



South Carolina Department of Corrections

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For immediate release

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COLUMBIA, S.C. – Today, SCDC moved Death Row from Kirkland Correctional Institution to Broad River Correctional Institution to the unit originally built to house these inmates in 1988.

This move will address some of the concerns raised in a recent lawsuit filed on behalf of the Death Row inmates.

Space at Broad River was freed up when the Department of Mental Health's Sexually Violent Predator unit was moved to a new DMH facility on the Broad River campus.

For most of the Death Row inmates, the new unit will operate more like a general population dorm. They will not interact with the general population at Broad River.

Most of the inmates will have jobs on the unit such as serving meals, cleaning the common areas, laundry or assisting fellow inmates with disabilities. They also will have the opportunity to worship together in services coordinated by the institution chaplain.

For the past year, the agency has worked to strengthen the unit's security measures to house these inmates. Before renovation plans were set, agency leadership visited Death Row facilities in other states and brought back ideas and best practices to incorporate in both the physical layout and programming.

Today's move went smoothly and was completed before noon. The inmates packed their rooms this morning and the items were searched and inventoried. They carried their bags to the buses and boarded them for the short ride to Broad River. All movement on the prison complex was stopped until the inmates were secured inside the new unit, and the S.C. Law Enforcement Division helicopter watched from above. Both institutions are behind the security gate that faces Broad River Road, and there was no chance for interaction with the general public.

The staff who worked on Death Row at Kirkland transferred with the inmates and will now work at Broad River. South Carolina has 38 inmates on Death Row, but one is incarcerated in California for crimes committed there.

Death Row was housed at Broad River when the institution opened in 1988. It was moved to Lieber Correctional Institution in Ridgeville in 1997, where it remained for two decades. SCDC moved it Kirkland in Columbia in 2017 in part because the tight labor market in the Charleston region made it difficult to retain staff.

“We are glad to be able to return this unit to its original purpose,” S.C. Department of Corrections Director Bryan Stirling said.

The agency Rapid Response and Special Operations Response teams, with the assistance of SCDC Police Services and SLED, carried out this operation.