

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



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NEWS RELEASE

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Corrections Director Ryan hands down discipline after Marcia Powell death investigation

Phoenix, Az.- Arizona Department of Corrections Director Charles L. Ryan announced Tuesday he dismissed five employees, two of whom resigned in lieu of dismissal, demoted a captain to an officer and suspended another 10 employees in response to the death of Inmate Marcia Powell.

Ryan made the decision after an exhaustive internal investigation into the actions that led to the death of Powell in May at Arizona State Prison Complex-Perryville. Powell was left in an outdoor holding enclosure for nearly four hours on May 19 before collapsing. She was taken to West Valley Hospital where she died early May 20.

“These supervisors and officers, to varying degrees, failed to properly perform their duties,” Ryan said. “The actions that I am talking about today do not represent the important public safety job the vast majority of our officers do on a daily basis in our 10 complexes. These incidents do not characterize the department as a whole or the good work we do protecting the public.”

Since the death of Powell, Ryan has instituted new policies regarding the use of enclosures. The Department added shading, misting systems and water to enclosures. Recreational time will be spent either in the morning or evening hours. And Ryan eliminated the use of enclosures for medical observation.

In addition to the internal investigation, the Department completed a criminal investigation that was reviewed by the state Department of Public Safety before being submitted to the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office on Aug. 20.