

# **ADULT DETENTION FACILITIES—SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

## ***SUMMARY***

California State Penal Code Section 919(b) mandates that the San Diego County Grand Jury inquire into the condition and management of the detention facilities in the county every year. The 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) toured seven adult detention facilities operated by the San Diego Sheriff's Department.

At two of the facilities, the Grand Jury noticed significant repair and maintenance issues, including nonfunctional security cameras at George Bailey Detention Facility and an inoperable elevator and sally port door at the Vista Detention Facility. According to the Sheriff's Department Policies and Procedures Manual, emergency maintenance is advisable for repairs that "significantly impair the operation of the facility or the safety of the staff or inmates." The Grand Jury believes that repair of the observed malfunctioning items should be a priority and recommends that all such repairs be addressed immediately, if not completed already.

## ***PROCEDURE***

During each facility visit, the Grand Jury interviewed staff members, spoke with inmates, and noted the physical condition and management of the facility, inquired about programs available to inmates, and evaluated the overall conditions.

The Grand Jury toured the following adult detention facilities:

- San Diego Central Jail
- Facility 8 Detention Facility
- George Bailey Detention Facility
- South Bay Detention Facility
- East Mesa Re-entry Facility
- Vista Detention Facility
- Las Colinas Detention and Re-entry Facility

## ***DISCUSSION***

### ***San Diego Central Jail (August 3, 2016)***

The San Diego County Central Jail (SDCJ) is primarily a booking facility, although it also houses some longer-term inmates as a result of AB 109. It also houses inmates awaiting arraignment or transfer to another facility. At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to SDCJ, the observed areas were clean and the inmate population was below capacity. The Grand Jury acknowledges that the presence of long-term prisoners creates a unique and complicated situation for the sheriff's department and for staff.

The Grand Jury observed several stages of the booking process, which takes place on different levels of the facility. Jurors were also shown various sections of the jail, including holding cells, safety cells, administration segregation units, as well as medical and mental health units. Jurors

also learned about the intake procedure to screen all arriving inmates for mental health problems and suicidal tendencies.

### **Positive**

- The medical facility was large, adequately staffed, and equipped to treat a multitude of health issues, including dental services and dialysis.
- Inmates are continuously evaluated for suitability for transfer to re-entry programs.

### **Negative**

- Although much attention is paid to mental health care, and the available services seem adequate, on-site psychiatric services are provided for only eight hours daily. During off hours, off-site contracted psychiatric services are available only through teleconferencing.
- A lot of activity takes place in the booking area, which is small for the intended purpose. If more than one person is being processed at the same time, there did not appear to be enough security to avoid a possible dangerous situation.
- Suicide assessment procedures undergo continual revision, with different models being employed. Care has been given to inmates at risk of suicide, with the means to commit suicide mostly eliminated. For example, the second tier in dual-level cells has been enclosed to eliminate the possibility of inmates jumping. Nevertheless, the suicide rate at SDCJ continues to be significantly higher than in other counties, even counties larger than San Diego, such as Los Angeles.
- The odor of urine was very strong surrounding the safety cells.
- Although tables and stools were available in the common areas that the Grand Jury observed, there was no evidence of books, puzzles, or games that the jury had been advised were available to inmates. Jurors were told that books are available by purchase through Amazon or Barnes and Noble, or from family members.
- Recreation facilities and opportunities are sorely lacking, consisting of a small concrete area with only a pull-up bar for exercise. During the Grand Jury's visit no one was using that space.

### ***Facility 8 Detention Facility (August 17, 2016)***

Facility 8 is a medium-security facility that houses approximately 200 inmates, a number that routinely fluctuates. The buildings consist of six modules, some of which are dormitory style, with the remainder consisting of single-person cells. Inmates are classified as level 1 through 4, with level 1 being those presenting the least risk. Most inmates are awaiting trial or sentencing;

however, some are serving sentences as long as four years. Inmates can work in the laundry, facility, the kitchen, or in landscaping.

The facility appeared clean and well-maintained, with outdoor recreation areas for fresh air and sunshine. The Grand Jury inspected the observation tower and the outside recreation areas, and observed the common areas and multipurpose room, where classes and other activities take place. The jury was told that mental health assessment is ongoing. Medical facilities are limited. Inmates with severe medical conditions are typically assigned to the George Bailey Detention Facility.

### **Positive**

- In the areas the Grand Jury observed, board games, playing cards, newspapers, and books were available in the common areas outside of cells for inmates to use.
- The common areas the Grand Jury observed also contained Coke machines and a phone bank.
- High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), religious, anger management, and Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous programs were provided.
- Equipment is on order to provide more options for recreation (step-up boxes, treadmills, rowing machines).

