

## Corrections downplays gang-ordered hit on B.C. jail guard

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Dean Purdy, spokesman for the corrections branch of the B.C. Government Employees’ Union, says that after an inmate was assaulted in Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre on Sept. 6, jail staff uncovered a plot “that there would be an arranged hit on one of the correctional officers.”

Purdy said the officers learned the alleged threat was connected to a gang, and it was hoped both BC Corrections and the RCMP would investigate.

The assault of an inmate is being investigated, Kamloops RCMP Staff-Sgt. Grant Learned said Tuesday, but he said police are not investigating information about any threats against a jail guard.

Following the inmate assault, the jail was partially locked down until the afternoon of Sept. 7, and one inmate was taken to hospital for treatment of superficial stab wounds and was transferred back to KRCC.

“We have not received any reports of an attempt to arrange a hit on a correctional officer,” Brent Merchant, Assistant Deputy Minister for BC Corrections, said in an email Tuesday. “However, we are investigating an alleged threat to assault an officer.”

According to BC Corrections, there appears to be no immediate threat to the prison’s staff.

When told of the response of BC Corrections, Purdy maintained that whether or not it is found that a gang-related hit was ordered on a guard in Kamloops, staff in B.C.’s nine jails face constant danger from a volatile mix of affiliates from 130 different gangs.

He said prison living units are generally over-crowded, and they could be better managed with “rotational lockdowns” to keep various gang members segregated.

In a rotational lockdown, different inmates within a living unit are locked up at different times, Purdy said, giving the population freer access to amenities.

“We are constantly putting out fires (with gang conflicts),” Purdy said. “It’s a real juggling act. You could better segregate the gangs within institutions, and it would improve the safety for the guards and the inmates.”

BC Corrections said where the inmate assault occurred on Sept. 6, there were 37 inmates in a unit with capacity for 40.

Read more:

<http://www.theprovince.com/news/Corrections+downplays+gang+ordered+jail+guard/7226177/story.html#ixzz26rHoEEWc>