

Santa Cruz County Jails Review

Definitions

Electronic monitoring: a program run by the Probation Department in which the offender is fitted with an ankle bracelet that is programmed to apprise the Probation Department of his/her whereabouts

Exit plan: a written plan that staff members and inmates work on together in hopes of preparing inmates for successful re-entry into the community

Infirmary: an area within a healthcare unit set up and operated for the purpose of caring for patients who need skilled nursing care but are not in need of hospitalization or placement in a licensed nursing facility, and whose care cannot be managed safely in an outpatient setting. It is not the area itself, but the scope of care provided that makes the bed an infirmatory bed.

Medium security: inmates whose crime and criminal history do not pose a high security risk. They are housed in a locked facility, but often in a dorm-like setting, rather than individual cells.

Minimum security: inmates whose crime and criminal history pose very little security risk. They are housed in an unlocked facility and can easily walk away from the jail.

Misdemeanor Promise to Appear: a citation that any peace officer can write. The promise to appear is a legal instrument that allows a person to be arrested for a misdemeanor crime but not be book into jail. This helps with jail overcrowding but starts the criminal complaint process.

“O” unit: The observation unit includes rooms within the medical unit, where inmates who are physically or mentally ill are monitored both by video and medical staff.

Parole hold: a prisoner/inmate is placed in custody at the local county jail level by his/her Supervising Parole Agent for having violated the conditions of parole or for committing a new crime. There is a hearing held while the prisoner is in custody (Morrissey Hearing) to determine the disposition of the case.

Plastic boats: used by the Sheriff’s Department to sleep inmates when the population surpasses the maximum capacity. The boat-shaped plastic bed sits directly on the floor within a cell block.

Rated capacity: California Board of Corrections minimum standards for detention facilities, contained in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations. It includes 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).

Rubber room: an isolation room in which the walls and floors are covered in a rubber material. Inmates who present a serious danger to themselves can be housed in this room, which is monitored by staff every 15 minutes.

S.A.F.E.: Safe and Free Environment program which is derived from the RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment) grant. This program is in operation at the Rountree Medium Security facility.

Ward: an offender who is under the age of eighteen years and has been sentenced by the Juvenile Court

Background

The Santa Cruz County jail system is comprised of six facilities:

1. Main Jail
2. Rountree (Medium)
3. Rountree (Minimum)
4. Blaine Street
5. Juvenile Hall
6. California Youth Authority

Each facility has its own operating budget, and the first five facilities comprise 50 percent of the Sheriff's budget. The California Youth Authority is a state-funded institution.

The Santa Cruz Main Jail

The Santa Cruz Main Jail is located at 259 Water Street in the city of Santa Cruz. The Main Jail was constructed in 1981. The California Board of Corrections sets both the rated capacity and the maximum capacity. The rated capacity is 311, and the maximum capacity is 400. The Main Jail is the booking center for all of Santa Cruz County (adult offenders). It holds both sentenced and unsentenced inmates, both male and female. Most females there are un-sentenced. Sentenced females are housed at Blaine Street Jail unless they are violent or have medical problems that cannot be managed by that facility. If they are violent, they are housed in a segregated section of the Main Jail.

All law enforcement agencies within Santa Cruz County bring their arrestees to the Main Jail. Booking fees of \$168 per arrestee are paid by each city. The cities are subsequently reimbursed by the State of California. According to detention personnel, the Board of Supervisors is considering cutting next year's booking fees in half.

Rountree Jail

Rountree Jail consists of two jail facilities located conjointly at 90 Rountree Lane (medium security) and 100 Rountree Lane (minimum security) in Watsonville. These jails were originally built in 1970. The medium facility has a rated capacity of 96 and a

maximum of 110. The minimum facility has a rated capacity of 162 and maximum capacity is 250. Both jails hold sentenced prisoners.

Blaine Street Jail

This jail is located at 144 Blaine Street in Santa Cruz. It has been in operation since 1984. It has a rated capacity of 32 with a maximum capacity of 42. It houses sentenced female inmates who can be housed in a minimum security setting.

Juvenile Hall

Juvenile Hall is located at 3650 Graham Hill Road in Felton. It was established in 1968. It houses sentenced and un-sentenced juvenile offenders (male and female) between the ages of 12 and 18. The rated capacity is 42. It also houses Juvenile Court with one Superior Court Judge assigned to preside over all cases.

