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Union wants lockdown after weapons found in prison

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Staff writer

The union representing corrections officers in a Livingston County state prison is calling for a lockdown after dozens of sharp metal objects were found in a recreational area.

Joseph Green, a business agent for the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, said 29 metal objects were recently found at the Livingston Correctional Facility in Groveland.

"This is an indication we may be facing a mass violence situation," Green said from his office in Lancaster, Erie County. "It's very alarming. ... We want to determine where these weapons came from, who is involved and to what extent."

He said 14 of the metal objects were discovered bundled together in the padding of a basketball support pole in a common area.

It's not known who put them there.

In addition, Green said he's troubled that 28 positive urine tests indicated drug use among inmates so far this year at the facility.

"It's very, very tense," Green said.

State Corrections spokesman James Flateau said officials believe the metal objects were handles from paint cans that were recently brought into the prison. The handles were supposed to be taken off in advance but were not.

"It was a good find by the officers. They do a good job of finding contraband," Flateau said.

"The superintendent reminded people that there was a procedure and they should follow it."

Flateau said the prison will not undergo a lockdown, during which inmates are restricted to their immediate living quarters while an extensive search is conducted.

"You find weapons in every prison," Flateau said. "All the weapons were found in one location, so probably only a couple inmates put them there. If you lock down the whole prison for the actions of a couple, you could have a whole lot of upset inmates that feel you are taking it out on them."

"That can very often cause more problems for staff."

Livingston Correctional Facility, with 874 inmates and 225 corrections officers, is next to the

Groveland Correctional Facility. Both are medium-security prisons.

Livingston, however, formerly was used exclusively for drug treatment, with inmates sent out on work release.

Flateau said more traditional inmates have been assigned to Livingston "and some staff at the prison don't like the changeover.

"But the future of the Livingston Correctional Facility is a medium-security traditional prison," Flateau said.

"That requires increased vigilance."

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