



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Joseph Ponte, Commissioner

75-20 Astoria Boulevard
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

718 • 546 • 0890
Fax 718 • 278 • 6022

March 24, 2017

Derrick D. Cephas, Acting Chair
NYC Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Cephas:

The New York City Department of Correction (“Department”) is requesting an emergency variance pursuant to §1-15(b)(3) of the New York City Board of Correction’s (“Board”) minimum standards from sections: 1-03 Personal Hygiene, 1-05 Lock-in, 1-06 Recreation, 1-07 Religion, 1-08(f) Access to Courts and Legal Services (regarding access to the law library only), and 1-09 Visiting of the Board’s minimum standards for the Manhattan Detention Complex (MDC). We are seeking this emergency variance for a period of three (3) days, effective immediately, to ensure that the safety and security of MDC is maintained and that all staff and inmates are kept safe.

Two violent incidents – slashing and a serious assault – that occurred in the same housing unit at MDC today and escalating inmate tension necessitated the Department to institute a facility-wide lockdown on March 24, 2017, to conduct a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the situation including a review of the inmate population dynamics within MDC, thorough searches and intelligence investigations. During the lockdown, all facility supervising staff will be provided with supervisory response training. The Department has made and will continue to make every effort to limit the scope of the lockdown and any disruption to services. During the lockdown, medical and mental health services will be maintained. Best effort will be made to afford all inmates with showers and phone calls, however, security issues may cause some disruption. While visiting will be suspended, attorney visits will remain in effect.

Despite our best efforts, we are unable to achieve full compliance with the above noted provisions of the minimum standards for the duration of the facility-wide lockdown period, in order to effectively identify, evaluate, and neutralize all threats and maintain the safety and security of the facility. On the morning of Monday, March 27, the situation will be assessed to determine whether additional time is required to continue the investigation. The Department will notify the Board immediately if the variance can be ended early or if it needs to be extended.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Brenda Cooke at (718) 546-0989.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Joseph Ponte

cc: Martha King, Executive Director