

Pilot implementation of a Custody Rating Scale: Interim report (R-02, 1989)

In June 1988, a pilot project implementing the new Custody Rating Scale was introduced as a component of the penitentiary placement process. The test areas were the Quebec and Pacific regions, and all initial placement decisions in these two regions were to be made using the Custody Rating Scale as a replacement for the benchmark codes found in the penitentiary placement report.

An assessment of the effects of adopting this new classification tool was twofold:

- an analysis of the implementation process -- to determine how the scale would be accepted by case management staff; and
- an analysis of the impact on classification decisions -- to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of the scale in classifying inmates to the lowest suitable level of security.

One-day training workshops were conducted for field staff who would be applying the scale. A user's guide provided detailed instructions on how to complete the scale, and detailed explanations and definitions for each item to ensure consistency and uniformity of application.

All data captured on the Custody Rating Scale and support documents (i.e., penitentiary placement reports and fingerprint section records) completed by the participating case management officers were to be forwarded to National Headquarters. Any concerns raised by the participants relating to the use of the new scale were addressed through various media of communication to maximize quality control.

In brief, the findings indicated minor disagreement with participating regional case managers on the effectiveness of the instrument, but there was general acceptance that it was an accurate tool for classification.

The findings also provided a sense of what issues must be addressed before further implementation of the Custody Rating Scale.