

Camp 45

Background

Located on 240 acres, Camp 45 was established in 1968 as a juvenile detention camp by the California Youth Authority. In 2005, it became a State of California Level 1 minimum security facility for male prisoners. The purpose of the camp is to provide a highly mobile work force to prevent and fight fires and perform conservation-related projects for local, state, and federal agencies. The program provides convicted felons with the opportunity to give something back to the citizens of California while paying their debt to society.

Camp 45 is overseen by the California Correctional Center at Susanville as specified by the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation operations manual, Title 15 and state penal codes. Because Camp 45 is a state-operated facility over which the county has no jurisdiction, it is encouraged rather than obligated to respond to the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury visited the facility on September 29, 2007.

Findings

The Inmates

1. All potential candidates for the conservation camps are screened by the Directors' Review Board (DRB), the Institutional Classification Committee (ICC), the Unit Classification Committee (UCC), and the Camp Classification Committee (CCC) and classified according to a points system. The inmate's age, marital status, number of children, and number and type of conviction are all taken into account.
2. Most inmates placed at this and other conservation camps have more than 12 months to serve.
3. On the day of the Grand Jury's visit, there were 106 inmates.
4. The average age of the inmates is 35.
5. Inmates are assigned to camps at least two counties away from the counties in which they were convicted.
6. For every one day served at the camp, inmates are credited an additional two days off their sentences.
7. All Camp 45 inmates have undergone extensive fire safety training prior to being placed in the facility. They are trained at the fire academy for one week and then serve for six weeks on a crew at a correctional center. In addition, they receive eight hours of training once a week at Camp 45. When at a fire site, the Camp's crews work collaboratively with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
8. Each inmate assigned to fire fighting duty must be certified by Corrections staff as being physically fit.

9. Some prisoners who do not meet medical requirements are assigned to a fire camp because they have skills the camp needs, such as carpentry or cooking. They work as members of in-camp or kitchen crews. The in-camp crew maintains the grounds and buildings, does laundry, cleans the facilities, landscapes, and provides clerical services. The kitchen crew provides the meals for the other inmates. Since this is a working camp, the meals must be hearty and nutritious and meet the Title 15 guidelines of 2600 calories a day.
10. Random drug testing is performed on all inmates.
11. The maximum stay in the program is three-and-a-half years; however, inmates are rotated every two years to other camps.
12. As of the day of the Grand Jury’s visit, there were no escapes in 2007, but there were two escapes in 2006. Both escapes were Mexican nationals nearing the end of their sentences and facing deportation. Due to this risk, inmates with an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) hold are no longer permitted at the camp. Since that policy was established, the number of escapees and attempted escapes has decreased.
13. Inmates earn \$1.45 per day for the work they perform, and \$1.00 an hour when on a fire crew.
14. Unless there is a fire, crews work Monday through Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on maintenance and conservation projects.
15. All work performed by the crews is under contract with a local city or county agency.
16. There are always at least two work crews that are “hot,” meaning they are suited up and ready to respond to a fire within three minutes.
17. Inmates who violate the rules accumulate points, which result in disciplinary action. The number of points they receive depends on the type and frequency of the violation. For instance, if an inmate is caught with tobacco, he automatically receives four points. If caught with tobacco again, he receives another six points. And if caught with tobacco a third time, he is removed from camp. Any inmate caught out of bounds three times is also removed from the camp.

The Facility and Security

18. The facility and grounds are beautifully maintained.
19. At least two correctional officers — one sergeant and one lieutenant — are on duty on any given day.
20. In the control room, staff can view all video surveillance monitors, control the inmate television, and monitor phone calls.
21. Alarms are set at night on the doors to all residential buildings.
22. Video surveillance operates 24 hours a day monitoring all access roads although not all access from the rear of the facility is clearly monitored. Surveillance data is saved for four days.

23. In order to make outside calls, inmates must first sign up on a phone list. They are allowed one call per day, and all calls are recorded. The staff monitor inmate phone calls on a random basis and are required to review at least three calls per shift.
24. Inmates may purchase personal items from the on-site canteen up to two times a month, with a monthly limit of \$180 in purchases.
25. All inmates are counted at least every two hours to ensure no one is missing.
26. The facility is equipped with hobby, pool, and television rooms. Outdoor facilities include handball and basketball courts.
27. Visitors are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays. Staff must pre-approve all visitors, and inmates may have a maximum of eight approved visitors on file at one time.
28. Support programs are provided for the inmates by Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, with meetings twice a week. Religious services are available three days a week, and counseling is provided every other week. A facilitator assists inmates as they prepare for release. Inmates may also work for their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) via courses available by mail.
29. Whenever there is a change of custody between Camp 45 and Cal Fire, it is performed with a careful process of photo ID verification.
30. The bus arrives every Tuesday to drop off new inmates and Wednesday to pick up any inmates leaving the camp.

Conclusions

1. The facility is operated by a conscientious and professional staff who have an excellent rapport with inmates.
2. The food provided to the inmates on the day of the Grand Jury visit was good.
3. The camp's work crews provide a valuable service to the community.
4. More cameras are needed for the rear of the facility.
5. The grounds are extremely clean and well-kept.

Recommendations

1. The Grand Jury recommends additional security cameras at access points at the rear of the facility to increase security.
2. The Grand Jury recommends GED classes be made available on site for inmates.

Commendations

1. The Grand Jury commends the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for providing a positive alternative to prison incarceration and a valuable service to the local community.
2. The Grand Jury commends Camp 45 staff for their dedication and effective management of the facility and inmates.

Responses Requested

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within / Respond By
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation	22	1, 2	90 days October 1, 2008

Sources

State of California, California Code of Regulations, Title 15. Crime Prevention and
Corrections,

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Regulations/Adult_Operations/docs/Title15-2007.pdf

Interviews with California Department of Corrections Personnel