
Youth Classification

502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the San Diego County Probation Department's classification process, which is designed to identify security and health issues so that youths may be held in such a way as to foster a safe and secure facility (15 CCR 1352).

502.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to properly classify youths housed in this facility according to security and health risks so that appropriate supervision, temporary holding, and housing assignments may be made.

502.3 CLASSIFICATION PLAN

The Division Chief or the authorized designee shall create and maintain a classification plan to guide staff in processing youths brought into the facility. The plan shall include an initial screening process, and a process for determining appropriate housing assignments (28 CFR 115.341; 28 CFR 115.342; 15 CCR 1352). The plan shall include use of an objective screening instrument, procedures for deciding classification and housing assignments, intake and housing forms, and a process to ensure that all classification and housing records are maintained in each youth's permanent file. The plan should include an evaluation based on:

- Age.
- Sex.
- Physical size and stature.
- Current charges.
- Behavior during arrest or detention and admission process.
- Criminal, detention, and incarceration history.
- Level of emotional and cognitive development.
- Potential risk to safety of others or self.
- Special needs assessment for vulnerable youths.
- Behavioral or physical limitations or disabilities.
- Medical condition.
- Medical disability.
- Mental health history
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- Suicidal ideation (15 CCR 1329).

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- Escape history and degree of escape risk.
- Prior assaultive or violent behavior.
- The need to be separated from other classifications of youths (e.g., violent offenders, gang affiliation, confidential informants).
- Prior sexual abusiveness.
- Gender or gender identity (15 CCR 1352).
- Whether the youth is or is perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming (see the Prison Rape Elimination Act Policy for transgender and intersex definitions).
- Previous sexual victimization.
- The youth's own perception of vulnerability.
- Any other criteria deemed appropriate by the Chief or the authorized designee.

The plan should include a methodology for evaluating the classification process and a periodic review for the purpose of continuous quality improvement.

Information obtained in response to screening questions shall be considered confidential and shall only be made available to those who have a legitimate need to know (28 CFR 115.341).

502.4 INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

The initial classification process is intended to identify predatory, violent, and at-risk youths. It should occur early in the intake process to allow for appropriate supervision while the youth is being temporarily held in this facility and until a decision is made to place the individual into a more permanent housing assignment and orientation is provided (see the Youth Orientation Policy).

Youths should be interviewed by an intake officer as soon as possible in the admission process. The intake officer shall complete the initial classification form. The initial classification form should include a place for the intake officer to make a housing recommendation. This recommendation should be based on the initial classification form, an assessment of the youth's condition, and the youth's interview.

The initial classification form shall be placed in the youth's file and provided to the classification officer, who will, within the limits of available resources, determine the appropriate temporary housing location.

Intake Booking and Reception (IBR) and/or the facility's Main Control are responsible for the initial classification of new youth (with the exception of youth who are committed to Urban Camp or the Youthful Offender Unit). The facility's Main Control is responsible for assigning housing locations to new youth. IBR and/or the facility's Main Control officers are required to direct any classification questions to the appropriate supervisor for evaluation, input, and recommendations or to resolve disagreements. The Girl's Rehabilitation Facility does not have specific classifications for housing youth.

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502.5 CLASSIFICATION UPON HOUSING

Once it has been determined that the youth will not be released from custody, a more in-depth classification of the youth will be conducted prior to housing assignment.

502.5.1 INTERVIEW

The comprehensive classification process begins with a review of any initial classification information obtained during the reception and admission process, and an interview by the intake officer. The review of initial classification documents and the questions, answers, and observations from the youth's interview and risk assessment will be documented, representing the treatment plan, security level, and housing assignment appropriate for each youth.

502.5.2 OVERRIDE

The intake officer has the authority to override the classification results when it appears necessary to assign more appropriate housing. The override capability exists to use the officer's training and expertise in those instances when the results are not reflective of the youth's potential security or health risk. Reasons for the override must be documented and approved by the supervisor.

502.5.3 TRANSFERS

All subsequent transfers occurring between units/dorms require a Supervisor's approval. Youth being transferred must always be escorted to their new unit/dorm.

All transfers occurring between units/dorms require that the facility's Main Control be notified to ensure adjustment in the unit/dorm count. The staff assigned to the facility's Main Control shall notify the Booking Office, School and the Medical Clinic of a youth's transfer to effect transfer of records to the youth's new unit/dorm.

