

Santa Cruz County Jails Review

Background

The Santa Cruz County Main Jail is located on Water Street in the City of Santa Cruz. The California Board of Corrections sets the rated capacity and the maximum capacity, which are the number of beds able to fit in a given space. The Main Jail is a maximum and medium security facility, with a California Board of Corrections rated capacity of 311 inmates and a maximum capacity of over 400 inmates.

The inmates are either unsentenced (awaiting trial, on trial or awaiting sentencing), awaiting transport to a state or federal prison or serving sentences of up to one year. The jail has both male and female inmates. Violent or high-risk female inmates requiring medium or maximum security are housed in a separate section of the Main Jail segregated from male inmates. The minimum-security female inmates are housed in the nearby Blaine Street Jail.

The Main Jail is the booking center for all of Santa Cruz County. Each city pays booking fees to the county. The State of California reimburses them for these fees. The primary goals of the Main Jail are safety and security for both staff and inmates.

The Rountree medium/minimum security facility is located in Watsonville. It houses sentenced male inmates in separate medium-security and minimum-security facilities. The minimum-security facility is referred to as The Farm because it was formerly a working farm.

The Blaine Street jail facility houses sentenced minimum-security female inmates.

The Juvenile Hall facility on Graham Hill Road houses sentenced and unsentenced male and female juveniles under the age of 18 or those individuals whose case is overseen by Juvenile Court. Juvenile Court is on the premises.

Scope

Pursuant to Penal Code 919(b), the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county. The Grand Jury fulfilled this requirement as follows:

- Toured each detention facility at least once and inspected the conditions.
- Interviewed staff during the tour and in telephone interviews.
- Read previous Grand Jury reports and responses relating to detention facilities.
- Read California Code of Regulations pertaining to detention facilities.
- Researched various Web sites pertaining to detention facilities and incarceration.

In addition to the Grand Jury's charge, each year the State Board of Corrections performs

two reviews of county penal facilities. These reviews are done separately and include:

- An evaluation of the physical operation and management of each facility to ensure compliance with mandatory state standards.
- An audit of the financial management of each facility.

Main Jail Findings

1. On March 23, 2004, the inmate population was 377 in a facility with a rated capacity of 311. According to staff, the Main Jail population varies but continues to be over its rated capacity.
2. The staff said the inmate population is:
 - Ninety percent male.
 - Eighty percent repeat offenders.
 - Eighty percent substance abusers.
 - Twenty-five percent suffering from some form of mental illness.
3. Ninety percent of repeat offenders will average a total of seven jail or prison terms.
4. Eighty percent of individuals booked are released on their own recognizance, or on bail, pending disposition of charges.
5. Medical spending is required by law and thus an uncontrollable expense. Up to 20 percent of the yearly medical budget is spent on psychiatric medication. Hospitalization of inmates can cost as much as \$35,000 a day. Medical treatment is contracted with Dominican Hospital and other agencies.
6. Inmate complaints are handled with a form. Inmates can request a form when they have a grievance.
7. Inmates have access to educational programs, movies, books and religious services. Educational programs include domestic violence, parenting, crisis intervention, family reunification, gang awareness and GED (General Equivalency Diploma).
8. The busiest time of year for arrests is summer, when the number of individuals booked ranges from 30 to 80 per day. During the rest of the year, the number booked ranges from 20 to 30 per day.
9. The booking process includes:
 - Detoxification (if needed) with restraint (if needed).
 - Fingerprinting and photo.
 - Cataloging and retention of personal effects.
 - A visual "strip" search for weapons and drugs.

- Showering and decontamination.
 - Issuing of jail clothing.
 - A health screening by deputies.
10. After booking, the housing requirement for each individual is determined by classification according to stipulated criteria:
- Criminal sophistication.
 - Gang affiliation.
 - Gender, transgender.
 - Age.
 - Physical, medical and mental state.
 - Risk of violence -- from others, to others or to self.
 - Nature of charge(s).
 - Potential for escape.
11. Staff said that experience, skill and judgment in classifying inmates are crucial to maintaining safety and security. For example:
- Members of rival gangs or other hostile factions must be identified and separated.
 - Homosexuals and transgendered people may be targets for attack.
 - Individuals charged with physical crimes against children may be targets for attack.
 - Mentally ill inmates can be perpetrators or targets of violence.
 - Some inmates are suicidal, or become suicidal once confined.
12. Mental state is an assessment based on behavior and observations. Individuals with mental health issues are closely monitored by the mental health, medical and jail staff. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure each inmate's welfare and safety while incarcerated. Recent budget cuts have resulted in a lower availability of mental health services. Services that have been cut include a follow-up outpatient program.
13. Since the last Grand Jury report, there have been two deaths in jail: one by suicide and one by other medical causes.
14. There have been two escapes since the last Grand Jury report. Both escaped inmates have been apprehended.
15. Staff said that the computer system's software is outdated for the jail's current needs. Newer software would allow more comprehensive management reports.
16. The kitchen pantry wall has a hole near the baseboard 12 inches long by four inches wide.

