South Carolina Department of Corrections

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For immediate release
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COLUMBIA, S.C. – The S.C. Department of Corrections informed S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson today that the department is now able to carry out an execution by firing squad as required by law under S.C. Code 24-3-530.

The legislation, which became law on May 14, 2021, makes the electric chair the state's primary means of execution while giving inmates the option of choosing death by firing squad or lethal injection if those methods are available.

The Capital Punishment Facility at Broad River Correctional Institution has been renovated to include the capacity to perform an execution by firing squad. Protocols have been written, and the department is ready to carry out an order of execution by firing squad if the inmate chooses this method.

Here is an overview of changes at the Capital Punishment Facility:

> The death chamber has been renovated to accommodate a firing squad. The chamber now includes a chair in which inmates will sit if they choose execution by firing squad. The chair is in a corner of the room away from the current electric chair, which cannot be moved.
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> Bullet-resistant glass has been installed between the witness room and death chamber.
> The firing squad chair is metal with restraints and is surrounded by protective equipment. The chair faces a wall with a rectangular opening 15 feet away.

Here is an overview of the protocols for carrying out an execution by firing squad and a description of what witnesses would observe:

> Three firing squad members will be behind the wall, with rifles facing the inmate through the opening. The rifles and open portal will not be visible from the witness room. All three rifles will be loaded with live ammunition.

The witnesses will see the right-side profile of the inmate. The inmate will not face the witness room directly. The electric chair faces the witnesses directly.

The inmate will wear a prison-issued uniform and be escorted into the chamber. The inmate will be given the opportunity to make a last statement.

The inmate will be strapped into the chair, and a hood will be placed over his head. A small aim point will be placed over his heart by a member of the execution team.

After the warden reads the execution order, the team will fire. After the shots, a doctor will examine the inmate. After the inmate is declared dead, the curtain will be drawn and witnesses escorted out.

Members of the firing squad are volunteer SCDC employees. They must meet certain qualifications.

The department spent about $53,600 on supplies and materials to make these changes, comply with the law and add safety precautions. The construction and design work was done in-house.

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