

# Pre-Christmas assaults on guards at pretrial centre spark calls for staffing increase

BY JOHN COLEBOURN, THE PROVINCE    DECEMBER 25, 2010



North Fraser Pretrial Centre in Port Coquitlam.

**Photograph by:** Ric Ernst, PNG

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Jail is a tough place at Christmas time.

Three correctional officers at the provincially run North Fraser Pretrial Centre know that all too well after they were beaten up by inmates in separate incidents last week.

The latest attacks come just weeks after a correctional officer was badly beaten at the same facility, said Dean Purdy, chair of the BCGEU Correctional and Sheriff Services section.

Jail can be a dangerous place for everyone during the Christmas holidays, Purdy said.

Not only are many of the prisoners depressed about missing the holidays on the outside, many are drinking homemade liquor, he notes.

Overcrowding at the Port Coquitlam facility is also a big problem. The jail was meant to house about 300, but now has upwards of 650 inmates on any given day.