17. Due to jail overcrowding, some of the prisoners sleep in plastic “boats” that are so low they appear to violate Board of Correction requirements.
18. Staff consists of 14 during the daytime and 13 at night.
19. At each level, staff was able to provide immediate, detailed answers to questions posed by Grand Jurors.
20. At the time of the Grand Jury reviews, July 23, 2003 and March 23, 2004, the facility was exceptionally clean and well maintained.

Conclusions

1. The facility is well managed by its staff.
2. The staff was very professional.
3. Staff appeared well organized and well versed in operational policies, rules and procedures.
4. The hole in the kitchen pantry wall near the baseboard could allow access by small animals.
5. The Main Jail is significantly overcrowded. For more information, see the Grand Jury report “Issues Contributing to the Overcrowding in the Santa Cruz County Main Jail”.
6. The jail appears to not be in compliance with the Board of Corrections’ regulations because it has beds that are not 12 inches above the floor.
7. An updated computer data management system could increase the jail’s efficiency.

Recommendations

1. The Sheriff’s Department and the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should consider ways to relieve overcrowding.
2. Software for the jail computer system should be updated.
3. The hole in the baseboard wall in the kitchen pantry should be repaired.
4. Jail officials should verify that the plastic “boats” used for some prisoners’ beds to ensure they meet Board of Corrections requirements.
5. Jail staff should be commended for its efficiency and good work running the jail.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	1, 15, 17	1, 2, 4	90 Days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1, 13 - 17	1 - 4	90 Days (September 30, 2004)

Rountree Medium Security Facility Findings

1. The Board of Corrections' rated capacity is 96 with current staffing and a

maximum of 110 with additional staffing. As of March 26, 2004, the population was 79 inmates.

2. Inmates prepare meals under direct supervision, using a posted menu.
3. The S.A.F.E. program, a drug rehabilitation program, has increased participation in Rountree between July 2003 and March 2004.
4. The sole medical position, a nurse, was eliminated because of budget cuts. Correctional officers now dispense medication. Rountree inmates are transported to the Main Jail for medical treatment.

The Farm Jail (Rountree Minimum Security Facility) Findings

1. This facility has a Board of Corrections' rated capacity of 162 with current staff and a maximum capacity of 250 with additional staffing. As of March 26, 2004, the population was 97 inmates.
2. Inmates sleep in dorm-like beds with all beds at least 12 inches above the floor.
3. No deaths have occurred since the last report.
4. Four escapes have occurred since July 1, 2003. All escaped inmates have been apprehended.
5. The Farm is a program-based facility. Inmates can continue some educational programs at Adult School free of charge if the program was started while they were incarcerated. Each inmate is enrolled in at least one program.

Programs and classes include:

- Work release.
- Auto body and paint.
- Computer.
- Domestic violence awareness.
- Gang awareness.
- Family reunification.
- General Education Diplomas (GED).
- Building maintenance and landscaping.
- AIDS education and testing.
- HIV awareness.
- Regional Occupational Programs.
- English as a Second Language.
- Parenting.
- Anger management.

- California Conservation Corps.
- Cabrillo College classes.
- Animal bonding program.

Substance abuse programs:

- Ray of Hope.
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA).
- Cocaine Anonymous (CA).
- S.A.F.E.

6. Inmates prepare meals under direct supervision, using a posted menu.
7. A designated area outside the building is used for family visits with a play area for children. In another area are an inmate-built koi pond, gardens and an animal enclosure for ducks, peacocks and other animals used in the animal bonding program. Outdoor recreation includes horseshoes, baseball, and other activities.
8. Total staffing level at both facilities on the Rountree site is seven staff members during the day and six at night.

Conclusions

1. Rountree is a well run facility.
2. Rountree inmates benefit from its variety of programs, including increased inmate involvement in the S.A.F.E. program.
3. Meals are nutritious and appealing at both the medium-security and the minimum-security facilities.
4. The interior of the minimum-security building is in good condition.

Recommendations

1. The Rountree staff should continue to run the facility with the care and success that it currently is doing.
2. Rountree should continue to offer its current programs.
3. Rountree should continue to apply for grants to fund its programs.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	1		90 Days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1	1 - 3	90 Days (September 30, 2004)

Blaine Street Jail (Women’s Minimum Security Facility) Findings

1. The facility has a Board of Corrections’ rated capacity of 32 inmates, with a maximum capacity of 42. As of March 26, 2004, the jail had a population of 12

inmates.

2. There have been no escapes since the last report.
3. No deaths have occurred within the facility since the last report.
4. Fire drills are practiced.
5. Rooms are in a dorm-like setting with inmates sharing rooms. Inmates are allowed personal property. Beds are at least 12 inches above the floor. There is a TV room and an exercise room.
6. Inmates prepare meals under direct supervision, using a weekly-posted menu.
7. There are two classrooms containing computers. Educational classes and support groups include:
 - Computers.
 - Parenting.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA).
 - Domestic violence awareness.
 - Yoga.
 - Knitting and crocheting.
 - General Education Diploma (GED).
 - Health.
 - English as a Second Language (ESL).
 - Gardening.

