

Section 2: The Mandate, Mission and Priorities of the Correctional Service of Canada

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is the federal government agency responsible for administering sentences of a term of two years or more, as imposed by the courts. CSC offers a variety of programs for offenders within the institution and those on parole in the community to assist them to successfully reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens.

CSC does not determine the guilt or innocence of persons charged under the *Criminal Code* or other related statutes or set sentences for convicted offenders. When an offender is eligible for parole, CSC makes a recommendation to the [National Parole Board](#) (NPB), based on its assessment of the risk posed to society and the offender's potential to reintegrate. CSC is also responsible for offenders on parole, statutory release and long-term supervision orders.

1. Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation that govern the functioning of CSC. The [Corrections and Conditional Release Act](#) (CCRA) and the [Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations](#) (CCRR) are the key legislative documents. Other governing legislation includes:

- [The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [The Criminal Code of Canada](#)
- [The Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
- [The Privacy Act](#)
- [The Access to Information Act](#)
- [The Official Languages Act](#)
- [The Financial Administration Act](#)
- [The Public Service Modernization Act](#)
- [The Public Service Employment Act](#)
- [The Public Service Labour Relations Act](#)

Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)

The CCRA governs the federal correctional system, and sets forth the legal framework within which the CSC must operate. It defines the principles for the administration of federal sentences along with the requirements for sentence calculation, forms of conditional release, and eligibility criteria not included in the *Criminal Code*.

In addition to detailing the purpose of the CSC and the principles for administering federal sentences, the CCRA also mandates CSC with the following responsibilities:

- care and custody of inmates
- provision of programs that assist with rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community
- preparation of inmates for release
- parole, statutory release supervision and long-term supervision of offenders
- providing a program of public education about the operations of CSC

Striking a fair balance between control and assistance

The CCRA aims to strike a fair balance between two inter-related strategies:

- exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control of offenders in correctional institutions and of offenders under supervision in the community
- assisting and encouraging offenders to become law-abiding citizens

The principle goal is public safety. This is promoted by proper control of offenders and with programs that help individuals rehabilitate. Rehabilitation programs are important because most offenders will complete their sentence and return to the community.

During incarceration, public safety is achieved by ensuring the secure custody of offenders and maintaining a safe environment for both staff and inmates. However, this is a time-limited strategy, as inmates who serve their sentences will be released from prison's secure environment. Therefore, it is equally important to prepare inmates for a successful return to the community as law-abiding citizens. This strategy contributes to long-term public safety.

Policy

All CSC [policies](#) are consistent with the CCRA and CRR, as well as other applicable statutes, regulations and policies of the Government of Canada. Policies incorporate the values of CSC's Mission and support CSC's priorities and objectives. CSC policies also reflect special needs of offenders, including those relating to gender, culture and religion.

CSC policies are mandatory rules that govern the management of the Service, including the operation of its programs and activities. Commissioner's Directives (CDs) and Standing Operating Practices (SOPs) are considered operational policies, which are developed subject to Sections 97 and 98 of the CCRA.

As per Section 97 of the CCRA, the Commissioner may make rules:

- (a) for the management of the Service;
- (b) for the matters described in section 4 of the CCRA; and
- (c) generally for carrying out the purposes and provisions of this Part and the regulations.

Section 98 of the CCRA further states that the Commissioner may designate as Commissioner's Directives any or all rules made under section 97.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its relationship to corrections

The [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) is an integral part of the Constitution of Canada. This means that if the rights guaranteed under the *Charter* appear to be violated by a particular law in the *Criminal Code*, the *Charter* will prevail. However, offenders do not have all the rights of other citizens, because the *Charter* also states that "the restriction of certain rights and freedoms may be justified in a free and democratic society."

CSC, under the authority of the CCRA, must justify any restrictions imposed on those in custody. For example, one justification for restricting an offender's right would be concern for public safety.

Furthermore, within strictly defined limits, the *Charter* guarantees offenders many rights, including:

- freedom of conscience;
- the right to practice their religion;
- freedom of expression;

- freedom of peaceful assembly and association;
- the right to legal counsel;
- the right to a fair hearing;
- the presumption of innocence;
- freedom from arbitrary detention and imprisonment;
- the right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual treatment and punishment.

These legal limits are taken into account in all aspects of CSC policy.

Other domestic legislation

Several other laws also affect the rights of prisoners and the way in which the work of federal corrections is carried out.

The [Canadian Human Rights Act](#) outlines a comprehensive framework for countering discrimination in federally regulated sectors. The Act applies to all government departments, agencies and federally regulated businesses.

The [Privacy Act](#) protects unauthorized access to personal information and provides some individual control over the use and collection of such information. The fundamental principle underlying this Act is that government institutions should not gather personal information unless it is justifiably relevant to a particular government activity.

The [Access to Information Act](#) provides the public with the right to access information held by federal government institutions; however, certain conditions apply.

