



## SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

*Kelly A. Martinez, Sheriff*

*Rich Williams, Undersheriff*

August 18, 2025

MaryAnne Pintar, Board Chairperson  
Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board  
1600 Pacific Highway, Suite 251  
San Diego, CA 92101

### **CLERB POLICY RECOMMENDATION: 22-056**

Dear Chairperson Pintar,

The San Diego County Sheriff's Office welcomes and supports the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board's (CLERB) independent review of complaints alleging improper actions by members of the Sheriff's Office. The San Diego County Sheriff's Office continuously strives to respond with professionalism and concern to the citizens we serve, and the CLERB process provides invaluable input to that end.

CLERB sent SDSO the following recommendations, reference CLERB Case #22-056:

- 1. It is recommended the San Diego Sheriff's Department implement a policy which ensures temporary holding cells are searched for any contraband prior to an incarcerated person (IP) being placed there.**

Thank you for your recommendation regarding this issue. Below is the response to your policy recommendation:

On average, the San Diego County Sheriff's Office (SDSO) processes between 150 and 400 new bookings a day of incarcerated persons amongst three booking detention facilities. Those booking facilities include the San Diego Central Jail (SDCJ), the Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility (LCDRF), and the Vista Detention Facility (VDF). The majority of holding cells in the booking areas of these facilities are often occupied at all times of the day or night. It would be impractical to empty and search holding cells prior to placing each incarcerated person into a holding cell as multiple incarcerated persons are typically housed in the holding cells and moved into and out of these cells throughout the booking process until they are either released or moved to another floor for long-term housing.

Although not policy, SDSO training teaches that SDSO sworn staff should, before placing an incarcerated person into an empty holding cell, conduct an inspection of the holding area for weapons, drugs, or any other items of contraband that may pose a safety risk to incarcerated persons

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or SDSO personnel. SDSO sworn staff are also taught to inspect other areas before placing incarcerated persons in them, to include the visit rooms. Sworn staff are also taught to inspect the holding area of a vehicle before and after transporting arrestees and incarcerated persons.

In response to any serious incident in a holding cell, including fights, uses of force, or medical emergencies, deputies are trained to make sure the holding cell where the incident occurred is clear of contraband, equipment, weapons, medical supplies, bodily fluids, evidence of a crime, or any other security threats before placing an incarcerated person back into that holding cell.

The SDSO Detention In-Service Training Unit created a "Tactical Tip" training bulletin titled: *"Clearing Holding Cells of Contraband before placing an Incarcerated Person."* This Tactical Tip was distributed to all sworn staff assigned to SDSO detention facilities on August 6, 2025, via the Learning Management System (LMS).

In closing, we appreciate the time and effort of the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board. Thank you for your service to the citizens of San Diego County and for the recommendation. Our goal is to provide the highest quality public safety service to everyone in San Diego County.

Sincerely,

KELLY A. MARTINEZ, SHERIFF

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JJ' or 'Jarjura', is written over the printed name of Joseph Jarjura.

Joseph Jarjura, Lieutenant  
Division of Inspectional Services

KAM: JJ



Kelly A. Martinez  
Sheriff

Human Resource Services Bureau, Detention In-Service Training Unit  
Telephone: (619) 258-3111

***San Diego County***

**SHERIFF**

August 6, 2025

## **TACTICAL TIP**

### **Clearing Holding Cells of Contraband before placing an Incarcerated Person**

In our ongoing efforts to ensure safety and security within our facilities, it is important to follow best practices regarding the clearance of holding cells of contraband. Maintaining a secure environment is paramount to our mission. Contraband can pose significant risks to the safety of both staff and incarcerated individuals. Below are recommendations for sworn staff to apply when feasible.

1. Before placing an incarcerated person in an empty holding cell, sworn staff should conduct an inspection of the area, checking for any unauthorized items, including weapons, drugs, garbage, or other forms of contraband.
2. Deputies should verify the professional visits room is clear of contraband before and after the placement of an incarcerated person.
3. Deputies should inspect and clear the court holding cells for trash, debris and contraband prior to incarcerated person(s) placement.
4. Following any incident inside a cell (e.g., a fight, use of force, medical emergency), deputies should verify the holding cell is clear of contraband, equipment, medical supplies, bodily fluids, and other hazard or security threats before placing an occupant.

These best practices can be applied to any area an incarcerated person is being placed, including vehicles, holding cells, dry cells, other types of cells, housing areas, search rooms, visit rooms, etc. By following these practices, deputies can create a safer and more humane environment for staff and incarcerated persons, potentially saving a life. Additionally, making sure an area or cell is free of contraband prior to placing an incarcerated person in it, will aid in prosecution if illegal items are found and the search is properly documented.