



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Office of Communications
Phone: (601) 359-5608
E-mail: MDOCOfficeofCommunications@mdoc.state.ms.us

MDOC Searches Washington County Regional Facility

JACKSON – Mississippi Department of Corrections officers came up empty handed when they searched one part of the Washington County Regional Correctional Facility early Wednesday morning.

They found no contraband in the housing area for females only.

However, they encountered a different scenario when they searched the area where only males sentenced to prison are held while awaiting transfer to prison. Assorted smartphones, phone chargers, bags of tobacco, packs of marijuana and spice, cigarette lighters, loose cigarettes, packs of Top paper, shanks, a pocket knife, and a sock filled with rocks were among the contraband seized.

Also, correctional officer Africa Lance, 24, who works at the facility, was arrested and charged with misdemeanor possession of contraband after several illegal items, including an open bottle of vodka, were found inside her car. She has been found guilty and received three days in jail and fined \$1,000.

“Operation Zero Tolerance is not just for facilities,” Commissioner Pelicia Hall said. “It applies to staff as well.”

The shakedown is the 12th under Operation Zero Tolerance. Hall started the large scale shakedowns in March to prevent the flow of contraband to improve security at the facilities for staff and inmates.

“I am pleased to see that the female inmates were in full compliance with MDOC rules and regulations,” Hall said. “They appear to be more focused on serving their sentences and taking advantage of the programs that we provide to assist with their re-entry than getting involved in criminal behavior while incarcerated.”

Washington County Regional is one of 15 such facilities in the prison system. It had 236 inmates as of midnight; it can hold a maximum 300 inmates.

All facilities will be searched in the contraband crackdown Commissioner Hall began in March to make facilities safer for both staff and inmates.

The other locations searched so far are Stone County Regional Correctional Facility, George County Correctional Facility, South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Hinds County Restitution Center, Carroll-Montgomery County Regional Correctional Facility, Wilkinson County Correctional Facility, East Mississippi Correctional Facility, Marshall County Correctional Facility, Yazoo County Regional Correctional Facility, and Holmes-Humphreys County Regional Correctional Facility.