California Youth Authority

The California Youth Authority was located at 13575 Empire Grade Road in Santa Cruz, and operated as a Youth Conservation Camp, from 1947 until 2005. The California Department of Corrections decided to close the facility to youthful offenders. The wards who had not completed their sentences were moved to other California Youth Authority camps or institutions. When the Grand Jury toured the facility, it was in operation as a Fire Conservation Camp.

The Department of Corrections plans to move in 100 adult prison inmates. The last ward was moved out of the facility in April of 2005. The adult population is slated to move in June 1, 2005. The fire camp will continue to operate as before, but with adult inmates instead of juvenile wards.

Scope

The Grand Jury is charged with inspecting of conditions and management of the jail facilities within the county under Penal Code § 919 (b). In order to meet these requirements, the Criminal Justice Committee of the Grand Jury:

- toured each facility at least once with attention to the conditions;
- interviewed staff and inmates of various facilities;
- reviewed previous Grand Jury reports and responses in regard to detention/facilities;
- made telephone calls and exchanged e-mails with jail commanders;
- reviewed California Code of Regulations pertaining to jail/detention facilities;
- reviewed the Santa Cruz County jail budget;
- reviewed web sites, at the state and county levels, pertaining to detention facilities; and

- reviewed numerous newspaper articles in the Santa Cruz Sentinel and the San Jose Mercury News.

The Board of Corrections performs reviews of each penal institution within the county to ensure compliance with mandatory state standards. It also audits the financial management of each jail facility.

Main Jail Findings

1. On May 3, 2005, the inmate population was 384 in a facility with a rated capacity of 311. According to detention personnel, the Main Jail population fluctuates but is routinely over the rated capacity.
2. General housekeeping and cleanliness were observed to be very good by the touring Grand Jury members. It was pointed out that painting the interior of the jail is a continuous process, beginning at one end and starting over once it is completed.
3. On May 3, 2005, the inmate population was:
 - 87.8 percent male;
 - 12.2 percent female.

Of those,

- 5.5 percent had mental health issues;
- 25.8 percent had committed crimes against person;
- 14.8 percent were parole holds; and
- 23 percent had committed drug related offenses.

Detention personnel report that records of repeat offenders are not available, but experience and anecdote indicate the percentage is significant.

4. Data on jail population was collected from June through November 2004. It indicated 21.2 percent of detainees were released on a Misdemeanor Promise to Appear, which helps with overcrowding. Over 16 percent were released under PC § 849(b) in which no court action was taken.
5. A grievance procedure is in place in which several levels of detention staff review the grievances and respond to the inmates' complaints, both verbally and in writing.
6. Inmates are given access to:
 - educational programs;
 - religious services;
 - counseling;
 - parenting classes;
 - domestic violence classes;

- drug and alcohol awareness;
 - gang awareness; and
 - classes to earn or study for a G.E.D. (General Equivalency Diploma).
7. The booking process includes:
- sobering (when necessary);
 - placement in a restraint chair for combative detainees;
 - fingerprinting and photo;
 - recording and retention of inmates' personal effects;
 - strip search with visual inspection for weapons, drugs or any noted injuries;
 - showering and decontamination;
 - issuing of jail clothing; and
 - health screening by deputies.
8. After the booking procedure, each prisoner is classified by strict criteria prior to receiving a housing assignment. The deputies in the booking area review:
- criminal sophistication;
 - age;
 - gender/transgender;
 - need for protective custody;
 - gang affiliation;
 - charges;
 - physical, medical and mental status;
 - escape risk; and
 - level of violence, from and to others and self.
9. Since the last Grand Jury report of June 30, 2004, there has been one death by suicide on November 23, 2004.
10. Since the last Grand Jury report of June 30, 2004, there have been no escapes from the Main Jail.
11. Because of jail overcrowding, some inmates sleep in plastic "boats" that are placed on the floor within the units. In May 2005, four inmates were sleeping in plastic boats.
12. The Correctional Officers and Sheriff Deputies involved in running the jails are required to attend state-mandated courses designed to keep them abreast of changes in the field and new tactics in dealing with inmates. Forty hours of POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) must be completed each year to remain employed.

Medical Unit

13. The Medical Unit at the Main Jail is staffed by:

- one part-time physician;
- one part-time psychiatrist;
- a minimum of one, usually two, registered nurses per shift;
- one community health worker;
- two medical assistants; and
- two licensed therapists.

14. In addition to serving inmates at the Main Jail, the medical staff also provides medical care for Rountree, Blaine Street and Juvenile Hall.

