



POLICY DIRECTIVE

Policy:	DOC 1.5.12 RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOR CASE PLANS
Effective Date:	11/01/2016 Page 1 of 7 including attachment
Revision Date(s):	03/12/2024
Signature/Title:	/s/ Brian Gootkin, Director

I. POLICY

The Montana Department of Corrections will complete risk and needs assessments on all offenders in accordance with the requirements of 53-1-203, MCA and this policy.

II. APPLICABILITY

All Department divisions, facilities, and programs, facility licensees of the Department, and those providing services to the Department as required by contract.

III. DEFINITIONS

Case Plan – An evolving document that outlines case management strategies designed to engage the offender, target individual risks and needs, and track progress as the offender transitions through the correctional system.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) – A structured systematic process that is used to review and monitor the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of evidence-based practices. The process includes the identification of areas in need of improvement and the development and implementation of coaching plans, including an evaluation of the efficacy of implemented actions.

Criminogenic Needs – Attributes that are directly linked to an offender’s risk to re-offend and must be addressed to achieve lower recidivism rates.

Criminogenic Risk – The characteristics, traits, problems, or issues of an individual that directly relate to the individual's likelihood to re-offend and commit another crime.

Current Assessment – A MORRA is current if completed in the past 12 months and the offender has experienced no life-altering events during that period.

Life-Altering Event – Any significant happening in an offender’s life that would impact two or more domain areas. Examples of a positive event that could impact two or more domains are completion of programming and establishing stability in employment. Examples of a negative event that could impact two or more domains are job loss and removal from programming/treatment. These impacts can both be positive or negative which would change a domain-specific score.

Quality Assurance of Evidence-Based Practices and Programs Bureau (QAEBPP) – The Bureau that oversees correctional best practices including training, implementation, and adherence to risk assessment instruments as well as core risk-reducing programming offered to offenders.

Responsivity – Addresses the non-criminogenic or non-predictive hurdles or barriers in an offender’s life that may influence the offender’s response to programming/treatment and thereby affect the offender’s risk to reoffend.

Secondary Assessments – Other assessments and/or evaluations used in conjunction with the overall and domain-specific scores of a risk assessment to aid in refining the offender's needs. These include crime-specific risk assessments (for example, sexual, DUI, substance abuse, and intimate partner violence) or clinical evaluations.

IV. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES

A. Assessments and Tools

1. The Department of Corrections is required by law (53-1-203 MCA) to conduct standardized, evidence-based, and validated risk and needs assessments on each offender under supervision or custody to drive the department's supervision and correctional practices, including integrating assessment results into supervision contact standards and case management for offenders.
2. The assessment tools approved by the Department are contained in *Attachment 1: Department-Approved Risk and Needs Assessments* and will be reviewed by QAEBPP every 3 years.
3. Only certified assessors may administer risk and needs assessments to offenders.
4. If an offender refuses to participate in an assessment, they will be managed at the highest risk designation. The refusal must be indicated in all release documents (for example, parole reports, conditional release requests, and CDFS requests).

B. Training Requirements for Risk and Needs Assessments

1. Certified Instructors:
 - a. Staff must meet the following prerequisites before being approved to become a certified instructor of risk and needs assessments or secondary assessments:
 - 1) be a certified assessor of the tool, and
 - 2) complete 15 or more offender assessments of the risk and needs assessment or secondary assessment.
 - b. Instructing other staff requires a significant time commitment from the instructor. As such, individuals interested in being certified instructors for risk and needs assessments or secondary assessments must receive approval from their supervisor and the Rehabilitation and Programs Chief, or their designee. Staff will use the *QAEBPP Evidence-Based Instructor Application* webform to apply to become a certified instructor.
2. End User Training:
 - a. Each Division Chief must designate which positions are responsible for administering risk and needs assessments (end users) and share those position titles and locations with the QAEBPP Bureau.
 - b. End users are defined as staff who:
 - 1) have successfully completed all requirements to use the tool;

