

SAN DIEGO COUNTY DETENTION FACILITY INSPECTION REPORT

SUMMARY

The San Diego County Grand Jury is entitled to free access at all reasonable times to the public prisons, and to the examination, without charge, of all public records within the County (California Penal Code §921). Also, it is mandated by California State law that the County Grand Jury “inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county”, per California Penal Code §919(b). In compliance with this requirement, the 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inspected seven adult detention facilities operated by the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, and five juvenile facilities operated by the San Diego County Probation Department.

Independent of the Grand Jury, it is mandated that the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), a separate statewide entity that develops and maintains standards for operating state and local adult and juvenile detention facilities (www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions_Boards/CSA), inspect all facilities bi-annually pursuant to California Penal Code §6031.1, in compliance with California Code of Regulations Title 15 (*Crime Prevention and Corrections*), and California Building Standards Code Title 24. CSA also assists these agencies in their efforts to remain compliant with minimal standards and assess juvenile detention facilities to determine their suitability for detaining minors. The following is a condensed synopsis of CSA’s recent (January 2010) Local Inspection Report for the adult detention facilities. The complete inspection report is on file with the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department and copies are available upon request:

- No deficiencies and clearance granted for Fire and Safety
- No compliance issues for Health and Environmental
- No compliance issues for Health and Medical
- No compliance issues for Health and Nutrition

Overcrowding and understaffing are two of the highest priorities concerning adult detention facilities in San Diego. The Grand Jury addressed both of these chronic issues at each detention facility. In spite of logistical constraints, the Grand Jury found the detention facilities to be operated by a highly professional, well-trained, and motivated staff.

PROCEDURE

The Grand Jury employed the following criteria during on-site inspections of both adult and juvenile facilities:

- Exterior and interior physical condition
- Professionalism of the staff
- Diversity of the staff

- Appearance of detainees
- Cleanliness and safety of all kitchen equipment, including utensils
- Conditions of infirmaries, classrooms, recreation areas, gyms, libraries, laundries, vocational training areas, and randomly selected individual cells

ADULT DETENTION FACILITIES

The Grand Jury inspected the following adult detention facilities (websites are provided for more specific information):

- San Diego Central Jail: Primary intake facility for the County, male only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/SDCJ
- Las Colinas Detention Facility: All classification levels, female only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/LCDF
- South Bay Detention Facility: All classification levels, male only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/SBDF
- Vista Detention Facility: Primary intake for North County, male and female
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/VDF
- George Bailey Detention Facility: Maximum security facility, male only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/GBDF
- East Mesa Detention Facility: Medium security facility, male only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/EMDF
- Facility 8 Detention Facility: Medium security facility, male only
www.sdsheriff.net/detentionfacilities/FAC8

DISCUSSION

When viewing the Daily Inmate Population Report, it is important to understand the difference between population and capacity. Population is the actual number of inmates in custody on any given day. Capacity is the pre-determined number of inmates that can be housed at each particular facility.

The George Bailey Detention Facility, East Mesa Detention Facility, and Facility 8 are not under court ordered capacity limitations. For these facilities, the Sheriff's Office has developed a "self imposed" cap based on the total number of beds.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Information gathered regarding issues of understaffing and overcrowding was gained by interviewing certain Sheriff Command staff members, and some staff of each facility.

Fact: In June 2009, Descanso Detention Facility (located in Alpine) was closed permanently.

Fact: Las Colinas Detention Facility is the only adult detention facility in San Diego County that is currently overcrowded.

Finding 01: As a consequence of closing Descanso Detention Facility, its staff was dispersed throughout the remaining adult detention facilities in San Diego County. As a result, facilities are now staffed at an operational level which in turn allows them to run more smoothly and efficiently.

Finding 02: The County's General Services Construction Manager is expecting to issue a Request for Proposal in the Fall of 2010 for the contract to build a new woman's prison to replace Las Colinas.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors:

10-36: Expedite all phases involved in replacing Las Colinas Detention Facility.

DISCUSSION

Every adult detention facility in San Diego County relies on video recording devices for safety, liability, and protection of staff and detainees alike. Guards have the ability to keep a closer eye on inmates, and supervisors have the ability to review digital images of questionable situations involving staff members. It is essential to have equipment that not only covers every area of the jail where inmates congregate or have access, but also to provide a seamless chronicle of any occurrence involving violence, accidents, mistreatment of staff or detainees, or any other suspect activity, all of which can result in lawsuits and loss to the taxpayers of San Diego County.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: Of the seven adult detention facilities the Grand Jury inspected, George Bailey is the only facility equipped with video recording devices that meet its needs. The \$950,000 upgrade was completed in 2005.