The [Official Languages Act](#) ensures the equal status of both English and French as the country's official languages. It also guarantees that the public, including offenders, have the right to receive services in the official language of their choice when dealing with federal government institutions.

2. Mission of the Correctional Service of Canada

“The Correctional Service of Canada, as part of the criminal justice system and respecting the rule of law, contributes to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control.”

CSC’s Mission was first adopted in 1989. Its purpose is to give clear direction to all those who work within CSC in carrying out its responsibilities. The Mission offers practical guidance for today and inspiration for meeting the challenges of tomorrow.

Together with the laws that govern CSC, the Mission document is the framework within which policies and plans are developed, and decisions made.

3. 2007-08 Priorities and Beyond

In response to the challenges of managing a changing offender profile while contributing to public safety, CSC will focus on five strategic priorities:

Safe transition of offenders into the community

Effective corrections means reintegrating those offenders judged to be making satisfactory progress while also ensuring that criminals who may still pose a threat to Canadians and their communities are retained in custody. CSC is also concerned with crimes committed by offenders after the end of their sentences.

In this context, a key strategic priority for CSC is to reduce violent re-offending by offenders both while they are in communities under CSC's supervision and after the end of their sentence.

To contribute to public safety results, CSC will develop and implement integrated strategies that focus on purposeful intervention, correctional programs and effective supervision, as well as improved monitoring of the offenders' progress. A key focus will be on better assessing the potential of offenders to re-offend violently, designing tools and interventions to better identify and address those factors earlier and, where serious problems persist, providing a sounder basis for detention referrals.

Safety and security for staff and offenders in our institutions

CSC is committed to reducing institutional violence in order to create an environment that is safe for staff and inmates, and establishes the right conditions for maximizing correctional results.

In striving to reduce violence in institutions, CSC is faced with the challenge of managing a changing offender population. For the improvement of safety and security, CSC will focus on:

- Ways to reduce assaults and injury to staff, including enhancing protective equipment for staff and providing specialized training for correctional officers and other staff who deal with violent inmates;
- Enhancing security and self-defence awareness around inmate movement; increasing awareness of violent tendencies of specific offenders, and applying more effective communication techniques in interacting with violent offenders;
- Developing a more comprehensive gang management strategy, more effective risk assessment tools for violent offenders; and intensive programs that target violent offenders.
- Further reducing the entry, trafficking and demand for drugs in its institutions. CSC will also work more closely with local police forces and Crown prosecutors to develop a more proactive approach for dealing with cases where drugs are seized.

Enhanced capacities to provide effective interventions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders

CSC has improved its capacity to provide Aboriginal-specific interventions. However, it has not closed the gap between results for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders.

Aboriginal offenders have a higher rate of violent and non-violent re-offending while they are in communities under CSC supervision and once they have completed their sentence. The gap in the rate of re-offending by Aboriginal offenders must be narrowed, both while they are in the community and after the end of their sentence.

Given these gaps, the third strategic priority for CSC is to continue to enhance its capacities to provide effective interventions for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders and strive to narrow the gap in correctional results.

In addition, CSC must work horizontally with other government departments to address the challenges that contribute to the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system.

Improved capacities to address mental health needs of offenders

Over the last few years, CSC has witnessed an increase in the number of offenders diagnosed with mental health disorders at admission. As a result of these clear trends, the fourth strategic priority for CSC is to improve its capacities to address the mental health needs of offenders. This is needed to improve correctional results and will be achieved by providing a full-spectrum response to their broad and multidimensional mental health needs.

Strengthening management practices

CSC will also pursue a fifth strategic priority, strengthening management practices, to improve the way it delivers on these key strategic priorities, and more generally, on all aspects of its mandate.

To do this, CSC will:

- Respond to the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)
- Promote Values and Ethics
- Improve Internal Communications
- Strengthen Human Resources Management

4. CSC Transformation

The Government of Canada made a commitment to protect Canadian families and communities. To further this commitment, Stockwell Day, former Minister of Public Safety, announced the appointment of an independent review panel to assess the operational priorities, strategies and business plans of CSC with the ultimate goal of enhancing public safety. The panel's report was provided on October 31, 2007.

The panel reviewed CSC's 2007-2008 Report on Plans and Priorities and other relevant CSC documents. It visited CSC facilities and also consulted with stakeholders, justice experts, CSC staff and the general public. Based on this review, the panel provided the Minister of Public Safety with an independent assessment of CSC's contributions to public safety, and advice on how they might be strengthened.

The independent Review Panel made 109 recommendations, concentrating on five key areas:

1. Increasing offender accountability
2. Eliminating drugs from prisons
3. Developing employability/employment skills
4. Renewing physical infrastructure
5. Eliminating statutory release and moving to earned parole

There is much to consider in the years ahead about the Review Panel's findings and recommendations, and what they mean for CSC, its people, and its business. Obviously, this is an important juncture for CSC, and one that presents a historical opportunity to position CSC for the future.

