



18 June 2015

C71689

Cody Harbour
www.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Harbour

Thank you for your email dated 17 May 2015, requesting information about the number of staff assaulted by prisoners for the years 2013 and 2014. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The Department has a zero tolerance policy toward prisoner assaults on staff and other prisoners. Every assault incident that is identified, no matter how minor, is recorded and reported. All prisoners involved in an altercation are interviewed by prison staff, and prisoners may be charged with an internal misconduct charge if it is warranted.

The misconduct system ensures that prisoners who are subject to disciplinary action have their charges heard by a hearing adjudicator or by a Visiting Justice in accordance with legislation. If a prisoner is found guilty of non-compliance with the rules and regulations of the prison, they are disciplined in a fair, just and humane manner. If the prisoner pleads or is found guilty, the hearing adjudicator or Visiting Justice determines the appropriate sanction, which can include loss of privileges, forfeiture of earnings, or cell confinement. Serious assaults against staff or prisoners can be referred to the New Zealand Police for investigation and criminal charges may be laid against the perpetrators.

Assault incidents are categorised as follows:

- **Serious assault** is an act of physical violence that involves one or more of the following: sexual assault of any form and degree; bodily harm requiring medical intervention (assessment including medical treatment) by medical staff followed by overnight hospitalisation in a medical facility or bodily harm requiring extended periods of on-going medical intervention
- **Non-serious assault** is an act of physical violence that resulted in physical injuries that may or may not have required medical attention, but not overnight hospitalisation or on-going medical treatment
- **Assault no injury** is an act of physical violence that did not result in physical injuries or require any form of medical treatment. This can include behaviour such as spitting or pushing past a Corrections Officer.

You have requested the number of staff assaulted by prisoners for the years 2013 and 2014. A breakdown of assaults for the period 1 July 2012 to 24 May 2015 is tabled below as the Department records this information by financial year and the parameters of your request have been adjusted accordingly. Note that this information is for all closed investigations during this period only.

Prisoner on staff assaults from 1 July 2012 to 24 May 2015			
Category of assault	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Assault - Serious	13	6	7
Assault - No Injury	232	214	216
Assault - Non-Serious	109	100	95

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Department. Alternatively you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Lightfoot
National Commissioner