted.

Naloxone (Narcan) going-home kits

Narcan kits, each containing two doses of naloxone and 10 fentanyl testing strips, were offered to IPs on the day of their release. The kits are stored in Harm Reduction Vending Machines, which are placed in a discrete area. MCI complied with DRC 10-SAF-20, Naloxone Safety and Health procedures.

Administrative Duty Officer (ADO) reports

CFIS reviewed the ADO (50-PAM-02) reports provided by the MCI staff. An ADO report is completed daily by the designated executive staff tasked with conducting inspection rounds. The designated rounds cover food services, the visitation area, housing units, the recreation area, and any other area designated by the warden. Upon completion of the rounds, the ADO summarizes the findings and submits the report to the warden's office for review. The report includes the date and time of the rounds, areas visited, observations, concerns and recommendations. The ADO reports reviewed by CFIS were completed promptly and in accordance with policy. No issues were noted.

Security and safety

The facility's units were appropriately staffed by correctional officers, a case manager, a sergeant and a unit manager. Units were clean and organized. Restrooms were clean, with all showers, sinks and toilets in good working order. Units had essential items, including a washer and dryer, ice machines, water fountains and microwaves. All were in good working order. Fire evacuation plans were posted in visible areas. Unit team pictures and programming information (e.g. staff/incarcerated adult facilitator, date and time of program) were posted. Cleaning products and supplies were secured appropriately. Dayrooms had televisions and appropriate recreational games and activities. The CFIS staff visited and inspected a housing unit that caters to the basic needs of IPs. Marion's M Block was examined and found to be clean, with no maintenance issues. The needs of those assigned to M Block are met by a unit manager, an administrative professional, a case manager and a sergeant. No violations of ODRC policies were observed or reported.

CONCLUSION

MCI was very clean. The administrative staff members were professional and exhibited extensive correctional knowledge. Staff members thoroughly answered all questions posed to them. The staff at MCI embodied a model that fosters positive, pro-social behaviors among the incarcerated population. CFIS observed no violations of DRC policy in the areas inspected.



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Correctional Facilities Inspection Services

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