

Rountree Detention Center

Background

The Rountree Detention Center consists of two jail facilities, located at 90 Rountree Lane (medium security) and 100 Rountree Lane (minimum security) in an unincorporated area of southern Santa Cruz County. Both facilities house inmates convicted and sentenced for up to one year in jail.

The medium security facility houses inmates who require incarceration and/or segregation from other inmates but do not require the maximum segregation provided by the Main Jail. The medium security facility also houses inmates with cases pending in court.

The minimum security facility houses inmates who do not have a high level of criminal sophistication and those who do not pose a threat to other inmates, as well as those who qualify for the Work Furlough program.

General Findings

1. The Grand Jury toured the Rountree Detention Facilities on September 10, 2007. This was followed by a second visit on September 14, 2007, and again on December 31, 2007 and May 5, 2008.
2. All Rountree inmates are men who are classified as either minimum or medium security risk. Security classification is determined at the Main Jail shortly after initial detention.
3. Gang affiliations are considered when assigning inmates to either the minimum or medium security facility.
4. The California Corrections Standards Authority last inspected the facilities July 10-11, 2007.
5. The Corrections Standards Authority sets minimum standards for detention facilities. The standards include the number of inmates each detention facility was built to hold (rated capacity) and the number of inmates that can safely be housed in the facility (maximum capacity). Both Rountree facilities operate an average of 20 to 40 percent below rated capacity.
6. On average, about one quarter of the Rountree inmate population speaks only Spanish. At least one Spanish-speaking officer is on duty most, but not all, of the time. Bilingual inmates are sometimes used as translators when no other option is available, particularly when a Spanish-speaking inmate must communicate with the nurse.
7. The sleeping areas in both facilities are open rooms with bunks two or three beds high. The areas are neat and clean.

8. The dining areas of both facilities appear to be well maintained. The meals are nutritious and fresh and the portions are adequate. Inmates also have access to food vending machines. They use debit cards funded with money deposited in their account by family or friends.
9. Most inmates are assigned jobs such as cleaning. Many are also required to participate in court-ordered rehabilitation programs. It is mandatory for all inmates to attend a skill-building class.
10. Inmates are not allowed to sleep late or lie around idle during the day. There is time available daily for recreation such as exercise, playing board games, or watching television.
11. Educational programs are offered in both the medium and minimum security facilities. The Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education program offers preparatory classes for the General Education Diploma (GED) and Adult Basic Education. Parent Education and substance abuse classes are also offered. A number of programs are provided by volunteer organizations, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and church services.
12. A medical unit serves both facilities. It includes private examination rooms and seems well equipped and well maintained. An experienced registered nurse is on duty eight hours a day, five days a week. If a problem arises, the staff can call the Main Jail medical staff. If necessary, the inmate will be transported to a nearby medical facility. The Sheriff's Department recently received additional funding to add nursing hours on the weekend. They are currently recruiting for this position.
13. In keeping with the requirements of *California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Section 1216 Management of Pharmaceuticals*, inmates prescribed certain mental health medications cannot be housed at Rountree because of the lack of medical personnel to dispense doses on weekends. The recent approval of weekend nursing hours will allow for medication to be dispensed seven days per week.
14. There is one automated external defibrillator (AED) in each facility. All correctional officers are trained in first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and AED use as a part of their initial training. They also attend a refresher course annually.
15. All visitors must be approved in advance. Only six people per inmate, including children, are on an inmate's approved visitor list during any 90-day period. Every 90 days, the inmates may submit new visitor lists for approval.
16. Telephones are available to all inmates. They can use prepaid phone cards to make a call. They can also make collect calls as long as the party being called has posted a deposit with the phone service provider.
17. The Environmental Health Report dated July 10, 2007 indicated the plumbing and condition of the floors, coving, and lower walls of the showers "are deteriorated" in the minimum security facility. The Grand Jury members noted these conditions on their visit.

Medium Security Findings

18. The medium security facility is designed with two direct-supervision housing units. Half the facility was opened in May of 1996, and the other half was opened in February 1999. The rated capacity is 96 inmates and the maximum capacity is 110. On September 10, 2007, the population was 73; of those, 33 were classified as “White,” 37 as “Hispanic,” and three as “Black.”
19. There are five correctional officers on duty per 12-hour shift at the medium security facility, except between 11 pm and 7 am when there are four. The number of onsite officers may be fewer during any given shift when officers are needed to transport inmates. Such circumstances occur daily when inmates are transported to or from court in Watsonville or Santa Cruz, or when there is a need for offsite medical care.
20. One officer is stationed in a secured area and controls all doors and gates. This area also has surveillance cameras monitoring inmate detention areas. No record is kept of the surveillance videos.
21. Medium security inmates attend classes located in the two classrooms behind the control room area of the facility. These classrooms hold about 20 inmates at a time. In addition to the educational programs previously mentioned and offered for both medium and minimum security inmates, the following classes are offered exclusively to medium security inmates: English as a Second Language (ESL) and domestic violence prevention classes.
22. Medium security inmates can be visited Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, during one of the four hour-long periods between 8:30 am and 2:00 pm. Visits are via telephone through glass. Two adults or one adult with two juveniles are allowed to visit an inmate at a time. There are four cubicles available for the visits.
23. Contained within each unit is an exercise yard with equipment such as pull-up bars and a basketball hoop.

