

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF**

ROSS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

INSPECTION DATE: NOV. 14, 2025



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



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 Ross Correctional Institution (RCI).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

On Nov. 18, 2025, CFIS completed an initial inspection of RCI. Warden Tim Shoop was notified the day before that the CFIS team would arrive at 9 a.m. the following day. CFIS was at RCI for approximately four hours. The CFIS team consisted of Dr. James Wesson, chief of inspections, and Deborah Drummond, lead inspector.

RCI is a medium-/maximum-security-level correctional facility located in Chillicothe, Ohio. The facility is divided into units with double-occupancy cells. On the date of the inspection, RCI housed about 1,900 incarcerated persons (IPs); the facility's capacity is 2,037. The facility opened in 1998.

In the 2025 internal management audit, Ross Correctional was found in compliance with 58 of the 60 applicable mandatory ACA standards and 431 of the 435 applicable non-mandatory ACA standards. RCI was in compliance with 66 of the 74 applicable Ohio standards. RCI is scheduled for an ACA reaccreditation audit in 2027. The table below illustrates RCI's rate of compliance with ACA and Ohio Standards over the past three years.

IMA Audit Scores	2025	2024	2023
ACA Mandatory	96.6%	100%	98.3%
ACA Non-mandatory	99%	99%	99%
Ohio Standards	86.8%	89%	95.7%

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 area that it deems appropriate. While at RCI, the CFIS team also inspected:

- Medical services
- Recreation department
- Visitation area
- Library/Law library
- Specialized housing units
- Transitional Programming Unit (TPU)

In advance of their arrival, CFIS inspectors requested that the facility staff provide copies of the previous seven days of their administrative duty officer (ADO) reports and the 15 most recent grievances. Upon arrival at the facility, the team was greeted by an executive staff member. After a brief meeting with Warden Shoop and his staff, the inspection, led by the institutional inspector, began.

MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Grievance process

ODRC'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 to file an ICR from the date of the incident. 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 may 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 appeal determination for every grievance that is appealed from the facility level. R.C. 5120.06.

Each IP is issued a tablet computer with access to ViaPath, the system IPs use to electronically file a grievance. Paper grievance forms are available for those who prefer a manual process. The grievance process is designed to 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.

While reviewing grievances with the CFIS team, the RCI institutional inspector remarked that the top three complaints he receives center on property transfers, staff supervision, and pest control in the food-services area. CFIS did not see the property or staff trends in the grievances reviewed, but the team did see pest-control complaints. RCI staff indicated that an exterminator visits the facility every Thursday. CFIS plans to re-inspect the food-services area soon to check on this issue. CFIS will also continue to monitor RCI's grievances for the trends mentioned by the IIS.

With respect to the grievances and ICRs reviewed by CFIS, the responses were submitted on time and appropriately cited policy.

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

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

Meal sampling

CFIS sampled a meal consisting of a country patty, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn and carrots, bread, margarine and canned pineapples. The portion sampled met policy standards for taste and appearance. 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).

Observations

During the inspection of RCI's North Dining Hall, the Aramark director (food-services contractor) reported persistent pest and rodent issues. CFIS was told that an exterminator visits the facility weekly to spray and place traps along baseboards. Although CFIS did not observe any pests during the inspection, the Aramark director noted the pests mostly hide behind a wooden board in the tool room. As noted, the CFIS team will conduct a follow-up inspection to review the facility's progress in eliminating this problem. CFIS will reinspect due to staff reports of pest-control problems, per DRC10-SAF-06.

Generally, the food-services area was clean and orderly, with the winter menu posted. IPs who work in food services were appropriately dressed in protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves), and their uniforms appeared to be clean. The kitchen tool room was inspected, with all tools accounted for. Tools not present were replaced with a chit, an object placed on the peg where the tool should be. A tool control log was being used, identifying the person to whom a tool was signed out – thus 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 or rodent/pest droppings were observed in the food-services areas or on the dock.

Coolers and freezers appeared to be in proper working order, and storage areas were clean and organized. The dish room was clean; dish-cleaning water temperatures met DRC 60-FSM-02 standards. Proper disinfectants were being utilized to clean the food-services area. CFIS verified completion of sanitation and hygiene training by food-services staff and IP staff, in compliance with 60-FSM-06. Safe Serv Certification was also verified.

Aramark and IP food-services staff were interviewed and had only positive things to say about working in the area. The Aramark director said the company, at the time of the inspection, was short three Aramark workers and one shift manager. The CFIS team spoke to several IPs in the food-services area. None reported any concerns or violations of ODRC policy, even though the institutional inspector had reported that food-services complaints were among the top three issues raised in ICRs and grievances.

Educational or rehabilitative program

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

- Adult basic education
- General educational development (GED)
- Carpentry (career tech)
- Administrative office technology

CFIS inspectors evaluated RCI's GED programs and reviewed post-secondary opportunities, checked instructors' qualifications, and examined whether educational materials and technology were current. They also assessed enrollment tracking, attendance monitoring, and accommodations for IPs with learning disabilities. Protocols were confirmed to provide equal educational opportunities for all incarcerated individuals. The education department was well-maintained.

NON-MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Medical services

CFIS toured the medical department and spoke to the staff. The department consists of 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 information was posted.