15. The medical facility at the Main Jail is not licensed as an infirmary. Under the current license, the medical staff can provide clinic care, administer first aid, take blood sugars, change dressings and administer medications.

16. The clinic staff is available to see patients Monday through Friday in the mornings. Inmates are charged \$2.00 per visit. The money is taken from the Inmate Welfare Fund, which is also used for personal care items, commissary needs and telephone calls. The money is put in the Inmate Welfare Fund by the prisoners' families. The inmates are issued a "debit" card to pay for expenses.

17. The nursing staff is on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are two registered nurses on the day shift and one on the night shift. There is also an on-call medical doctor available by telephone when there is no physician on site.

18. In addition to their clinic work, the jail nurses also handle medical screening upon booking.

19. The medical staff is supplemented by nursing students from Cabrillo College. Many of these students are put on the extra-help list after graduating, but so far none have sought full-time employment in detention nursing.

20. Some of the inmate medical problems cannot be treated at the Main Jail's medical facility. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- stroke;
- cancer;
- serious heart disease; and
- broken bones.

21. Inmates who require treatment outside the scope of the Main Jail Medical facility are taken to Dominican Hospital, Doctors on Duty or the County Health Clinic.

22. Inmates are transported via ambulance or in a patrol car with a Transportation Deputy. The deputy's maximum hourly rate is \$48.85. If a lower level of security is

appropriate, a private security company can be used for \$18.08 per hour. The Sheriff's Department has a contract for services.

'O' unit

23. There are twelve rooms in the "O" unit. Seven of the rooms are on video monitoring. The patients (inmates) are individually allowed out of their rooms for one hour each day. They are in a room adjoining the nurses' station so they can be fully monitored. Healthcare workers also monitor some inmates on a one-to-one basis, however, they are not allowed to distribute medication. The staff in the "O" unit is able to handle medical and psychiatric problems that would be cost prohibitive if the Sheriff's staff had to transport the inmates outside the facility for treatment.
24. Detention nurses' pay scale is lower than in the private sector. The pay scale range is from \$31.82 per hour to \$40.44 per hour, depending on their employment status with Santa Cruz County. Private sector nurses earn between \$50 per hour and \$60 per hour depending on their training.
25. The "Rubber Room," room 13 of the "O" unit, is used for mental health patients who are considered to be a danger to themselves or others. They are monitored every 15 minutes.
26. The nursing staff at the Main Jail often uses extra help staff, or even administrators from Health Services Agency, to provide mandated coverage.

Pharmaceutical

27. Pharmaceutical costs are a major problem in the jail/medical environment. If an inmate is prescribed medication, he or she uses it only while in custody. If the prisoner is released or escapes, the medication must be discarded. Recently, the County of Santa Cruz, through the Health Services Agency, has contracted with a company that provides "bubble" packaging that allows unused medication to be returned to the pharmaceutical company or prescribed /used for another inmate. Currently, Rountree and Juvenile Hall are using this system. It is expected that the Main Jail will adopt this program.

Conclusions

1. The staff is professional and well trained in the day-to-day functioning of the institution.
2. The facility, though old, is well maintained, clean and well managed by the staff.
3. The number of nurses on staff is inadequate for the current jail population.
4. The present method of dispensing medication is not cost effective.
5. The Main Jail continues to face overcrowding.
6. The grievance procedure allows inmates the opportunity to express their concerns, and the staff responds in a timely fashion.

Recommendations

1. The Sheriff's Department and the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should continue to work on solutions to address jail overcrowding.
2. The Board of Supervisors should take action to increase the pay scale for the detention nursing staff.
3. The Board of Supervisors should work to re-open the medical clinic at the Rountree facility to reduce the workload of the nursing staff and to cut transportation costs of bringing inmates to the Main Jail for treatment.
4. The Main Jail should adopt "bubble" packaging for dispensing medication to save money.
5. Jail administrators and staff should be commended for the care and integrity they apply toward the running of this institution.
6. The Main Jail should continue to conduct the inmate grievance procedure in the fair and well-documented manner they currently employ.

