

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Introduction:

This review is with respect to the circumstances surrounding the escape of an offender from the Cape Breton Correctional Facility on May 24, 2012.

Consideration:

The review considered:

- Methods employed by the offender to escape custody
- The actions taken in response to the incident
- Compliance with operational standards and requirements

Issue:

A 46 year old male offender breached security fences at the Cape Breton Correctional Facility on May 24, 2012 at approximately 3 PM. The offender was apprehended approximately 15 minutes later by correctional officers ½ kilometer from the Cape Breton Correctional Facility.

Facts:

- The offender was remanded into custody at the Cape Breton Correctional Facility (CBCF) on four Criminal Code charges.
- On May 24, 2012 at approximately 2:55 PM two correctional officers initiated the recreation program for offenders. The offender who escaped was one of the offenders that opted to participate in recreation.
- As the offenders were being escorted by correctional officers into the recreation yard, an altercation between two other offenders temporarily distracted the officer resulting in the offender being in the recreation yard unsupervised for 17 seconds.
- The offender then successfully breached the fences and maneuvering himself through the barbed razor wire and escaped into the surrounding woods in 58 seconds.
- Correctional officers responded to the escape in progress but were unsuccessful in reaching the offender to prevent his escape.
- The Cape Breton Police Service were notified of the incident at approximately 3:02 PM.

- Correctional staff initiated a foot pursuit into the wooded area to recapture the offender. At 3:15 PM the offender was sighted and subsequently re-captured approximately ½ kilometer from the facility by two correctional officers. The offender was placed into the custody of the Cape Breton Police Service at approximately 3:20 PM.

Findings:

- Video evidence indicates the offender was unsupervised in the CBCF recreation yard for 17 seconds.
- This unsupervised time enabled him to get a sufficient “head-start” that staff were unable to prevent his escape.
- Video evidence confirms the entire escape took 58 seconds.
- Evidence supports that the offender acted in isolation and that no other offenders knowingly assisted in his escape from the CBCF.
- Staff did not follow approved standard operating procedures with respect to escorting offenders within the building and issuing security equipment to the correctional officers who pursued the offender after his escape.
- There is no evidence to support comments made by the offender that the amount of force required to apprehend him was excessive.

Subsequent Actions:

- A debriefing with staff was subsequently conducted to ensure staff are aware of procedures for escorting within the building and for the issuing of security equipment, and to identify any other lessons learned from the incident.
- Changes were made to the security fences to reduce the ability of offenders to escape.
- The offender subsequently received a one month consecutive sentence for escaping custody.