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CoreCivic investigating security breach at Hartsville prison

CoreCivic said it was investigating after someone who was not authorized made it through the prison checkpoint last week and into the Trousdale Turner Correctional Center. "There was a lack of communication with our food services vendor with regards to clearance status," said Amanda Gilchrist, Public Affairs Director for CoreCivic. "Once it was discovered, we addressed it. "We're going to work with the vendor to determine what happened and the breakdown in communication." Gilchrist said an applicant showed up, went through the security checkpoint at the entrance to TTCC and was taken along to the food service area with other employees before it was discovered that the person was not yet cleared to be on site. Upon being found, the person was escorted from the facility. Sources told The Vidette that the security checkpoint was unmanned overnight when the person arrived and that it was hours, into the day shift, before the breach was discovered. Gilchrist also declined to comment on reports that a TTCC employee was forcibly strip-searched recently, citing ongoing investigations. She also declined to comment on reports that a number of TTCC staffers, reportedly including an assistant warden, have been placed on administrative leave as a result. Sources told The Vidette about the reported strip search and the employees reportedly placed on leave. According to Tennessee Department of Correction policy, "no forcible searches shall be conducted" of an employee. Strip searches of staff require the prior approval of the warden, also per TDOC policy. "We're cooperating fully and out of respect for that process, we can't comment at this time," Gilchrist said.