Finding 03: Although no official requests for funds have been made, the Grand Jury concludes that complimenting, supplementing, or augmenting video recording equipment will prevent further financial burden to tax paying citizens of San Diego County. Some of the present deficiencies prohibiting sufficient surveillance in the facilities are:

- Video equipment that does not run continuously
- Video equipment that is not complimented with audio capabilities
- Lack of cameras monitoring areas where inmates congregate, some of which are known volatile areas such as booking rooms, sober cells and dayrooms.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Sheriff's Department:

- 10-37: Evaluate existing video recording equipment at every adult detention facility in the County, excluding George Bailey Detention Facility, and determine whether or not the existing equipment is adequate; and complete the appropriate upgrades or modifications for the purpose of ensuring the safety and well-being of staff, detainees, and visitors.**

COMMENDATION

The adult detention facilities in San Diego County employ inmates as labor in the laundry, food service, sewing, and in a myriad of other production services, saving the County hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is no simple task to orchestrate and oversee these operations. Acknowledgement and distinctive praises are extended to all staff at the San Diego Sheriff's Department including the medical staff.

JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

SUMMARY

Juvenile detention facilities have unique needs distinct from adult detention facilities. The RAND Corporation, a non-profit think tank which provides objective research and analysis, did a study known as the *Eight Percent Study*. This study confirms that childhood experiences predispose youth to become juvenile delinquents. There are many factors that mold socially unacceptable behavior. Many of the youth offenders have been exposed to many of the following adverse childhood experiences:

- Violent neighborhoods
- Chaotic home life
- Gang affiliation
- Problems in school
- Criminal, substance abusing, or mentally ill parent(s)

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury toured the following juvenile detention facilities operated by the Probation Department of San Diego:

- East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility: male only
www.co.san-diego.ca.us/probation/juvenile/EMJDF
- Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility: males and females
www.co.san-diego.ca.us/probation/juvenile/KMJDF
- Juvenile Ranch Facility (Campo): male only
www.co.san-diego.ca.us/probation/juvenile/JRF
- Girls Rehabilitation Facility: female only
www.co.san-diego.ca.us/probation/juvenile/GRF

- Camp Barrett: male only
www.co.san-diego.ca.us/probation/juvenile/Camp_Barrett

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury also visited the following non-detention facility:

- Polinsky Children's Center: A temporary emergency shelter for children
www.promises2kids.org/polinsky

INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury gathered information from interviews with senior psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, principals, and staff at the juvenile detention facilities in the County of San Diego. Although juvenile delinquency doesn't guarantee a lifelong penchant for crime, the detention facilities in San Diego County demonstrate that well planned placement of youth offenders into the appropriate facility will more likely than not have a positive impact on their futures. Furthermore, the blueprint for behavior modification used in San Diego's juvenile detention facilities has demonstrated that the rate of recidivism *can* be reduced by approximately seventy-five percent. Overall, the Grand Jury was highly impressed with the operation of San Diego's juvenile detention facilities. These facilities are well managed by a competent, devoted staff of professionals who see the youth offenders for "not *where* they are but *who* they are." This carefully planned environment parlays discouraging futures into burgeoning redirection that will benefit the youth as well as society.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: Since the last inspection on July 15, 2009, Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility has had nine suicide attempts by asphyxiation using bunk beds.

Fact: The new South Bay Expressway (I-125) is the most convenient artery to East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility for employees. Because the expressway charges a substantial toll, the majority of the staff avoids this commute for economical reasons.

Finding 04: Single beds may assist in reducing suicide attempts at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

Finding 05: Providing free passes for the I-125 toll road would halve lengthy commutes for the employees of East Mesa Juvenile Facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends the San Diego County Probation Department:

10-38: Take steps to deter suicide attempts at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility by asphyxiation, such as replacing all bunk beds with platform-style single beds (“safe beds”).

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends the San Diego County Board of Supervisors:

10-39: Consider taking the steps needed to purchase prepaid FasTrak® electronic transponders (which mount onto vehicles) at a group rate for the staff of East Mesa Detention Facility.

DISCUSSION

During a visit to Polinsky Children’s Center, a temporary emergency foster care facility in San Diego, the Grand Jury witnessed children interacting with dogs. The dogs had been brought to the center by volunteers from various non-profit organizations dedicated to providing education and therapy by working with animals. Animals can have a calming effect on children by lowering blood pressure and relieving anxiety in addition to instilling a sense of responsibility. This is referred to as Pet Encounter Therapy (PET). Law enforcement professionals and mental health experts have had great success with PET therapy for children that have been victimized or traumatized.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: Pet Encounter Therapy has a positive effect on children.

Finding 06: Pet Encounter Therapy should be implemented because the financial benefits of curbing the recidivism rate far outweighs the financial burden that “revolving door” criminals impose on taxpayers.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends the San Diego County Probation Department:

10-40: Incorporate a Pet Encounter Therapy program into the other types of successful programs presently implemented at juvenile facilities.

