

## Media Release

August 2, 2016  
For Immediate Release

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Dawn-Renee Smith, Interim Communications Director  
402-479-5713; [dawnrenee.smith@nebraska.gov](mailto:dawnrenee.smith@nebraska.gov)

---

### **Nebraska State Penitentiary Locked Down**

(LINCOLN) – The Nebraska State Penitentiary is currently in a lockdown status. Today, at approximately 6:45 p.m. inmates from a general population housing unit were returning to their assigned living location from the dining hall and refused to exit the yard.

Multiple directives were given to disperse and return to the housing unit. A group of inmates gathered and converged on staff and a warning shot was fired from the tower. Also during this time, groups of inmates throughout the facility became defiant to staff directives and verbally aggressive. Subsequently, staff were then able to return the inmates to their housing unit and began locking down the entire facility.

“Facility staff regained control of the involved inmates and were able to secure the facility. At no time was the public in any danger,” said Warden Rich Cruickshank. “The majority of inmates are cooperative. However, the small percentage who are not put everyone at risk.”

Despite recent efforts to increase out-of-cell time and provide additional opportunities to be outside the housing units, over the last month staff have observed inmates being more defiant, disobedient and verbally threatening, particularly during meal times. In an effort to be proactive and ensure control and safety of both staff and inmates, measures were implemented to control inmate movement during meal times.

“Our mission is ‘keep people safe’,” said Director Scott Frakes. “Doing that requires controlled movement and compliance with rules. I am proud of the staff who managed the situation and pleased to note there were no injuries to staff or inmates during the incident.”

The facility will remain on lockdown status as the incident is investigated. Members of the public are encouraged to call the facility before coming for a visit. Information on facility movement will be released as operations resume.