Unit/Dorm assignments may not always correspond to the guidelines due to a variety of variable factors. Factors that may affect placement and assignment of a youth to a unit/dorm can include the following (15 CCR 1352):

- (a) The youth's overall maturity, including their physical and emotional levels.
- (b) Court orders, law enforcement, District Attorney or Probation Officer's requests to keep two (2) or more youth in separate units/dorms. Such requests may be based on a criminal investigation; threats exchanged between youth, victims or witnesses; intimidation, or acts of violence between youth, or gang affiliations.
- (c) Unit/Dorm population imbalances and overcrowding which necessitates inter-unit/dorm transfers to reduce a unit/dorm's population below maximum levels, and correct population imbalances between similar units/dorms.
- (d) Unsatisfactory adjustment to a unit/dorm or disciplinary problems. Youth who exhibit severe personality clashes, become involved in significant gang activities or acts of violence, may be transferred to another suitable unit/dorm for security purposes.
- (e) Changes in a youth's security or safety status. Youth may be transferred to any appropriate unit/dorm, due to changes in their security status either up or down (e.g.,

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placement on or off unit confinement, Court commitment to DJJ) or safety needs (e.g., violent crime victims, threats to personal safety, placement on or off Suicide Watch).

- (f) A change in a youth's program status necessitating a move to the unit that meets that particular program needs.

502.6 REVIEWS AND APPEALS

Once a youth is classified and housed, the youth may appeal the decision of the classification officer. The appeal process shall begin at the first-line supervisor level. The decision by the supervisor may be appealed to the Division Chief or the authorized designee. The decision by the Division Chief or the authorized designee is final.

502.6.1 PERIODIC CLASSIFICATION REVIEWS

The officer assigned to the housing units should continually review the status of all youths who are housed in the living unit. The review shall include an examination of changes in the youth's behavior or circumstances and should either raise, lower, or maintain the classification status (15 CCR 1352).

Housing and program assignments for each transgender or intersex youth shall be reassessed at least twice each year to determine whether the youth has experienced any threats (28 CFR 115.342).

Youth risk levels shall be reassessed when required due to a referral, request, incident of sexual abuse, or receipt of additional information that increases the youth's risk of sexual victimization or abusiveness (28 CFR 115.341).

502.6.2 STAFF REQUESTED REVIEW

At any point during a youth's detention, a staff member may request a review of the youth's classification. The reason for the review, the review itself, and the outcome of the review shall be documented in the youth's permanent file. Nothing in this section shall prohibit staff from immediately moving a youth to another location in the facility based on exigent circumstances. Under such circumstances, the staff member moving the youth must immediately document the action and notify the Division Chief or the authorized designee.

502.7 HOUSING ASSIGNMENTS

The Facility Division Chief shall develop and implement written policies and procedures on the classification of youths for the purpose of determining housing placement in the facility (15 CCR 1352). Such procedures shall:

- (a) Provide for the safety of the youth, other youth, facility staff, and the public by placing youth in the appropriate, least restrictive housing and program settings (15 CCR 1352). Housing assignments shall consider the need for single, double, or dormitory placement (15 CCR 1352).
- (b) Consider facility populations and the physical design of the facility (15 CCR 1352).

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- (c) Provide that a youth shall be classified upon admittance to the facility (15 CCR 1352). Housing assignments shall be based upon the factors listed in 15 CCR 1352 as well as other appropriate factors identified by the Division Chief, and include:
1. Age
 2. Maturity
 3. Sophistication
 4. Emotional stability
 5. Program needs
 6. Legal status (e.g., non-adjudicated, adjudicated, current charge)
 7. Public safety considerations
 8. Medical and mental health considerations
 9. Sex
 10. Gender and gender identity of the youth

Facility staff shall house youth in the unit or room that best meets their individual needs, and promotes their safety and wellbeing (15 CCR 1352.5). Staff may not automatically house youth according to their external anatomy, and shall document the reasons for any decision to house youth in a unit that does not match their gender identity (15 CCR 1352.5). In making a housing decision, staff shall consider the youth's preferences, as well as any recommendations from the youth's health or behavioral health provider (15 CCR 1352.5).

502.7.1 SEPARATION

Male and female youths shall be housed to ensure visual and physical separation.

502.7.2 ADDITIONAL SEPARATION REQUIREMENTS

Youth may be separated for reasons that include, but are not limited to, medical and mental health conditions, assaultive behavior, disciplinary consequences, and protective custody (15 CCR 1354).

Decisions to separate youths shall include consideration of positive youth development and trauma-informed care (15 CCR 1354). When the objective of the separation is discipline, 15 CCR 1390 shall apply (15 CCR 1354) see the Youth Discipline and Room Confinement policies.

Youths shall not be denied normal privileges during separation except when necessary to accomplish the objective of separation (15 CCR 1354).

When separation results in room confinement, the separation shall occur in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code § 208.3 and 15 CCR 1354.5 (15 CCR 1354).

Facility staff shall not separate youth from the general population or assign youth to a single occupancy room based solely on the youth's actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, mental or physical disability, or HIV status (15 CCR 1352). 15 CCR 1352 does not

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prohibit staff from placing a youth in a single-occupancy room at the youth's specific request or in accordance with Title 15 regulations regarding separation (15 CCR 1352).

