



Large Inmate Fight in the Yard at Cotsackie Correctional Facility

Warning Shot Fired by Staff from Yard Tower as Large Group of Inmates Began to Assemble and Approach Officers

For Immediate Release

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Cotsackie , NY – At approximately 2:00 p.m. on December 25, officers assigned to the center yard observed a physical altercation involving nine inmates—seven against two. Officers immediately issued verbal orders for the inmates to cease fighting and get on the ground. The inmates ignored all directives and continued to engage.

Officers deployed OC spray, which was effective on five of the inmates. The remaining four combatants continued to fight and were physically restrained using body holds, allowing officers to bring them under control.

During the incident, a large group of uninvolved inmates in the yard became hostile and began advancing toward staff in a threatening manner. Simultaneously, additional inmates from other areas of the yard ran toward staff. Due to high winds, the tower officer determined that deploying chemical agents from the tower would not be effective. Instead, the officer fired a warning shot into a designated safe area of the yard as the threat escalated.

Following the warning shot, the tower officer ordered all inmates to move to the wall. All inmates complied, allowing staff to regain control of the situation. Once order was restored, inmates were escorted out of the yard and returned to their respective cells.

The nine inmates involved in the original fight were escorted to the infirmary for medical evaluation. All refused treatment. Minor injuries were documented for each. Four inmates were placed in a Special Housing Unit (SHU) pending disciplinary charges, while the remaining five were housed in the Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU).

Several staff members sustained minor injuries—including back, knee, shoulder, and elbow strains—and were treated by facility medical personnel. All injured officers remained on duty after treatment.

Statement from Joe Horacek, NYSCOPBA Mid-Hudson Region Vice President:

“All officers who responded to the yard fight on Christmas Day did an excellent job quickly containing the nine-inmate fight. The officer assigned to the tower made an outstanding decision in assessing the threat as a large number of inmates advanced toward staff. His quick actions helped bring the situation under control and prevented further escalation. This incident is another reminder of how rapidly dangerous situations can develop inside correctional facilities, and we are grateful, that under the dangerous circumstances, no staff was seriously hurt.”