

## **HOW ARE YOU ASSIGNED A PRISON (DESIGNATION)**

When the (B.O.P. Bureau of Prisons) decides what prison they will use to warehouse an inmate, this decision is called 'designation'. Periodically, the B.O.P. (the case manager, the warden and or Regional headquarters) will review an inmate's case and may re-designate the inmate to another facility.

A custody classification questionnaire is used in Sentry software to determine an inmate's custody points which is used to recommend an inmate's custody level. [This process of designation is rather involved.](#)

The bottom line is that the B.O.P. does whatever they want in the designation process for whatever esoteric reasons or non-reasons they may have. In recent times, inmates are being shuffled where the B.O.P. is short of bodies in relation to bed space. The defendant (or incarcerated inmate) may or may not be allowed any genuine participation in the designation process. [If a judge orders a spot, it may be followed; if he/she recommends one it is likely to be ignored.](#)

Nor does designation insure prompt movement to the designated facility. There may be a delay from the time of self-surrender until the new inmate gets into general population of the prison. If you self-surrender while drunk, you may find yourself placed in the hole (SHU, Segregated Housing Unit)

Foremost, defendants (and inmates) need to recognize that no matter where they are designated, they will always face the challenges of getting along with staff and inmates. There will always be rules and procedures to learn and follow. [Most people are just about as happy as they make up their minds to be.](#) The first task the inmate can do to help himself/herself is to maturely adjust to whatever situation he/she is placed into. Like the weather, we can learn to live with it, or allow it to ruin our happiness. This is the attitude behind the prayer "God grant me the serenity to accept what I can't change."

However, there may be ways for a defendant to influence his/her designation, and this is where McDorman & Associates Consulting may be helpful. [This is one reason it is important to make sure the PSI, which produces the PSR – Pre-Sentence Report, is done as favorable to the inmate as possible](#) (see above: THE PSR: The Defendant's PSI & PSR Are Very Important). The defendant is wise to seek help to protect his/her interests during the PSI process.

A warning is in order. Please realize that if the B.O.P. has the slightest doubt as to a custody designation they will manipulate their calculations (this is referred to as a management variable) to provide them with a higher designation, until the inmate has

proven himself/herself qualified to go to a lower designation. It is not unusual for someone to end up at a higher designation than what one would expect, until the B.O.P. moves him/her to a more appropriate custody level. One of the B.O.P.'s manipulation mechanisms is management variable, which means they can disregard what the calculations say about your custody level. Most management variables are placed on an inmate's case without his/her approval.

Realizing ahead of time what will happen will set you free from your fears of the unknown, and help you be mentally prepared for the difficulties. Part of why McDorman & Associates will be important in providing help is that we will give you truthful expectations. Overcome the unknown with the truth, and the truth shall set you free (of your fears).

A defendant (or inmate) can negatively affect his/her designation. An inmate is not allowed to have previous relationships with the designated staff.

A defendant (or inmate) who caused waves (demands his/her rights, for instance) will be shipped away from home. While retaliation is not an official policy of the B.O.P., they are determined to show an inmate they have ultimate power over him/her. It will help the defendant (inmate) to learn how to work with the B.O.P. as much as possible. If issues arise, and they always do, learn to deal with the B.O.P. in a respectful manner. The B.O.P. staff is recognized as the boss and the inmate's attitude acknowledges his/her subordination status.

Where you are designated does make a difference, but the inmate can learn to make the best of any situation.

Where you are designated will be decided by the B.O.P. but you may be able to influence that decision in a positive or negative way.

We, McDorman & Associates, are here to help you.