



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
MONTANA STATE PRISON
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE**

Procedure No.: MSP 5.5.104	Subject: INMATE HOUSING UNIT REPRESENTATIVES	
Reference: MSP 1.1.3, Organization and Responsibility		Page 1 of 3, plus attachment
Effective Date: July 1, 2006	Revision Date:	
Signature/Title: /s/ Mike Mahoney / Warden		

I. PURPOSE:

To establish procedures for the election of inmate housing unit representatives as a means of facilitating communication between inmates, unit staff, and the institution's administration.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Inmate Unit Representative - an inmate elected in a housing unit to bring forward concerns of other unit inmates to the Unit Management Team and MSP Administration. All housing units at MSP, with the exception of the MDIU, will have a designated representative.

III. PROCEDURES:

Inmate Unit Representatives will represent the inmate population in interaction with the Unit Management Teams and MSP Administration as outlined in this policy.

A. The purpose and scope of an Inmate Unit Representative is to:

1. Represent the general needs and views of the inmates from his housing unit by presenting these issues to the Unit Management Team.
2. Provide suggestions for improving living conditions and/or facility operations that effect inmates in the respective housing unit.
3. Encourage other unit inmates to adhere to rules, maintain clear conduct, cooperate with staff, and prepare for their transition within the facility and back into society.
4. Direct inmates with individual concerns to address them by contacting the appropriate staff member or going through the inmate grievance process.

B. Inmate Unit Representative Duties and Expectations:

1. Listens to concerns of inmates housed in the unit he is representing.
2. Presents the general concerns of inmates, and suggested solutions, to a member of the Unit Management Team as meeting agenda items (see section F.2. below).
3. Disseminates correct and accurate information to the other inmates in the housing unit from his meetings/interactions with members of the Unit Management Team.
4. Assists unit staff in communicating information to and from inmates on an "as needed" basis.
5. Interacts with all staff and inmates in a respectful and considerate manner.

C. Housing Unit Representative Qualifications/Criteria

Each housing unit will select a representative from the housing unit population. An inmate must meet the following qualifications/criteria to be eligible for consideration as an inmate representative:

1. A history of good behavior, with a minimum of six months clear conduct since his last

major write-up.

2. Have demonstrated oral and written communication skills and the ability to interact well with staff and inmates.
3. Be in good standing with the Unit Management Team.

D. Elections

1. The Unit Management Team will ensure that notices of an upcoming Housing Unit Representative election are posted not less than five days prior to the election.
2. Inmates from each unit will elect one representative according to the following process:
 - a. Once an election notice is posted the inmates from the unit may submit written nominations for the Housing Unit Representative to the Unit Manager.
 - b. The Unit Management Team will select up to three qualified candidates from those nominated. If no qualified inmates are nominated for the position the Unit Manager will ask for qualified volunteers. If more than one qualified inmate volunteers an election will be held. If only one qualified inmate volunteers the Unit Management Team may appoint him as the Unit Representative.
 - c. Staff will post the names of the candidates who accept the nomination and the date of election at least three working days prior to the election.
 - d. On the scheduled election day staff will supervise a secret ballot election.
 - e. At least two members of the Unit Management Team will tally the ballots and post the results of the election in the unit.
 - f. The inmate with the highest vote total will be the housing unit inmate representative for the designated term.

E. Terms

1. Unit Representatives will serve a six-month term. With the approval of the Unit Management Team, a second consecutive term may be considered, however the total term will not exceed one year.
2. If a Unit Representative resigns, transfers to another unit or institution, or is removed from the position for any reason, an election for a new Unit representative will be held as soon as possible.
3. Inmate housing unit representatives may be removed from the position or have their term cancelled if any of the following occur:
 - a. The representative fails to maintain a good disciplinary record - no major infractions.
 - b. The representative misuses or abuses the position.
 - c. The representative engages in any conduct or behavior that is determined to be inappropriate for a Unit Representative.
 - d. The representative exhibits an inability to interact or work appropriately with inmates or staff.
 - e. The representative engages in written or oral communications that are derogatory, accusatory, inappropriate, or have the potential to affect the security or orderly operation of the facility.

