

Responses to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report

Every year, when the annual Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Report is published, designated agencies are requested to respond to the findings and recommendations of the report. These responses may agree, partially disagree, or disagree with the findings, and may indicate that recommendations have already been implemented, will be in the future, or will not be implemented, or that further analysis is required.

Comments may also be added to the responses. When a response agrees with a recommendation, further comments are optional. In case of complete or partial disagreement, or in response to recommendations for action, comments should be provided as part of the response.

For each report, the collected responses are published in a separate file on the [grand jury's section of the county's public website](#). Note: The responses are provided as received, and have not been edited, except for minimal formatting to make them appear correctly on this web page.

Report: [Main Jail Inspection Report: No Room at the Inn](#)

This report requested responses from the following:

1. Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors: Findings 1, 2
2. Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner: Findings 1-5, 8, 9; Recommendations 1, 4-6, 9, 10
3. Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency: Findings 6, 7

Findings

- **Finding 1: Overcrowded conditions in Main Jail housing units make it difficult for COs to follow their policies and to monitor inmate safety.**
 - Response from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors: **Partially Disagree**

The Sheriff has responsibility over conditions at the Main Jail and has responded to this finding. The Board adopts that response as its own (see below).
 - Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

When the population of the Main Jail housing units increases it stands to reason that officers must then serve a larger population and workload increases. Correctional Officers are provided with training to provide them with prioritization skills so that tasks can be completed in compliance with the law, policy and procedure. Since the time of the inspection, there has been increased emphasis

placed on prioritizing the time to conduct hourly Safety Checks that includes documentation by the officers and review by supervisors. From a practical standpoint, this has required direct communication between officers and the Housing Supervisor as well as the education of other staff members and program providers. A consistent application of this policy has enabled the Correctional Officers to remain in full compliance with Title 15 without compromising the safety and security of the facility. Other tasks are not unreasonably delayed to accommodate Safety Checks and during an emergency, Safety Checks are still being completed. Lowering the jail population or increasing the officer to inmate ratio would allow more time for officers to monitor the inmates in housing.

- **Finding 2: Staff furloughs, mandatory overtime, and the impasse in CO labor contract negotiations have lowered CO morale.**

- Response from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors: **Agree**

Issues discussed in F2 have been addressed by the Sheriff who has responded to this finding. The Board adopts that response as its own (see below).

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

During the week of May 6, 2014, the Board of Supervisors delivered a proclamation to acknowledge National Correctional Officers and Employees Week. Each day of the week Correctional Employees were involved in activities to provide them with recognition for their difficult job of working in a custodial setting. Correctional Employees and their families were invited to a hosted barbeque and tour of the Corrections Bureau that was sponsored by management, the Deputy Sheriff's Association, Correctional Officers Association and donations from the local business community. The participation and recognition had a positive impact on the morale of the bureau.

Furlough for all of the bargaining units in the County to include the Santa Cruz Correctional Officers Association ends on September 26, 2014 for those employees working a 5/8 schedule and on October 10, 2014 for those employees working a 7/12 schedule. The end of the furlough period will have a positive impact on staffing and help in reducing the need for overtime coverage.

Mandatory overtime is scheduled through October 2014 in order to cover staffing shortages due to attrition. Recruitment and hiring is working with County Personnel to hire staffing so that mandatory overtime is no longer required.

- **Finding 3: The lack of consistent enforcement of rules and regulations by COs at the Main Jail creates opportunities for inmates to hide prohibited materials.**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

An internal review by supervisory staff revealed that some employees were not enforcing rules consistently. Extra food, clothing and other items that are considered minor violations were not being addressed by all officers on every occurrence. Supervisors began meeting as a group to address inconsistencies and training was conducted for employees.

Since the inspection, rule violations are being dealt with at the time the violation is observed. Documentation was changed to provide more details about each shift. Inspection Reports and Shift Logs are reviewed each shift by supervisors. Supervisors are taking an active role. Each area of the jail has been brought into full compliance with jail rules. Consistency and better discipline have improved throughout the jail.

- **Finding 4: Medical staff members are vulnerable when COs do not remain in the medical clinic with inmates.**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

Medical Staff can be vulnerable when not under direct supervision of officers. Direct supervision by officers is provided for maximum and medium security inmates receiving services.

- **Finding 5: An air vent in the Main Jail medical clinic is excessively dirty and in need of immediate maintenance.**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

The air vent in the medical clinic was cleaned.

- **Finding 6: Record keeping tasks and ongoing clerical work decrease CIT's counseling time with inmates.**

- Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (Erik G. Riera): **Partially Disagree**

While clerical support was withdrawn from CIT in prior years, part-time clerical support has subsequently resumed in 2014.

- **Finding 7: Inmate safety has been at risk because CIT has not had a comprehensive protocol manual or individualized inmate treatment plans at the Main Jail.**

- Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (Erik G. Riera): **Disagree**

Policies and Procedures do exist for crisis assessment, crisis intervention, suicide assessment and mental health treatment provision in the Main Jail. Inmate safety is the focus of the service delivery model for CIT. In addition, the CIT Policies and Procedures have been updated and new policies have been developed in light of CFMG as a new medical provider.

- **Finding 8: There is no adequate process in place at the Main Jail to communicate jail rules to inmates and verify that they are aware of them.**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Disagree**

At the time of the inspection, the jail rules and procedures handbook was being distributed each Sunday to the individual housing units and a video was being shown daily. Since the inspection, a copy of the jail rules and procedures handbook is being provided to each inmate at the time of intake in booking. As of August 2014, each housing unit was provided with a secure bulletin board that displays the jail rules and procedures. The jail rules handbook continues to be distributed to the individual housing units on Sunday and the video is shown daily.