### **Negative**

- Only one multipurpose room for 200 inmates.
- No re-entry programming; however, low-level inmates transfer to the East Mesa facility for such programs.
- No organized recreational activities.

### ***George Bailey Detention Facility (August 17, 2016)***

George Bailey Detention Facility (GBDF) is a maximum-security facility physically identical to Facility 8; however, it houses an average of more than 1,500 inmates, with a rated capacity of only 1,380. Approximately 300 inmates are classified and placed in protective custody (protected from other inmates) because of high-profile crimes, crimes against children, or diminished capacity. More than 350 inmates are identified as gang members. Inmates at GBDF are classified from levels 1 through 6, with level 1 being the lowest-risk prisoners and level 6 the highest. Like Facility 8, some modules are dormitory style while others consisted of single-person cells. GBDF also has an administrative segregation module, whose inmates are reviewed every seven days to determine housing suitability.

A contracted psychiatrist is on-site eight hours daily, with video psychiatric conferencing available at other times. Inmates can have jobs ranging from simple labor to kitchen duties. Housing in one unit is provided for ADA and older inmates with medical conditions.

The areas that the Grand Jury observed were clean and well-maintained, except for a broken window in the Enhanced Observation Room, which rendered the room unusable. One multipurpose classroom exists that is used primarily for book storage and one computer. Inmates do not seem to have access to this room.

Based on jurors' observations of areas shown, the following was noted:

**Positive**

- Incentive-based programs allow those inmates who qualify to have access to dorm modules, which contain phone banks, vending machines, and a game room.
- Video conferencing is available for attorney and clergy visits.
- Competing gang members are identified so that each gang can be housed in separate units and not allowed to mingle during meals or common-area time.
- Family visits are face-to-face, albeit on a telephone through a glass wall.

**Negative**

- Only three counselors serve 1,500+ inmates.
- Broken glass in the enhanced observation room is a safety and security hazard.
- As with Facility 8, the recreation areas contained only a pull-up bar, although jurors were assured that additional exercise equipment was on order.
- Half of the security cameras throughout the facility appeared nonfunctional as the glass covering the cameras was cloudy, creating a safety and security issue.
- The analog door-opening system appeared to be at least 25 years old.
- Technology in the observation tower is far inferior to that in Facility 8. The technology is old, outdated, and the Grand Jury was told that it is expensive to maintain.

***South Bay Detention Facility (August 31, 2016)***

The South Bay Detention Facility (SBDF) is for housing only; it has no booking/intake function. It is an incentive-based facility for mostly level 4 and 5 inmates. The jail has four identical modules, each containing approximately 100 inmates. The entire facility is located underground,

beneath the South Bay Regional Justice Center, and areas that the Grand Jury observed appeared clean and well-maintained.

The jail has limited medical facilities, with a contracted doctor on-site only four hours every Wednesday morning. Doctors are on call at other times. There are three staff nurses, which means care is available 24/7.

In order for an inmate to be housed in an incentive-based module, which can lead to a work position in the facility, he must pass an interview and agree to all components of a learning program. The program takes place five days a week and includes HiSET training, yoga, meditation, cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), food handling, and anger management courses. Many of the courses are taught by Grossmont Adult Education.

If an inmate agrees to participate in the program, he is able to spend up to 10 hours daily with other inmates in the common area outside the cells. A chaplain is on-site with an office directly attached to the classroom.

The Grand Jury had the opportunity to speak with inmates in one of the common areas. All inmates commented on how this facility differed from others, and all agreed being better equipped for re-entry into society after release. They felt better prepared to find jobs and stay away from bad influences. One inmate commented that the classes and therapy sessions he had taken would give him the tools to reintegrate with society and stay out of jail.

Areas the Grand Jury observed were evaluated as follows:

#### **Positive**

- The facility is well-lit and did not have the feel of being underground.
- Programs are designed to prepare inmates for life outside of detention.
- The recreation area had pull-up machines, a rowing machine, a handball court, and a ping-pong table.
- Eighteen laptops are available for inmate use.
- Inmates working in the kitchen can receive food-prep certification from the Grossmont School District.

#### **Negative**

- Second tier walkways are not enclosed, which presents a suicide risk. However, inmates identified as being at risk for suicide are not housed in this facility.

