HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN AUDIT

Preparation for an MCCS audit should begin immediately upon licensing or at the conclusion of the audit. It is a good idea to listen to the auditors' suggestions offered during the inspections. Often, recommendations on how to improve audit performance with preparation are given at the exit conference. Your audit should be much easier, more relaxed, and shorter in time if you are well prepared. Here are some suggestions.

- Have all agency staff involved in the audit preparation. Delegate direct accountability to these staff persons. For consistency, assignments should last throughout the audit interim.

- Review each standard individually. Refer to the **Standards Manual** for compliance criteria and explanations.

- Conduct periodic self-audits using the standards worksheets as a guide. Network with other monitoring agencies. Pre-audits should take place at least six months prior to the actual audit in order to allow time to make adjustments where needed.

- Make sure your policies and procedures meet the standards requirements. When revising a policy and procedure, if you are not sure the revision will enhance compliance, contact MCCS staff to review before implementation. Routinely assess your policies and procedures against the actual practices and documentation.

- Develop a tickler system to monitor those functions that are required to be performed and documented at specific frequencies (weekly, monthly, annually, etc.).

Once you have been contacted by MCCS and have agreed on the audit dates, you should do the following to ensure a smooth inspection.

- Advise all personnel of the audit dates and the purpose of the inspection. Personnel who are involved and understand the purpose are more likely to take pride in doing a good job. Review the Audit Process section of the **Standards Manual** so you will know what to expect.

- Select a private area where the auditors will be able to review documentation.

- Review all secondary documentation to ensure it is complete. Centralizing this information in clearly marked files and/or boxes will help the auditors get through it quickly. Move the secondary documentation to the area where the auditors will be working. Agency staff should remain readily available during the course of the audit to answer questions, present additional documentation, and provide access to certain areas of the agency if needed.

- Ensure all secondary documentation is in order by standard. Chronological order is also important.

- Prepare documentation to show compliance with standards requiring staff training/awareness. A complete and up-to-date roster of employees should be prepared. The roster should list names, positions, and dates of employment. Be sure to include contractual and part-time employees. Sign-offs for awareness of complete policy and procedure manuals and inmate orientation materials are acceptable. Formal training, whether pre-service or in-service, is also acceptable.

- Assemble computer entries with appropriate hard copies available for crosschecking, the computer system's integrity.

The Commission staff approaches the audit process as consultants and problem solvers. The keys to a successful audit include cooperation and open communication between auditors and the monitoring agency both during and after the inspection. MCCS believes that working together toward the common goal of standards compliance will have a positive impact on private home detention in this state. With cooperation, communication, and networking with other monitoring agencies, the audit process can benefit all of us. Commission staff remains ready to provide technical assistance to you.