

OSHA Issues Citations Following Drug Exposure Incidents at Thomson Federal Prison

Union Joins OSHA's Call for Immediate Mail Digitization

THOMSON, IL, UNITED STATES, November 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 4070 is acknowledging the conclusion of the

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Occupational Safety and Health Administration's investigation into drug exposure incidents involving staff at Thomson Federal Prison. OSHA has issued citations and recommendations intended to reduce the risk of hazardous exposure to synthetic drugs that enter federal prisons through the mail.

OSHA's findings referenced several exposure incidents that required medical evaluation for staff and routine Narcan administration. These incidents included exposures to substances such as fentanyl, amphetamines, and synthetic cannabinoids concealed in inmate mail. In 2024, a staff

member died following a drug exposure event linked to mail handling. In the past year, multiple incidents required hospitalization, including an April 2025 event in which several employees received emergency medical treatment.

OSHA recommended the Bureau of Prisons adopt additional controls, including digitized mail systems that convert inmate mail into electronic images before delivery. The agency and union note that similar systems piloted at FCI Beckley in West Virginia and USP Canaan in Pennsylvania, which limit staff contact with physical mail and reduce exposure risk.

AFGE Local 4070 has previously supported the adoption of advanced mail screening tools, including digitization, to reduce health and safety risks for correctional staff and inmates. Union President Jon Zumkehr said, “We are grateful OSHA has finally put the Bureau on notice. We lost a dedicated staff member to drug-tainted mail in 2024, and little has changed. Staff keep getting exposed while drugs traffic through the mail. Our employees are sitting ducks in the mailroom.”

AFGE Local 4070 will continue working with OSHA, the Bureau of Prisons, and facility leadership to support the implementation of additional safety measures intended to reduce exposure risks

for staff and inmates.

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