There shall be a daily review of separated youths to determine if separation remains necessary, unless more frequent review is required (15 CCR 1354).

502.7.3 SEPARATION EXCEPTIONS

Youths not required to be in an infirmary for illness may be separated for health and safety issues, with the written approval of a licensed physician or nurse practitioner in accordance with 15 CCR 1354.5:

- (a) To treat and protect against the spread of communicable disease for the shortest amount of time required to reduce the risk of infection.
- (b) For required extended care after medical treatment.

502.8 CLASSIFICATION SPACE ALLOCATION

The classification plan depends on the ability of the facility to physically separate different classes of youths. To ensure that allocated space meets the current population needs, the Division Chief or the authorized designee should periodically meet with representatives of the classification officers to discuss the fixed resources (e.g., rooms, dorms, dayrooms) (15 CCR 1352).

The Division Chief should report at least quarterly to the custody management team any space issues (see the Crowding Policy).

502.9 SINGLE-OCCUPANCY ROOMS

Single-occupancy rooms may be used to house these categories of youths:

- Maximum security
- Administrative Separation (AS)
- Medical condition or disabilities (upon consultation with medical staff and the availability of medical beds)
- Mental condition (upon consultation with mental health staff and the availability of mental health beds)
- Sexual predators
- Any youth with an elevated risk of being taken advantage of, being mistreated, or becoming a victim of sexual abuse or harassment
- Any other condition or status for single-occupancy housing

The classification supervisor shall notify the Division Chief or the authorized designee when single-occupancy rooms are not available for housing the above described youths. In such cases, a risk assessment shall be used to identify youths in the above categories who may be safely housed together.

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502.10 PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) CONSIDERATIONS

Within 72 hours of the youth's arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a youth's confinement, the Department shall obtain and use information about each youth's personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon the youth (28 CFR 115.341).

The Department shall use all information obtained pursuant to 28 CFR 115.341 to make housing, bed, program, education, and work assignments with the goal of keeping all youths safe and free from sexual abuse (28 CFR 115.342).

Housing and program assignments of a transgender or an intersex youth shall include individualized consideration for the youth's health and safety and any related supervisory, management, or facility security concerns (28 CFR 115.342). A transgender youth's or an intersex youth's views regarding the youth's own safety shall be given serious consideration (15 CCR 1352.5).

Identification or status as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex shall not be considered as an indicator of likelihood of being sexually abusive (28 CFR 115.342; 15 CCR 1352).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex youths shall not be placed in particular housing, bed, or other assignments based on such identification or status (28 CFR 115.342).

Staff shall consider any recommendations from the youth's health care provider. The decision to house youths in a unit that does not match their gender identity, including any reason(s), shall be documented (15 CCR 1352.5).

502.10.1 SEPARATING YOUTH FROM THE GENERAL POPULATION

No youth should be separated from the general population unless an assessment of available alternatives has been made and the classification supervisor has determined that there is no available alternative means to keep the youth and other youths safe. The basis for safety concerns and the reasons why no alternative means of separation are available shall be documented (28 CFR 115.342).

Youths may only be separated from the general population until an alternative means to keep all youths safe can be made (28 CFR 115.342).

Every 30 days, the Department shall afford each separated youth a review to determine whether there is a continuing need for separation from the general population (28 CFR 115.342).

During any period of separation, youths may not be denied daily large-muscle exercise and legally required educational programming or special education services. Separated youths should not be denied access to other programs and work opportunities as reasonably possible (28 CFR 115.342).

Separated youths shall also receive daily visits from a medical or mental health care provider (28 CFR 115.342; 15 CCR 1354).

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502.10.2 POST-ALLEGATION PROTECTIVE CUSTODY (28 CFR 115.368)

If the Division Chief of the facility determines a need to use segregated housing to protect a youth who is alleged to have suffered sexual abuse, the Division Chief shall ensure the youth is isolated from others only as a last resort when less restrictive measures are inadequate to keep them and other youths safe, and then only until an alternative means of keeping all youths safe can be arranged (28 CFR 115.368; 28 CFR 115.342). During any period of isolation, youths shall not be denied Title 15 requirements, including but not limited to daily large-muscle exercise, work opportunities, programs, free-time, correspondence, and legally required educational programming/special education services. If isolated, the youth shall receive daily visits from a medical or mental health care clinician (28 CFR 115.368; 28 CFR 115.342).

502.11 STAFF TRAINING IN CLASSIFICATION

Members should receive training specific to youth classification before performing classification duties. Individuals not specifically trained in youth classification may perform classification duties under the immediate supervision of a trained and qualified staff member.