#### ***East Mesa Re-entry Facility (September 7, 2016)***

The East Mesa Re-entry Facility is a medium-security facility geared toward successfully reintegrating inmates into society on release. The facility provides incentive-based housing

(IBH) that allows AB 109 and mainline inmates more freedom and re-entry preparation if they agree to a full range of programming, including HiSET preparation and cognitive behavioral therapy. These inmates also have access to jobs in the print shop, yard, laundry, commissary, or meal preparation/bakery. Inmates receive individualized counseling to design a case plan that will prepare them for re-entry into society once their sentences are complete.

The facility consists of six housing units, two of which house newly arrived inmates. Those housed in these two units must earn points through good behavior and participation in programs to move to one of the housing units for working inmates. Once in the less-restrictive units, inmates have access to a large outdoor recreation area with exercise equipment as well as increased privileges. Inmates in dorms A, C, and D must be enrolled in a program administered by Grossmont Adult Education. There are two classrooms per dorm, along with one probation officer, who assists only those inmates classified as AB 109, and two drug and alcohol specialists.

Each unit in the IBH has counselors that use “Thinking for a Change” curriculum. Inmates with 90 days or fewer remaining in their sentence use the job center training program, sponsored by the “Second Chance” program, which ties inmates to outside resources for help in housing and jobs.

Medical and mental health services are limited at this facility. A contracted psychiatrist is on site every Wednesday, but those with greater needs are transferred to the George Bailey Detention Facility.

Jurors had the opportunity to talk with an inmate who praised the programming provided. He indicated that he had been incarcerated for most of his adult life but now, for the first time, was hopeful of successfully reintegrating into society upon his release.

Based on the areas the jurors observed, the following was noted:

**Positive**

- A wide range of programming is offered to inmates, and the incentive-based housing model appears to have a positive effect, inspiring personal responsibility and accountability.
- Many work opportunities are available for inmates.
- Grossmont Adult School provides classes and training, some of which offer skill certificates.
- The recreation area is well-equipped.

**Negative**

- The jury noted a rotted support beam along one walkway. This was also noted in the 2015-2016 Grand Jury Detention Facilities report, but it has not yet been corrected.

- Some maintenance work is needed in the meal production/bakery facility. Rust was observed in a couple of areas. Workers also stated that additional freezer space is needed, which would allow them to work six days a week instead of seven.

### ***Vista Detention Facility (September 14, 2016)***

The Vista Detention Facility (VDF) in the North County is a booking and housing facility that provides housing for some long-term inmates, both male and female. It is attached to the Vista Courthouse.

The Grand Jury was provided a tour of selected housing areas. Most observed areas of the facility consisted of old construction, and many areas were in need of repair. One area in particular was the door mechanism in the intake sally port that leads to the medical screening area, which was nonfunctional and presented a safety and security hazard for staff. Also, the staff elevator was out of order on the day of the Grand Jury's visit, forcing staff to use the elevator reserved for inmate transport. The Grand Jury was told that the elevators are old and they are having difficulty in securing parts and getting them repaired.

The booking process at VDF is similar to that of the San Diego Central Jail, and the facility has safety cells for suicidal inmates. Incoming inmates are screened for hepatitis, and each one receives a chest X-ray to screen for tuberculosis.

The Grand Jury observed worker inmates housed in dormitory-style rooms containing triple-high bunks. Worker inmates attend classes Monday through Friday and receive cognitive behavioral therapy. Some mainline inmates that the Grand Jury observed were housed in either single-bed or double-bed cells.

In one area that consisted of six modules, two of the modules housed military veterans who are enrolled in a program called "Veterans Moving Forward." They participate in one-on-one counseling and group therapy, and they interact with former military officers who visit this facility and volunteer their time. The modules are brightly painted in red, white, and blue, unlike the rest of the facility, which is in drab beige and blue trim. The Grand Jury spoke with two inmates in the veterans' modules who stated that the program gives them hope for successful re-entry into society. The veterans' post-release progress is tracked for one year, and post-release support and resources are also available.

#### **Positive**

- The veterans' modules provide a humane and proactive approach to successfully reintegrating inmates into society.

#### **Negative**

- It appears that maintenance has been deferred, resulting in some safety and security issues. (Staff elevator was not working; sally port door was stuck in an open position because the closing mechanism was not working)

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### ***Las Colinas Detention and Re-entry Facility (October 5, 2016)***

Las Colinas is a booking/holding facility for women, located in Santee that also has a re-entry program. It is a model jail for women carefully designed not only to satisfy present needs but also equipped to meet long-term requirements. As in other detention facilities, inmates are examined for physical and mental problems upon booking. Safety and enhanced-observation cells, as well as administrative segregation areas, are also available for inmates exhibiting suicidal tendencies or aggressive behaviors.