- 2) use the tool to case plan from assessments, make placement decisions based on assessments, or enter completed risk assessments; and
 - 3) are direct supervisors of an end user. Direct supervisors of an end user must successfully complete one training on the MORRA tool to learn the research behind the tool and obtain the MORRA manual to be used in the CQI process. This excludes Division Chiefs.
- c. End users must:
- 1) complete the risk and needs assessment training course and pass any associated tests to obtain certification to conduct assessments;
 - 2) complete booster trainings annually and be recertified every three years (by the end of calendar year three) – booster and recertification training will be coordinated by the QAEBPP Bureau; and
 - 3) be trained in Motivational Interviewing within 12 months of hire.
- d. If an end user fails to attend or complete the required training, the QAEBPP Bureau Chief or designee will:
- 1) notify the end user's supervisor prior to privileges being revoked, and
 - 2) revoke their privileges to enter assessments into the offender management system until training is completed.

C. Conducting Risk and Needs Assessments and Timelines

1. Each offender under supervision or in custody must have a current MORRA unless there is an acceptable extenuating circumstance (documented in a chronological entry), including if the offender:
 - a. absconded from community supervision,
 - b. is incarcerated out of state and a telephonic interview is not possible,
 - c. is incarcerated in another jurisdiction within the state (a request will be made to the nearest office),
 - d. threatened assessment staff which poses an unnecessary risk of safety to staff, or
 - e. refused to participate in the assessment process.
 - 1) If an offender refuses, the offender and two department staff will complete the *Refusal* form which will be uploaded to the offender management system. Staff must document in a chronological entry that an attempt was made at least every 6 months to complete the assessment with the offender.
2. All offenders will have an initial assessment completed and uploaded into the offender management system within 90 days of sentencing (if on community supervision) or placement into a secure facility or assessment center.
3. Reassessments must be completed annually within 30 days prior to the current MORRA expiring, or when a life-altering event occurs (either positive or negative) as defined in this policy.

D. Developing Case Plans and Timelines

1. Each offender will have an active case plan developed from the domain-specific results of the risk and needs assessment that addresses two or more of the highest dynamic need areas.
 - a. For secure facilities, each offender will have a written case plan.

- b. For offenders on community supervision, case plans are not required for low-risk offenders; however, staff may develop case plans for low-risk offenders if the offender has high needs.
2. Approved secondary assessments may also be used to help staff identify high-need areas not easily identified by the risk and needs assessment.
3. The case plan will also include dynamic need factors that staff and the offender prioritize as required by court judgments, Department-imposed conditions, BOPP conditions, offender responsibility needs, and any crime-specific requirements. Examples of dynamic need factors that may be present in conditions may include completion of ACT class, payment of restitution, participation in offender/victim dialogue, and completion of anger management.
4. Case plans developed by staff must:
 - a. be created in cooperation with the offender and tailored for that specific offender based on their unique risk and needs;
 - b. address any responsibility issues identified in the risk and needs assessment or secondary assessments;
 - c. identify targets for behavior change, goals and objectives, timeframes for completion, and performance indicators; and
 - d. undergo periodic review and update by staff and offenders as indicated by staff and offender signatures (on paper forms).
5. If an offender refuses to participate in the risk and needs assessment process, a case plan will be developed based on the dynamic need factors that staff and the offender prioritize as required by court judgments, Department-imposed conditions, BOPP conditions, offender responsibility needs, and any crime-specific requirements (as outlined in IV.D.3. above).
6. Supervisors must regularly hold case staffing meetings (for example, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly depending on program characteristics) on the work-unit level with staff who develop case plans and manage offenders. The case staffing meeting will have a written agenda where offender progress in case plans is discussed. QAEBPP will provide the agenda format to work units.
7. Case plans should ideally follow the offender through subsequent correctional placements. Staff receiving the offender are encouraged to communicate with the previous placement/program staff about the offender's individual characteristics and progress.

