

Study: Most inmates in multiple units

The majority of inmates within state prisons in Alaska are housed in multiple occupancy units, according to a national study released through the School of Justice Statistical Analysis Unit at the University of Alaska-Anchorage.

The study, completed by the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, shows that about three-quarters of Alaska inmates are housed in multiple-occupancy units. This figure is 12 percent higher than the national average.

The study reports that on a nationwide basis the prison population con-

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finied to state-operated facilities increased 45 percent between 1979 and 1984.

In Alaska, according to state Department of Corrections figures, the inmate population has more than tripled since 1979. Growth in prison space

nationally was limited to 29 percent, resulting in a decrease in the average amount of space available for each prisoner.

The study showed that Alaska state facilities have an average of 71.4

square feet for each inmate. The national average is about 57 square feet.

The Alaska figure exceeds minimum standards set by the American Corrections Association of 60 square feet for each inmate.

The national study found little evidence that population density levels were directly associated with elevated death rates, inmate assault rates or institutional disturbances. Instead, such events tended to occur more frequently in maximum security facilities, regardless of their population densities.