DISCUSSION

The Juvenile Ranch Facility (JRF), located in Campo, is part of the Camp Lockett Historical District, which was designated a California Landmark in 2003. The County of San Diego General Services department is responsible for the maintenance of the buildings. However, the Director of JRF has been informed that because the buildings are historical landmarks no maintenance can be done without approval from San Diego County Historic Site Board (HSB). Belonging to an historical society brings inherent responsibility to adhere to the ordinances that ensure preservation of said structure(s);

therefore, it is essential that there be no grey area as to the agency responsible for maintenance and repair. The building facades of the Juvenile Ranch Facility need to be restored and maintained given the climatic conditions.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: Ordinance 9493 Section III, relating to the San Diego County Local Register of Historical Resources, defines an alteration to a historic structure as an addition, relocation, demolition, or any change affecting the exterior visual qualities of an historical resource, including but not limited to architectural features, visual characteristics, design and materials, *excluding routine maintenance*, and the Historic Site Board is to be consulted and to and make recommendations of approval or denial of the proposed alteration.

Fact: Ordinance 9493 Section XII “Duty to Keep in Good Repair” states the owner of a Historical Resource(s), located within a Historical District, shall keep in good repair the exterior portions of all such Historical Resource(s) and the interior components thereof whose maintenance is necessary to prevent deterioration and decay of any exterior element of a Historical Resource(s). Generally, an historical resource that is maintained and repaired in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties will maintain its historical significance.

Fact: Juvenile Ranch Facility’s exterior façade is deteriorating from lack of maintenance and repair.

Fact: Replacement of any structural element such as window frames, original siding, or roofing to the Juvenile Ranch Facility would require approval from the San Diego Historical Site Board.

Fact: Routine maintenance to the Juvenile Ranch Facility, including painting, patching, replacement of broken glass, and landscaping do *not* need approval from the Historic Site Board.

Fact: The carpet at the Juvenile Ranch Facility in the classrooms and medical clinic is frayed and badly worn.

Finding 07: The Juvenile Ranch Facility’s exterior maintenance has been neglected and is deteriorating. Clarification needs to be made regarding whose responsibility it is to maintain and repair the buildings on this historic site. If any physical upgrades or changes are questionable, within the scope of repair and maintenance, there needs to be communication among San Diego County’s General Services, San Diego’s Historic Site Board, and the Juvenile Ranch Facility’s management.

Finding 08: The Juvenile Ranch Facility's badly worn carpet poses a trip and fall hazard which is dangerous to the children and employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors:

10-41: Direct San Diego County General Services to repair and restore the building facades at the Juvenile Ranch Facility and develop a schedule for routine maintenance.

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Probation Department:

10-42: Replace the carpet in the classrooms and medical clinic at the Juvenile Ranch Facility in order to be compliant with safety standards.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: The floors in the Unit 60 hallway at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility are badly worn.

Finding 09: The badly worn surface of the floors at the Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility poses a safety hazard for the youth and employees. Potential accidents and possible lawsuits amount to monetary loss that inevitably trickles down to taxpayers.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Probation Department:

10-43: Resurface the floors in the Unit 60 hallway at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility in order to be compliant with safety standards.

COMMENDATION

The education available for youth at juvenile detention facilities is not compromised due to special circumstances relating to their offender status. In fact, if a youth offender is placed in the appropriate facility specific to their needs, determined by highly qualified professionals, they will be enrolled in programs that will overcome educational hurdles in concert with improving self esteem. The principals, teachers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and their staff of counselors are especially gifted when it comes to diagnosing and facilitating youth offenders in the juvenile detention facilities of San Diego County. The 2009/2010 Grand Jury members who were not previously familiar

with the juvenile detention system remain profoundly impressed and extend equal commendations to all staff who partake in the commitment and devotion to those youth.

REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The California Penal Code §933(c) requires any public agency which the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, to comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. Such comment shall be made *no later than 90 days* after the Grand Jury publishes its report (filed with the Clerk of the Court); except that in the case of a report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to a department or agency headed by an elected County official (e.g. District Attorney, Sheriff, etc.), such comment shall be made *within 60 days* to the Presiding Judge with an information copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.

Furthermore, California Penal Code §933.05(a), (b), (c), details, as follows, the manner in which such comment(s) are to be made:

- (a) As to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
 - (1) The respondent agrees with the finding
 - (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.
- (b) As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
 - (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
 - (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
 - (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
 - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
- (c) If a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the Board of Supervisors

shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

Comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in compliance with the Penal Code §933.05 are required from the:

<u>Responding Agency</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Date</u>
San Diego County Sheriff's Department	10-36, 10-37,	07/19/10
San Diego County Board of Supervisors	10-36, 10-39, 10-41	08/18/10
San Diego County Probation Department	10-38, 10-40, 10-42, 10-43	08/18/10