E. Recordkeeping

1. All risk and needs assessment forms are copyrighted; therefore, none of the documents will be disseminated to any individual who is not an authorized or certified department or contracted staff member. The only exception to restricted distribution is the proper use of the MORRA self-report form which is intended to be handed to the offender immediately before the assessment interview and collected immediately following the interview.
2. Staff will score the risk and needs assessment, using the scoring guide, immediately following the interview when all information from the specific offender is fresh in their mind. Scoring can be completed by using a paper score sheet or entering directly into the offender management system.

3. Documentation for risk and needs assessments in the offender management system will be completed as follows:
 - a. Within five working days of the assessment interview and scoring, staff must enter the information generated from the interview and scoring into the corresponding module.
 - 1) In the section comments area, for each domain, staff must document which information was used to determine the score for each item (file review, collateral contact, offender interview, and/or self-report).
 - 2) Prior to finalizing the assessment tool in the offender management system, staff must review all scores and notes for accuracy.
 - 3) Once an assessment is finalized in the offender management system, it can only be edited with approval from staff authorized by the QAEBPP Bureau.
 - b. All risk and needs assessment documents must be uploaded into the offender management system assessment module. For MORRA this includes the Interview Guide, Self-Report, and Scoring Sheet (if used). Paper copies of the assessment forms are not required to be kept or maintained and will be destroyed once the forms are uploaded.
4. Documenting secondary assessments in the offender management system will be completed by making a chronological entry describing the information and scores gathered from the secondary assessment and uploading documents into Offender Documents.
5. Documenting case plans in the offender management system will be completed as follows:
 - a. Within five working days of the case plan meeting, staff must enter the information into the system.
 - b. All updates to the case plan over time must also be reflected in the system so that subsequent staff/placements can view the progress.

F. Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

1. Risk and needs assessment information is used for a variety of offender processes including processes that are designed to reduce recidivism. All staff have a vested interest in ensuring risk and needs information is accurate and reliable. To that end, all staff are responsible for quality assurance over risk and needs assessments including the specific requirements of staff indicated below.
 - a. The QAEBPP Bureau will:
 - 1) approve all qualifying offender assessment tools used by staff;
 - 2) initiate validation of risk and needs assessment(s) as required by statute;
 - 3) coordinate training for the standardized risk and needs assessment, any secondary assessments that require training, and case plan tools used by the Department;
 - 4) upon creation or updates, review any Facility/Bureau procedures pertaining to risk and needs assessments;
 - 5) administer a mandatory CQI Process for supervisors to ensure certified assessors are conducting risk and needs assessments and staff are developing case plans with fidelity;
 - 6) provide regular training to supervisors on the CQI Process;
 - 7) provide coaching and feedback strategies to supervisors for use with staff if there are deficiencies identified in the CQI Process;
 - 8) review all CQI Reports submitted by supervisors to identify areas for ongoing improvement; and
 - 9) review recorded risk and needs assessments conducted by newly trained staff using the information provided by the owners of the assessment systems and provide feedback

to staff and their supervisors. Feedback may include recognition of positive techniques or identification of deficiencies with specific improvements staff can make to address deficiencies.