- **Finding 9: Video surveillance is inadequate for the booking area and the medical clinic in the Main Jail.**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Agree**

There is video in the booking area that depicts most of the activity. When there is a pre-planned event, hand-held video is used in addition to the surveillance system. There are limitations to video surveillance. Future planning will take into consideration the need for enhanced video capability in the booking area. Since the time of the inspection, on or about June 2014, video surveillance cameras have been added to the medical area to increase capability. Future planning will take into consideration the need for enhanced video capability in the medical area.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: The Sheriff's Office should expand the Custody Alternatives Program (CAP) to relieve jail overcrowding. (F1)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has been implemented**

The Custody Alternative Program (CAP) has proven to be successful to relieve jail overcrowding. CAP will continue to be utilized. Growth will continue but the rate of growth will be dependent on the eligibility and appropriateness of the individuals considered for participation in the program.

- **Recommendation 2: The Board of Supervisors should eliminate furloughs and mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers in order to improve their morale. (F2)**

- Response from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors: **Has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.**

Furlough for all of the bargaining units in the County including the Santa Cruz Correctional Officers Association ends on September 26, 2014 for those employees working a 5/8 schedule and on October 10, 2014 for those employees working a 7/12 schedule. The end of the furlough period will have a positive impact on staffing and help in reducing the need for overtime coverage. Mandatory overtime is scheduled through October 2014 in order to cover staffing shortages due to attrition. The Board of Supervisors has authorized the hiring of officers to fill current vacancies. Recruitment and hiring is working with County Personnel to hire staffing so that mandatory overtime is no longer required.

- **Recommendation 3: The Board of Supervisors should negotiate a new contract with the Corrections Officers union by the end of 2014. (F2)**

- Response from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors: **Has been implemented**

On June 10, 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved a new 6-year labor contract for the Correctional Officers that will run from July 1, 2012 through November 30, 2018.

- **Recommendation 4: The Sheriff's Office should ensure that Main Jail CO supervisors and their management consistently enforce inmate rules. (F3)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has been implemented**

Daily shift logs and a Watch Commanders Daily Log have been re-designed to comprehensively cover events throughout the shift that include rule violations. Supervisors are required to conduct daily physical inspections of the facility and to document any findings. Immediate corrections are made. The logs and inspections are submitted through the chain of command each shift for approval. The logs and inspection reports are in an electronic format that is read and reviewed by all supervisors to include jail management. Supervisors are required to direct staff to enforce rules. Increased training and mentoring has been implemented for supervisors to require an active role in supervision. A monthly meeting for jail sergeants and jail management is conducted to establish consistent enforcement of jail rules. Jail Management conducts daily inspections, meets with staff and inmates directly and requires rules to be enforced.

- **Recommendation 5: The Sheriff's Office should require a CO to remain in the Main Jail medical clinic while inmates are being treated unless the CO is released by the medical staff. (F4)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has been implemented**

A Correctional Officer will directly supervise an inmate classified as maximum or medium security while the inmate is being treated in the medical clinic.

- **Recommendation 6: The Sheriff's Office should ensure that the air vent in the Main Jail medical clinic is cleaned and maintained. (F5)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has been implemented**

Daily inspections at each shift will include the inspection of air vents. Dirty air vents will be cleaned and maintained.

- **Recommendation 7: HSA should increase hours for the CIT supervisor at the Main Jail and increase clerical support for CIT staff. (F6)**

- Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (Erik G. Riera): **Requires Further Analysis**

Utilization of CIT services and the supervisory responsibilities required for

the operation of the CIT services will be reviewed by November 1, 2014 and recommendations will be made at that time.

- **Recommendation 8: CIT should complete a protocol manual and develop individualized treatment plans for inmates at the Main Jail. (F7)**

- Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (Erik G. Riera): **Has been implemented**

CIT has existing Policies and Procedures, as well as protocols for treatment and service delivery. A standardized Treatment Plan form is under development to be completed by November 1, 2014.

- **Recommendation 9: The Sheriff's Office should provide inmates with written jail rules at intake and document that inmates have received them. (F8)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has been implemented**

Each inmate will be provided with a copy of the Jail Rules and Procedures Handbook at the time of intake.

- **Recommendation 10: The Sheriff's Office should install video surveillance in the medical clinic and correct the obstructed video surveillance of the open seating booking area. (F9)**

- Response from Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner (Lt. Fred Plageman): **Has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future**

Video surveillance has been added to the medical clinic area as of June 2014. Future planning will take into consideration the need for additional surveillance that will need to be addressed in the 2015-16 Budget.

The booking area has existing video and future planning will take into consideration the need for additional surveillance in the 2015-16 Budget. Moving the existing system will only create other blind spots that are caused by a pillar or other booking design layout. Open seating is directly supervised by officers on station at the booking platform to ensure the safety and security of the inmates. The primary purpose of the additional video at this location would be to assist in documenting events.

Commendations

- **Commendation 1: We commend the Sheriff's Office for evaluating the feasibility of using video conferencing for routine court appearances to reduce the need for CO escorts.**
- **Commendation 2: We commend the Sheriff's Office for its plan to expand and improve the Rountree Facility to help alleviate overcrowded conditions at the Main Jail.**
- **Commendation 3: We commend the Main Jail kitchen staff for their well managed food service program.**