

CHANGES COMING TO LETTER OF AGREEMENT ON GAS MASK EXEMPTIONS

The Letter of Agreement that authorizes the 10% gas mask exemption lists will be renegotiated soon. The current letter will expire July 31. MCO and MDOC will meet before then to write a new letter that keeps the 10% seniority-based exemption lists.

MDOC had a concern with the

process that allows COs to get a medical exemption from the list. Originally, they wanted the current letter to expire at the end of this month. But after meeting with MCO, they agreed to let the current letter stand until the end of July to allow us time to negotiate a new letter.

Current medical exemptions will not carry over to the new list. In order to have MDOC consider your exemption for the new list, you must submit documentation to your personnel office by July 31.

MCO will release more info as it's available.

MCO LEADERS MEET WITH NEW MANAGER OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS UNIT

The new head of the MDOC Wellness Unit met with the MCO Executive Board this month.

Board members told Wellness Manager Lynn Gorski about the unique stressors COs face, including vacancies, mandated overtime, and the general negativity that can come with working in a prison.

Gorski has a solid track record of working with law enforcement and first responders. Before joining MDOC, she worked nine years with the Michigan State Police Behavioral Science Unit and focused on employee wellness.

"Wellness has always been a passion of mine, but as I progressed in my field ... I had the honor of working with first responders and individuals in the corrections field," Gorski said on the MDOC [Field Days Podcast](#). "I have a true respect for them,

the responsibilities they have, and the task that they've taken on. Also the high dedication and sacrifice that they have to be in this field." Go to the podcast to hear more about the wellness unit or read about it in this [KYI](#).

MCO leaders encourage members to keep an open mind about the wellness unit and recognize it signals positive that changes are occurring in the MDOC. Four years ago, no one was talking about corrections PTSD, except MCO leaders and members. Now, MDOC administration acknowledges PTSD among the ranks and has established a wellness unit to address it. There have been [legislative hearings](#) and several [media interviews](#) over the last few months about the stressors COs face. Just like the military changed their culture, we can change ours. MCO will continue to weigh in on PTSD and resources staff need.

Congratulations to the Tony Trierweiler class! 196 recruits training in Lansing graduated today. Additional recruits training in the UP graduated earlier this month.

Good luck as you start your MDOC career!



Join us for COPS Day at the Ionia Free Fair!

COPS Day at the Ionia Free Fair is Wednesday, July 17.

Corrections officers and other law enforcement officers are welcome to come out and get free snacks, MCO gear, and discounted ride wristbands. The fun starts at 1 p.m. at the hospitality center in the Administration Building. The fairgrounds are located at 317 South Dexter Street in Ionia.

See you there.

IN MEMORIAM: CO PHILLIP ABBOTT



Baraga Officer Phillip Abbott passed away June 21.

Abbott had four years with the MDOC and worked at Baraga during his entire time as a CO. Officers say he was a great work

partner who was always upbeat and smiling.

Abbott leaves behind two young sons and a wife.

Services were held Thursday.

Rest in peace, Officer Abbott.