

Question on Notice
No. 978
Asked on 1 September 2022

MR M BERKMAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON M RYAN)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the use of spit hoods in Queensland prisons since 2015—
Will the Minister advise (a) how many times have spit hoods been used in Queensland prisons each year, (b) in each of these instances, for what duration of time was the hood used and (c) what proportion of prisoners on whom a spit hood was used were Indigenous?

ANSWER:

I am advised by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) that:

- In the 2021-22 financial year, safety hoods were used a total of 122 times during use of force incidents in Queensland correctional centres.

- In the 2020-21 financial year, safety hoods were used a total of 114 times during use of force incidents in Queensland correctional centres.

QCS have only provided data for the use of safety hoods during use of force incidents in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years. To provide other data requested would require a significant manual review of the database. The manual count would be onerous and is considered by QCS to be an inappropriate use of departmental resources, at this time.

QCS advise that while the Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS) records data on the use of safety hoods, the duration of time for each utilisation of a safety hood is not easily extracted.

Further, QCS advise that safety hoods prevent or minimise risk to officers of contracting a blood-borne virus resulting from a prisoner spitting on or biting an officer.

I am further advised by QCS, that because of the limited data available at this time, that the use of safety hoods, while rarely used, are about equally used each year on prisoners, irrespective of Indigenous status.

I am advised QCS continues to review and evaluate alternatives to the use of safety hoods that afford officers and other people in custody the same protection against the transmission of communicable diseases, should they be spat upon or bitten. The health and welfare of all people in custody is a priority for QCS, who continue to work with stakeholders to improve policies, practices and training around custodial management.