Recreation department

RCI's has a full-length basketball court and an outdoor rec area. All equipment was in good order; no major issues were observed. Appropriate cleaning disinfectants were being utilized. The restrooms were inspected, with no sanitation issues to report. Toilets, sinks and water fountains were in good working order. No violations of DRC 77-REC-01, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

Library/Law library

RCI's library, which includes a law library, is newly renovated. The area was clean and organized. The library offers LexisNexis and access to OhioMeansJobs.com, which provides specialized employment services, including re-entry resume support. Hours of operation were posted and visible. RCI did not have a librarian at the time of the inspection; the position had been posted. No violations of DRC 58-LIB-01, Comprehensive Library Services, were observed or reported.

Visitation area

RCI has a large, well-maintained visitation area. Vending machines were available for visitors to purchase food and drinks. No violations of DRC 76-VIS-01, Incarcerated Person (IP) Visitation, were observed or reported.

Specialized housing units

DRC specialized units provide additional programming to support a specific need or serve a specific population. At RCI, CFIS inspected two specialized units, Unit 8B and Death Row. Unit 8B is restorative/re-entry unit focused on rehabilitation through peer support and structured programming. RCI staff advised that 8B offers tools to address barriers to change, including drug- and alcohol-recovery services, behavioral therapy, and programming related to appearance, self-respect, respect for others and restoration into society. Unit residents are required to take at least one program per week. IPs must apply to the program to gain admission. IPs in Unit 8B also participate in the video-in-reach program, through which soon-to-be released IPs connect with agencies in the county where they will be released to develop a release plan.

CFIS verified that Death Row inmates were able to access programming and library services (e.g. LexisNexis) in the unit. Death Row IPs who have a mental-health-crisis precautions or who are in restricted housing stay in designated cells within the unit. For security purposes, the Death Row population is escorted to recreation and meals separately from the general population.

No violations of DRC policy were reported or observed in either specialized housing unit.

Transitional Programing Unit (TPU)

CFIS reviewed eight DRC 4118s in the TPU, which is restrictive housing. A DRC 4118 documents an IP's essential daily functions, such as acceptance/refusal of meals, personal hygiene and recreational activities. Each DRC 4118 is signed or initialed by a staff member – confirmation that these necessities were provided to the IP. CFIS found that that DRC 4118 reports had been completed appropriately, with dates and times documented and staff initials provided.

No sanitation problems were found. The cells inspected were in good condition. The TPU laundry area was clean and organized, with proper cleaning products being used. The unit was properly staffed and used range walkers. Range walkers are IPs who interact with other IPs housed in the unit to verbally de-escalate situations, with the goal of reducing the use of force and/or disruptive behavior. In reviewing the DRC 6011 sign-in log, the CFIS team confirmed that executive staff were making rounds according to DRC Policy 50-PAM-02. None of the IPs interviewed by CFIS reported any policy violations.

MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTION MATTERS

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (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 IPs from sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all ODRC institutions, including privately operated and juvenile correctional facilities.

As the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, the Ohio State Highway Patrol tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system. CFIS reviewed RCI's PREA reports from that system and found no substantiated cases. PREA signs were appropriately posted throughout the facility (housing units, recreation, visitation, education, front entrance, and medical). Contact information for a local rape-crisis center was posted.

Staff recruiting and retention

At the time of the CFIS inspection, RCI's vacancy rate exceeded 10%. Information regarding hiring events and job openings was posted.

Naloxone (Narcan) going-home kits

RCI offers Narcan kits to IPs on the day of their release. Each kit contains two doses of naloxone and 10 fentanyl testing strips. The kits are stored in Harm Reduction Vending Machines, which are placed in a discrete area. RCI complied with DRC 10-SAF-20, Naloxone Safety and Health Procedures.

Administrative duty officer (ADO) reports

CFIS reviewed the ADO (50-PAM-02) reports from the week before the inspection, provided in advance by RCI staff. An ADO report is completed daily by the designated executive staff member(s) tasked with completing inspection rounds. The designated rounds cover food services, the visitation area, a housing unit, the recreation area and any other area designated by the warden. Upon completion of the rounds, the ADO provides the warden's office a summary of his/her findings. The report includes the date and time of the rounds, areas visited, observations, concerns and recommendations. The ADO reports reviewed by CFIS were completed on time and in accordance with policy. No violations of 50-PAM-02 were observed or reported.

Security/Facilities

Each unit was appropriately staffed by two 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 such as a washer and dryer, ice machines, water fountains and microwaves. All were working properly. Cells appeared clean and orderly.

Fire evacuation plans were posted in visible areas. Unit team pictures and programming information were posted (staff/incarcerated adult facilitator, date and time of program). Cleaning products and supplies were secured appropriately. Dayrooms had televisions and appropriate recreational games and activities. A review of the DRC 6011 (sign-in logbook) indicated that executive staff were conducting rounds according to policy (50-PAM-02).

During the inspection, no safety or security issues were observed or reported.

CONCLUSION

RCI was clean, its staff diligent and professional. Staff members displayed significant correctional knowledge and were able to thoroughly respond to all inquiries. The facility's programming and vocational services were focused on preparing IPs for successful re-entry into society. In a forthcoming re-inspection, CFIS will follow up on the pest issue in the RCI's food-services area.



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF
ROSS
CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION**

Correctional Facilities Inspection Services

30 E. Broad St. 17th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
800-282-0515
www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov