For Immediate Release:
November 19, 2019

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Assault Against a Correctional Officer at Southern State Correctional Facility

Waterbury, Vt., Nov. 19, 2019 – At approximately 10:15 a.m. today there was a disturbance at the Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF) in the India Unit. It began with the assault of a correctional officer. An inmate attacked the correctional officer while he stood at the officer's podium, striking him with a blunt weapon. While the assault on the officer took place, two inmates on the unit attacked an additional inmate.

Almost immediately, other officers responded to the incident, the first of whom deflected an attempted assault by using pepper spray to disable his attacker, before continuing on to the other three inmates who had instigated the assaults, and again using pepper spray to subdue the attackers. Department of Corrections staff secured the unit by locking the remaining inmates in their cells and securing those involved in the assaults and attempted unit takeover.

Approximately 30 minutes later, two inmates in the same unit barricaded themselves in their cell. SSCF's Special Response Team (SRT) and the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility SRT were activated, and the statewide Crisis Intervention team was placed on standby status. SSCF staff, after attempting to speak with these two inmates unsuccessfully, deployed a handheld diversionary device into the cell to safely resolve the situation.

The response today from all officers involved was swift and professional, bringing a dangerous and escalating situation quickly under control.

The assaulted officer sustained minor injuries and was treated and released by Springfield Hospital. Vermont State Police have been notified and will be conducting an investigation to determine if any criminal charges will be filed.

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