Every inmate is enrolled in classes. Free continuing education classes are offered through the Adult School but inmates must pay the fees themselves after they are released.

8. The backyard is a park-like setting with benches, flowers and a garden. The inmates maintain it and family visits are conducted there.
9. The facility is staffed with two officers during the day and one at night.
10. Discipline consists of a warning for a first offense. Extra work detail is required after that.

Conclusions

1. The Blaine Street Jail interior is in good condition. Everything is clean and in working order.

2. The kitchen is clean and in good order. Meals are nutritious and appealing.
3. The jail is a well run facility.
4. The exterior area of the building is in good condition. The yard is well kept.
5. The programs offered to the women inmates are not as extensive as those offered to the men and do not include free Adult Education classes.

Recommendations

1. The staff should continue to run the facility with the care and integrity that it now does.
2. Women should have the same option that male inmates do to continue classes started while incarcerated without paying fees after their release.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	7	2	90 Days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1 - 10	1, 2	90 Days (September 30, 2004)

Juvenile Hall Findings

1. This facility has a State Board of Corrections’ rating of 42 inmates. It has never exceeded capacity. As of March 24, 2004, the facility had a population of 19 juveniles.
2. There have been no suicides, attempted suicides, deaths or escapes during the last

year.

3. The last fire drill was in February of 2004.
4. The faculty has passed inspections by the State Board of Corrections, Fire Department and Nutritional Health.
5. The correctional staff consists of four to five officers during day hours and two at night.
6. Eighteen of the total 33 staff members speak Spanish.
7. The staff is culturally diverse.
8. Chemical cleaning products are labeled and locked up.
9. Weapons are in a secure area.
10. Individual cells are provided for each juvenile. They contain beds that are 12 inches above the floor, a sink, toilet and toiletries.
11. The common area includes a study area, ping-pong table, books, board games and television.
12. The juveniles are housed in two units. One unit is for more criminally sophisticated boys and the other is for girls and less criminally sophisticated boys.
13. Juveniles must attend classes, with the following exceptions:
 - Individuals who are 19 years old.
 - Runaways.
 - Individuals housed under a Child Protective Services protective order.
 - Individuals who pose a threat to others.
14. Inmates are required to do class homework once a week.
15. Programs include:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA).
 - Alateen.
 - Friday Night Live.
 - Book and Poetry Club.
 - The Beat Within.
 - General Education.
 - Barrios Unidos.

- Planned Parenthood.
- Mentoring/Job Readiness.
- Religious programs.
- Community speakers.
- Young Men as Fathers.
- Sports, such as basketball, soccer and running (in an enclosed uncovered area).
- Programs for girls.
- Job Corps.
- Family Reunification Planning: Strength-based Treatment and Assessment Recovery (STAR) and Graduated Return Out into the World (GROW).
- Victim awareness.
- Life skills and mental health classes.
- High School Diploma classes.
- General Education Diploma (GED) classes.
- Juvenile Enforcement/ Juvenile Law Classes.
- English language classes.
- Work Release programs (through the courts).

16. Kitchen knives are locked up when juveniles are present. The meals are served cafeteria-style and juveniles are given 30 minutes to eat.
17. Juveniles are given an orientation to the facility upon intake (arrival). Juveniles are given a list of rules and consequences, which they sign.
18. Rules and grievance procedures are posted.
19. Discipline works on a point system. It includes time-outs, writing a paper, additional homework, loss of privileges, loss of store items and earlier bedtimes.
20. Juveniles are allowed to file grievances. The staff checks the grievance box twice a day. Typical grievances include treatment from staff, points lost, food issues and requests for televisions in their rooms.
21. Postage for correspondence is provided free of charge. Juveniles cannot write to anyone in another institution or to anyone protected by a restraining order.
22. Juveniles have access to a phone during intake and free-time hours to make collect calls. Only under special circumstances can juveniles use a staff phone.
23. Juveniles shower every day and have their hair cut every four to six weeks.

Conclusions

1. The exterior of the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall building and grounds are in excellent condition.

2. The interiors of the buildings are clean and organized.
3. Juvenile Hall is a well managed facility with an excellent staff.
4. The staff is diverse and has excellent interactions with the juveniles, which provides a safe environment.
5. The kitchen area is clean and in good order. Meals are nutritious and appealing.
6. In poor weather, juveniles have very little opportunity for physical activity because the enclosed exercise/recreation yard is not covered. There is a genuine need for a covered recreation area.

Recommendations

1. Staff should continue to run the facility with the care it has in the past.
2. A covered recreation area, such as a gym, should be built so the juveniles will have an area for physical recreation in poor weather.

Responses Required

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Respond Within</i>
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	11, 15	2	90 Days (September 30,2004)
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1 – 15	1, 2	90 Days (September 30,2004)

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