Medical services include physician, dental, and psychiatric, and a lab is on the premises. Non-emergency medical situations are handled by Tri-City Hospital in Oceanside, while inmates with emergencies are sent to Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa.

The facility has an open, campus- like setting, and inmates have some freedom to move around without direct supervision. Inmates have access to 23 courses, including HiSET, some college courses, nutrition, yoga, self-care, and healthy living, among others. As part of the facility's re-entry programming, four vocational programs are available: industrial laundry, sewing, landscaping, and culinary arts. Upon completion of these programs, inmates receive certificates from Grossmont Adult Education.

Las Colinas has two levels of housing, for low-risk (1-3) and high-risk (4-6) inmates. Lower-risk inmate workers reside in the least restrictive, dormitory-style housing.

The areas that the Grand Jury observed provided the following:

#### **Positive**

- Open-campus environment that allows low-level inmates to roam freely with controls to maintain security.
- Available classes and counseling support are exceptional.
- Staff that the Grand Jury observed, both sworn and administrative, had positive attitudes toward helping inmates succeed after release, and seem to enjoy their work.

#### **Negative**

- Inmates who need nonemergency medical care are transported to a hospital 43 miles away.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Overall, the Grand Jury believes that the Sheriff's Department manages the adult detention facilities well, especially considering the effect AB 109 has had on the inmate population as well

as the ongoing impact of inmates' mental health issues. The exception is the status of significant repair and maintenance items, several of which pose a threat to the safety and security of staff and inmates.

In the George Bailey Detention Facility, the Grand Jury observed a broken window separating the enhanced observation room from the hallway outside of it, which rendered the room unusable. Also, the Grand Jury noted that approximately half of the security cameras throughout the facility appeared to be nonfunctional, as the glass covering the cameras was cloudy and opaque. Finally, technology in the facility—the analog door-opening system and the technology in the observation tower—is old and outdated. The Grand Jury was informed that these systems are expensive to maintain.

The Grand Jury is aware that a proposal has been included in San Diego County's 2016-2018 CAO Recommended Operational Plan to replace security controls and cameras at George Bailey Detention Facility. The Grand Jury supports this plan and encourages its completion.

In the Vista Detention Facility, the Grand Jury noticed that one sally port door was stuck in an open position because the closing mechanism was not working. Additionally, the staff elevator was out of order, requiring staff to use the elevator designated for inmate transport. Staff informed the Grand Jury that because replacement parts were difficult to obtain, the elevator had not been functioning for some time.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Code of Regulations, Title 15, states, "The facility administrator shall develop written policies and procedures for the maintenance of an acceptable level of cleanliness, repair and safety throughout the facility." The San Diego County Sheriff's Department Policies and Procedures Manual has such a policy, and it further states, "At the discretion of the Watch Commander, an emergency maintenance 'Call-out' may be initiated for those repairs, which, if not performed would significantly impair the operation of the facility or the safety of the staff or inmates."

The Sheriff's Department Policies and Procedures Manual also has a full section devoted to elevator maintenance, which says in part, "Due to the volume of elevator use, and the impact of facility operations, repair of elevators is of great concern and shall be handled expeditiously."

The Grand Jury believes that the Sheriff's Department's own procedures for repair and maintenance should be adhered to and given top priority for the safety and security of both staff and inmates.

### ***FACTS AND FINDINGS***

***Fact:*** The George Bailey Detention Facility had a broken window at the time of the Grand Jury's visit, rendering the enhanced observation room unusable.

***Finding 01:*** Broken windows should be repaired as soon as possible to ensure safety and security of staff and inmates.

**Fact:** Security and technology systems at the George Bailey Detention Facility are outdated and expensive to maintain.

**Finding 02:** Outdated technology systems increase safety and security risks for staff and inmates.

**Fact:** The Vista Detention Facility had a broken sally port door at the time of the Grand Jury's visit.

**Fact:** The Vista Detention Facility had a nonfunctional staff elevator at the time of the Grand Jury's visit.

**Finding 03:** Nonfunctional sally ports and elevators increase safety and security risks for both staff and inmates.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

**The 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:**

- 17-50: Review the Policies and Procedures manual to evaluate and reassess whether repairs and maintenance could be completed in a timelier manner.**
- 17-51: Follow through with the County's CAO Recommended Operational Plan to replace outdated technology systems at George Bailey Detention Facility.**
- 17-52: Expedite necessary repairs at the Vista Detention Facility.**

### ***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 Sheriff's Department	17-50 through 17-52	7/31/17