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~~\$~~560m upgrade for prison

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Stanley prison will begin a \$560m rebuilding programme next year, improving and expanding outdated facilities, installing closed-circuit TV and electrifying the institution's security systems.

The refurbishment of the 1930s institution will take 18 months and will involve reconstruction of kitchens, cell blocks, the perimeter fence, the visiting area and administrative offices.

"When a prisoner arrives, he will have registration, a body

search, his interview, and be issued with a uniform, blanket and be escorted inside, all from the same room," said John Wong, the prison's chief superintendent.

At the moment, extra supervision is needed because prisoners are moved around during admission procedures.

"We will also increase perimeter security," Wong said. "Now we have a chainlink fence, but will put in a metal wall and add 120 closed-circuit cameras along the perimeter road and the interior, so we can monitor movements."

He added that electronic

systems will replace manual locks and keys.

Stanley, a maximum security prison with 235 high-risk inmates among its 1,604 male prisoners, opened in 1937.

In 1962, after prison riots caused by overcrowding, an internal wall was constructed, to create segregated areas for troublesome inmates, while hurricane fences around the inner perimeter created a security strip between the walls and the prison yard.

Most cells remain without toilets and prisoners must move outside their cell blocks to enter the dining area. New

kitchens will be built next to the cells, and joined by corridors to the blocks.

Metal sinks and toilets will be installed in each of the 1,600 cells, ending the half-hour "slopping-out" every morning.

The first phase of improvements will enlarge the visiting areas by 20 per cent.

"There will be a lot of workmen coming in and out," Wong said.

"We'll have to supervise all the activities, but we have experience with this kind of thing. We'll manage."