F. Meetings

1. The individual housing Unit Management Teams will meet at least monthly with the unit's inmate representative.
2. The Unit Management Team will schedule the day, time, and location of the meeting, and notify the unit representative.

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3. The Unit Representative must submit proposed agenda topics in writing to the Unit Management Team at least one week in advance of this meeting. Topics must relate to issues that affect the majority, or large groups, of inmates within the unit. The problems/concerns of individual inmates will be addressed through the inmate grievance procedure.
4. The Unit Management Team will fill out an *MSP Housing Unit Representative Monthly Meeting Form (attachment A)*, leaving the response/resolution sections blank. A copy of the form will be given to the representative prior to the meeting.
5. Discussion at the meeting will be restricted to the agenda topics on the form.
6. The Unit Management Team may invite additional staff or unit inmates to attend the meeting.
7. The Unit Management Team will fill in response/resolution sections on the form during or after the monthly meeting. Within ten working days of the meeting the Unit Management Team will ensure copies of the completed form are forwarded to the unit representative, Warden, Deputy Warden, Associate Wardens, Security Major, Command Post, housing unit Sergeants, Case Managers, and IPS Team, and are posted in the living unit blocks/cubes and appropriate bulletin boards.
8. If an agenda item isn't addressed at the meeting, or requires input from others, it will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
9. In the event the Unit Management team and the unit representative are unable to reach an agreement on an issue, the matter will be held in abeyance until the next unit managers meeting. The issue will be addressed with the Associate Wardens making the final decision. When resolved the issue and response will be added to the next unit meeting form.
10. Any items initially approved by the Unit management Team requiring IWF funding will be processed in accordance with *DOC 1.2.12, Adult Inmate Welfare Accounts/Miscellaneous Revenues*.

G. Supplies

The respective Unit Management Team will provide the representative with the office supplies necessary for his duties.

H. Records

Each Unit Management Team will establish and maintain a filing system to archive the written discussion topics submitted by the representatives as documented on the *MSP Housing Unit Representative Monthly Meeting Forms*.

I. Inmate Welfare Fund Representatives

The MSP Administration will select two inmates to serve as the representatives for the Inmate Welfare Fund (one Low Side IWF Representative and one High Side IWF Representative). One will be from the low side and one will be from the high side, and may be individuals from the Unit Representatives selected from the inmate population as outlined above.

J. Stipends

The housing unit and IWF representatives will receive a monetary stipend from the IWF as outlined in *MSP 5.1.2, Inmate Wage Plan* while they serve in these positions.

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IV. CLOSING:

Questions concerning this policy shall be referred to the Security Major.

V. ATTACHMENTS:

MSP Housing Unit Representative Monthly Meeting Form (attachment A)

MSP HOUSING UNIT REPRESENTATIVE MONTHLY MEETING FORM

Date of Meeting: ___ / ___ / ___

Housing Unit: _____

Staff Present: _____

Unit Representative: _____ ID#: _____

1. Agenda Item/Issue: _____

Response/Resolution: _____

_____ Resolution Date: ___ / ___ / ___

2. Agenda Item/Issue: _____

Response/Resolution: _____

_____ Resolution Date: ___ / ___ / ___

3. Agenda Item/Issue: _____

Response/Resolution: _____

_____ Resolution Date: ___ / ___ / ___

4. Agenda Item/Issue: _____

Response/Resolution: _____

_____ Resolution Date: ___ / ___ / ___

5. Agenda Item/Issue: _____

Response/Resolution: _____

_____ Resolution Date: ___ / ___ / ___

The above agenda items were discussed on the meeting date listed above and reflect the handling or resolution of the issues. My signature signifies that the Response/Resolutions noted are correct and accurate.

Staff Signatures: _____

Unit Representative Signature: _____

Copy to: Inmate Rep. Unit Bulletin Board(s) Unit Manager file Associate Wardens Deputy Warden Warden Security Major
Command Post Other: _____ Other: _____