Minimum Security Findings

24. The minimum security facility, often referred to as the “Jail Farm,” was first opened in 1970. The board rated capacity is 162 inmates with a maximum capacity of 250. The population on inspection day was 99. They were categorized as 60 “White,” 34 “Hispanic,” four “Black” and one “Other.”
25. There are three officers on duty during the day shift and two during the night shift. The shifts are 12 hours long. As with medium security, there may be fewer staff onsite when officers are needed to transport inmates from one place to another.
26. There are surveillance cameras monitoring inmate detention areas. No video record is kept of the surveillance.
27. Visiting is allowed for minimum security inmates on Sundays from 12:45 pm to 2:45 pm. These are contact visits in a large fenced grassy area adjacent to the minimum facility. On rainy days, visits are held in the dining hall. All six approved visitors may visit each visiting day.

28. More educational programs are available to minimum security inmates than to those in medium security. The following job training programs are offered by the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) and Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education: computerized diagnostic car repair, auto body repair, computer assembly and repair, and a computer skills lab. In the near future, ROP will begin offering landscaping and culinary arts job training. In addition, a men's health education program and a home construction course will soon be implemented.
29. Minimum security inmates can walk away from the facility, and it happens about four times a year. Those who walk away are generally rearrested within 24 hours. They are then likely to be held at the Main Jail for the remainder of their sentences, and new charges can result.
30. Due to the lack of fencing around the facility, Rountree has had problems with unauthorized persons entering the grounds. This has enabled contraband to be dropped off in the parking lot area which can be picked up by inmates working in the area and brought into the facility. The Grand Jury has been informed the Sheriff's office has secured \$72,000 to install fencing around the front of the facility. The automatic gates into the facility would be controlled from the control room located in the medium security section of Rountree. The Sheriff's Office is waiting for the General Services Department (GSD) to put this project out to bid.
31. Exercise and recreational options are adequate and include basketball, weight lifting, horseshoes, volleyball, baseball, soccer and ping pong.
32. The County has provided \$48,000 in funding to repair and replace the shower posts, flooring and support walls at the Jail Farm. This was reported to be a problem in the Environmental Health Report. Funding has been secured for this project. Rountree staff is still awaiting GSD to put the project out to bid.

Conclusions

1. Correctional officers and civilian workers at Rountree Detention Center appear to be respectful of inmate rights, experienced in dealing with inmates, and well trained in security procedures.
2. Inmate visits in both facilities are well managed and beneficial to both the inmates and their families.
3. The maintenance and cleanliness of all areas of both facilities is good.
4. There are a commendable variety of constructive activities and skill building classes for inmates although few are conducted by Spanish-speaking teachers.
5. Because the Rountree jail inmate populations are consistently under capacity, the facilities could be better utilized to relieve the overcrowding at the Main Jail.
6. The staffing of the facilities is inadequate to properly oversee, protect, and transport the inmate population.
7. Onsite medical care is currently available 40 hours a week. The newly approved nursing weekend hours are needed to assure that medical problems are properly

assessed and expeditiously treated. This weekend coverage will allow qualified inmates who need mental health maintenance medications to be transferred from the Main Jail to Rountree.

8. The video surveillance system has been noted to be inadequate in earlier Grand Jury reports, but it has still not been improved.
9. Installation of fencing around the facility would prohibit the public from entering the facility without permission and would deter contraband from entering the facility.
10. The Grand Jury agrees with the Environmental Health Report that the shower posts, flooring and support walls at the Jail Farm are in need of repair and replacement.

Recommendations

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Office of Education provide additional Spanish-speaking teachers or teacher's aides for the skill-building classes.
2. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Office develop new strategies to house more of the County's Main Jail population at the Rountree facilities.
3. It is recommended that the Sheriff's Office finish recruiting for the weekend nursing position.
4. It is recommended that the Sheriff's Office and the Board of Supervisors locate funding for additional correctional officers, at least one per shift per facility, to assure the safety of staff and inmates.
5. The Grand Jury strongly recommends that the Sheriff's Office provide a recording of all surveillance camera activity.
6. The Grand Jury strongly recommends GSD put the shower repair project out to bid as soon as possible.
7. The Grand Jury strongly recommends GSD go out to bid for the fencing project as soon as possible.
8. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Supervisors secure the necessary funds to install fencing around the remaining perimeter of both facilities.

Responses Required

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within / Respond By
County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors	19, 25, 30	4, 8	60 Days September 1, 2008
County of Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Office	12, 13, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30	2 -5, 8	60 Days September 1, 2008
Santa Cruz Office of Education	11, 28	1	90 Days October 1, 2008
General Services Department	17, 30	6, 7	90 Days October 1, 2008

Sources

Prior Grand Jury reports: 2005-2006 and 2006-2007.

California Corrections Standards Authority report July 10-11, 2007.

Interviews with Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office Personnel

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

The daily Population Analysis Report published on the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s website.

Environmental Health Report July 10, 2007