

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to inform you about the conditions within California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's facilities, during this period of extreme heat. As I am sure you are aware, temperatures of over 115 degrees Fahrenheit are being reached in some areas of California this week, particularly South Central California, with an excessive heat warning issued for San Joaquin Valley, Coastal Range, Lower Sierra Foothills, Yosemite Valley, Kern River Valley, and Kern County desert. This has been an ongoing issue throughout these summer months, however minimal efforts have been implemented to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of the incarcerated population. For example, at many of CDCR's facilities, there are consecutive days where program is not run, and therefore there is limited/no access to showers and dayroom. At Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, it has been reported on some yards that when program is run, there are no fans available. There is also no air conditioning. What other type of institution does not provide the people housed inside it access to air conditioning, especially when the location of the institution is in an area that does reach extreme temperatures?

It is abhorrent and completely unacceptable that the most basic facilities are not available to our loved ones. It seems highly unlikely that staff are suffering these same conditions, partly because I am certain you would have a lawsuit on your hands if that were the case.

How is it acceptable (legally or morally) to allow human beings to endure these inhumane conditions?

Below is from California State Penal Code regarding treatment of animals in excessive heat. Our loved ones face this treatment, if not worse each and every day of this heatwave.

*"State Penal Code Section 597.7 PC makes it illegal for any driver to leave their dog inside of a vehicle unattended in conditions that may result in great bodily harm to the dog. Some dog owners who commit this offense will also face prosecution for animal cruelty. Some of the conditions are stated in Penal Code 597.9 that can endanger an animal, which include: Excessive heat or excessive cold."*

As noted on [cdcr.ca.gov](http://cdcr.ca.gov), the following are some precautions that should be implemented in circumstances of extreme heat:

*"During extreme heat situations, some actions that may be taken include:*

- *Increased access to water stations, fans, portable cooling units and ice.*
- *Housing unit cell windows may be opened if available.*
- *Alternative housing space, such as gymnasiums or chapels may be utilized, if needed.*
- *Additional access to showers may also be provided.*
- *Additional access to cooling stations in air-conditioned areas, such as clinics and mental health spaces.*
- *Consider conducting yard at night in order to limit daytime exposure to extreme heat, hold additional dayroom program opportunities and conduct recreational programs in a gymnasium.*

*Heat Contingency Plans:*

*Stage I: When outdoor temperatures exceed 90 degrees*

- *Incarcerated people identified as vulnerable to heat stress are moved indoors for recreation, to areas such as gyms, dayrooms and classrooms. Their time outdoors is limited to 30 minutes for travelling to classes, programs and job assignments but is not to include outdoor recreation.*

*Stage II: When indoor temperatures exceed 90 degrees*

- *Outside temperatures are monitored each hour.*
- *Vulnerable incarcerated people are moved to air conditioned spaces, such as offices and classrooms; fans are used to provide additional cooling capacity; and they are given more access to more frequent showers, bottled water and ice.*
- *Nursing staff who are trained to recognize heat-related illnesses tour housing units more frequently to monitor the health of inmates.*

- *Liquids with electrolytes are provided to incarcerated people if directed by the medical staff.*

*Stage III: When indoor temperatures exceed 95 degrees*

- *All of the relief measures listed above are continued.*
- *Nursing staff check on each inmate at least every two hours to prevent heat-related illnesses."*

All facilities should be adhering to this plan. It is not sufficient to just state that action will be taken. Action must be taken.

There is absolutely no concern for the wellbeing of the incarcerated population. The Ombudsman has been frequently contacted by myself and other family members that are concerned about the treatment of our loved ones during the summer months. We all receive almost identical stock responses back, about how they are monitoring the temperature etc, and that our loved ones should file 602 grievances themselves.

Surely it would save a considerable amount of time, effort and money to just provide the basic necessities that we are asking for, rather than respond to each and every complaint you receive with an evasive and futile response?

It is a matter of urgency to ensure that the temperatures inside California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's facilities are lowered as much as possible during this period of extreme heat, and that incarcerated individuals are granted ample access to cold water and ice, air conditioning, fans, extended day room, frequent showers and relief from the heat in any form the facility can provide. I implore your organisation to take action and for a change to take place regarding the treatment of those that are incarcerated, during this time.

This will continue to be an issue until it is resolved by CDCR. Families, friends, and concerned citizens will not stop complaining about this treatment and drawing your attention to this matter until effective action is taken by the California Department of Corrections.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. I await your immediate response.

Yours sincerely,