

The Technical Criteria document was first issued in 1979 to guide construction material and assembly requirements for new builds which were anticipated to address a forecasted inmate population growth. Defining requirements unique to the correctional environment was particularly important as CSC earned a departmental status of a 'knowledgeable client' in its working relationship with Public Works and Government Services Canada when delivering construction projects. During the subsequent period, a Facility and Standards professional staff complement would oversee capital construction projects across all five regions and contribute in keeping the standards current and relevant.

Since its first issue, the Technical Criteria document underwent several reviews which resulted in revisions to all sections. This occurred in the late 1980's and again in the early 2000's. A number of amendments were also issued in the intervening years. The current revision of this document is the third formal undertaking in order to capture a number of required changes and new standards.

Introduction of new or changed standards generally follows a review of outcomes of events such as:

- Incidents in institutions which demonstrate that current standards are no longer effective to ensure safety of the institution or effective custody of inmates,
- Introduction of new weapons or operational protocols which have an impact on facilities,
- CSC and government initiatives in the form of new directives and policies,
- Industry technological advances and the use of these in other jurisdictions as best practices.

When conducting reviews of standards aimed at capturing changes, CSC assesses the following key factors:

- Have technological advances been subject to the proof of time,
- If threat risk assessments are used to substantiate changes, are they evidence based,
- As a steward of public funds, are various options assessed and substantiated and are they supporting a cost effective approach to the delivery of our mandate to provide a safe and secure work and living environment.

The prescriptions in the Technical Criteria document have proven performance based on independent testing and history of actual usage. Standards are based on the best evidence available and for this reason when providing rulings either in the court of law or for any 3rd party review, consistency with standards must be established and achieved. Notwithstanding, special circumstances may lead an institution to require a unique solution. In such case, the institution must submit via their Regional Deputy Commissioner their requests to the Director General Technical Services and Facilities for consideration by an appointed committee composed of the Commissioner, the Senior Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner Correctional Operations and Programs and the Assistant Commissioner Corporate Services. Other Executive Committee members may also be asked to participate.