



“Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ U.S. Penitentiary Canaan,” May 2026

Hello, I’m Bill Blier, the Deputy Inspector General Performing the Duties of the Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the inspection of U.S. Penitentiary Canaan, known as USP Canaan. The institution houses male inmates in a high-security federal penitentiary and adjacent minimum-security satellite camp. This was our first inspection of a standalone US Penitentiary. We identified several serious issues during our inspection.

First, there were instances in which USP Canaan employees applied restraints in a manner that caused inmates severe discomfort and posed a risk of serious and lasting injury. Multiple USP Canaan employees told us that they had seen four-point restraints applied too tightly, which caused the hands of restrained inmates to swell and become discolored. While BOP policy allows for use of restraints in certain situations, it is impermissible to cause physical pain or extreme discomfort. The OIG had previously identified challenges the BOP faces in its policies relating to the use of restraints in a July 2025 management alert.

We also found that, for a variety of reasons, USP Canaan routinely limited inmate movement to maintain security. One common reason was that, when space was not available for inmates who needed to be placed in the Special Housing Unit, or SHU, those inmates remained in general population until SHU bedspace became available. Overall, we found that on a majority of days during a 4-month period, general population inmates spent all or most of each day confined to their cells. These frequent restrictions adversely affected the overall conditions of confinement of general population inmates.

Additionally, we identified deficiencies in the healthcare available to inmates, including the absence of an on-site physician; found hazardous items stored improperly in unlocked locations accessible to inmates; and identified issues with entrance and search procedures, such as failure to conduct monthly random employee pat searches as required. The security shortcomings significantly increased opportunities to introduce contraband, which is a major challenge throughout the BOP.

Lastly, we observed USP Canaan employees using inappropriate and demeaning language toward inmates and fellow employees and our team observed several instances of imagery associated with designated criminal groups, white supremacy, and antisemitism in employee-only areas.

We made nine recommendations to ensure effective operations at USP Canaan and safe conditions of confinement. To read the report, please visit our website, oig.justice.gov, or go to oversight.gov. Thank you.