- b. Each Division Chief or designee is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and must:
 - 1) oversee the development of any division-specific procedures that may be needed to outline the use of assessments, and
 - 2) verify staff participate in the CQI process by reviewing the CQI Reports on an annual basis.
- c. Supervisors of staff conducting risk and needs assessments and/or developing case plans must:
 - 1) implement the CQI Process with staff after being formally trained and provide the required reports to their Division Chief or designee and the QAEBPP Bureau Chief,
 - 2) coach staff using the CQI Process and obtain additional information and/or resources from QAEBPP Bureau staff if deficiencies are identified,
 - 3) use the tool(s) developed by QAEBPP with staff to ensure risk and needs assessments and case plans meet the requirements of this policy, and
 - 4) regularly review any reports from the offender management system to identify offenders that require risk and needs reassessment and discuss that information with their staff.
- d. Staff conducting risk and needs assessments must:
 - 1) following initial training and completion of a minimum of 10 assessments, record and submit the 11th assessment to QAEBPP@mt.gov for review/feedback/final certification – this process should be completed within the initial six-month period following training but may be extended;
 - 2) participate in the CQI Process with their supervisors;
 - 3) participate in booster training annually and maintain certification; and
 - 4) regularly review any reports from the offender management system to identify offenders who require reassessment and discuss that information with their supervisor.
- e. Staff using risk and needs assessment information for developing case plans must:
 - 1) participate in the CQI Process with their supervisors,
 - 2) participate in regular case staffing meetings in their work unit, and
 - 3) participate in booster training annually and maintain certification.
- f. Staff who make placement decisions based on assessments or staff who enter completed risk assessments must participate in:
 - 1) any CQI process as determined necessary by QAEBPP, and
 - 2) booster training annually and maintain certification.

V. CLOSING

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Quality Assurance of Evidence-Based Practices and Programs Bureau Chief.

VI. REFERENCES

A. 53-1-201, 53-1-203, MCA

VII. ATTACHMENT

A. *Attachment 1: Department-Approved Risk and Needs Assessments*



Attachment 1: Department-Approved Risk and Needs Assessments

Tool	Description	Validated to Measure
MORRA PIT Prison Intake Tool	Designed to assess offenders' risk as they enter prison or designated assessment centers. (Note: The PIT is not intended to determine an offender's supervision level.)	Risk and need
MORRA SRT Supplemental Reentry Tool	Designed for offenders currently in prison who have been incarcerated fewer than four consecutive years on their current incarceration.	Risk and need
MORRA RT Reentry Tool	Designed for offenders currently in prison who have been incarcerated four or more consecutive years on their current incarceration.	Risk and need
MORRA CSST Community Supervision Screening Tool	Designed to screen offenders in the community. Individuals who score "Moderate/High" should be assessed with the CST.	Risk only
MORRA CST Community Supervision Tool	Designed to be used with offenders in the community, for example, community supervision or in a prerelease center.	Risk and need
OYAS-RES Residential Tool	A tool that is designed to be used with youth who are entering a residential program with an intended length of stay of 3 months or longer.	Risk and need
OYAS-RET Reentry Tool	A tool designed to be used with youth prior to release from a residential facility and as a reassessment tool once in the community on parole.	Risk and need
OYAS-DIS Disposition Tool	A tool designed to be used with youth post-adjudication while on parole prior to a revocation hearing.	Risk and need
AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test)	An alcohol screen that can help identify offenders who are hazardous drinkers or have active alcohol use disorders (including alcohol abuse or dependence).	Domain-specific need only
Static-99R	Used for qualifying adult male sex offenders; completed once by a licensed evaluator at the time of the psychosexual evaluation. If not completed by evaluator, assessment may be completed by a P&P Officer within 45 days of the offender's arrival in the community.	Risk only
Stable-07/Acute	Used for qualifying adult male sex offenders or male offenders with child pornography conviction; may be completed by a P&P Officer within 45 days of offender's arrival in the community and at 12-month intervals thereafter.	Risk, need, and domain-specific need
SOTIPS (Sex Offender Treatment Intervention and Progress Scale)	Used as a rating scale designed to assess dynamic risk among adult male sex offenders and degree of change at 6-month intervals.	Risk, need, and domain-specific need
TCU (Texas Christian University) Drug Screen 5, Opioid Supplement	Screens for mild to severe substance use disorder; helps determine placement and level of care in treatment; Opioid Supplement is not scored, should be used in conjunction with the DSM-V diagnostic impression, and may be used as a tool for treatment planning.	Need and domain-specific need
ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment)	Used to calculate how a male who has assaulted his female partner ranks among similar perpetrators with respect to risk and the likelihood that he will assault a female partner again in the future.	Risk only