Rountree Medium Security Findings

28. On December 3, 2005, the population was 55, well within the rated capacity of 96.
29. The S.A.F.E. program, a drug rehabilitation program, had 27 participants on December 3, 2005.
30. The on-site nursing position was eliminated in February of 2004 due to budget cuts. As a result, the facility cannot house any inmates requiring daily medical injections or psychotropic drug dosing. Other types of prescription drugs are dispensed by a nurse from the Main Jail seven days a week for two hours in the morning. Detention staff estimated that 25-30 inmates on psychotropic drugs could be housed at Rountree if the medical facility were staffed by a full-time, on-site nurse. This would alleviate Main Jail overcrowding.
31. Non-urgent medical issues are handled by transporting inmates to the Main Jail medical facility or, on occasion, to Doctors on Duty by officer-driven vehicle. Emergency medical issues are handled by transporting inmates to the Watsonville Community Hospital by either ambulance or officer-driven vehicle.
32. An established and documented grievance procedure, dated May 4, 1996, is in place to respond to issues relating to conditions of confinement.
33. General housekeeping/cleanliness of the medium security facility was observed to be very good by the touring Grand Jury members.

Rountree Minimum Security Facility Findings

34. On December 3, 2005, the population was 115, well within the rated capacity of 162.

35. There have been 13 escapes (walkaways) since the seating of the 2004-2005 Grand Jury, up from seven during the term of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury.
36. There are ample opportunities for inmates to participate in numerous programs during incarceration. A partial list follows.
 - Education:
 - English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - General Equivalency Diploma (GED)/ESL
 - GED Testing
 - Self Improvement:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Narcotics Anonymous
 - Bible study/church
 - AIDS awareness class/testing
 - Substance abuse
 - Tobacco cessation
 - Vocational:
 - Auto body and paint
 - Computer skills
 - Building maintenance and landscaping
37. A designated area outside the facility is maintained for family visits.
38. An established and documented grievance procedure, dated May 4, 1994, is in place to deal with issues relating to conditions of confinement.

Conclusions

7. Rountree is a well-run facility.
8. Rountree inmates can benefit from a variety of programs and educational opportunities.
9. The grievance procedures are due for a review and possible update.
10. The staff at Rountree performs its duties in a professional manner.
11. Closing the medical facility resulted in otherwise eligible inmates being housed in the Main Jail facility because of prescription drug needs.

Recommendations

7. The Rountree staff should continue to run the facility in a professional manner.

8. Rountree should continue to offer numerous programs and encourage all inmates to participate.
9. A study should be undertaken to assess what impact the re-opening of the medical facility would have on Main Jail overcrowding.
10. The grievance procedures of both the medium and minimum security facilities should be reviewed and updated, if appropriate.

Blaine Street Jail (Women's Minimum Security Facilities) Findings

39. The Board of Corrections' rated capacity is 42 inmates. As of May 4, 2005, the facility had 22 inmates.
40. There have been six escapes (walkaways) in the past year.
41. There have been no deaths in the past year.
42. Fire drills are held monthly.
43. There are 25 rooms, five of which do not house inmates. These are used for storage or office space. The inmates' rooms house up to two inmates per room.
44. Meals are prepared by inmates from menus provided by the county dietitian.
45. There are two classrooms in the facility. Attendance at these classes is voluntary. The classes offered are:
 - GED (General Equivalency Degree);
 - job skills;
 - Pajaro Valley Substance Abuse Prevention and Student Assistance;
 - exit plans;
 - computers;
 - crocheting and knitting;
 - parenting skills;
 - communication skills;
 - women's health;
 - Narcotics Anonymous;
 - Alcoholics Anonymous; and
 - Bible study, various church groups.
46. Grievances are handled through a grievance form. An inmate can request this form from a staff member. If the grievance concerns a staff member, the grievance is handled with that staff member and the director. If the grievance concerns other areas,

it is discussed with the director. Grievances are usually handled upon receipt of the form.

47. Each inmate is given a set behavior rules. If there is a violation of these rules, the following steps are taken:
 - a verbal warning is issued;
 - a written warning is issued;
 - privileges are lost;
 - extra work detail is assigned;
 - counseling is scheduled with the director; and
 - if there are too many infractions, the inmate is sent to the Main Jail.
48. Both the interior and exterior of the building are clean and neatly maintained. The outside area is in a garden setting and used by inmates for activities such as reading and socializing and is also used for family visits.
49. There is one officer on duty for all shifts, 24 hours a day.

Conclusions

12. The Blaine Street Jail buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained.
13. The facility is well staffed, and staff appears to be attuned to the needs of the inmates.
14. There is a variety of useful activities available to the inmates.

Recommendations

11. The Blaine Street Jail staff should continue to operate the facility in the same caring and efficient manner that it does at present.
12. The staff should be commended for their attractive and well-run facility.

Juvenile Hall Findings

50. This facility has a State Board of Corrections rating of 42 detainees. It has an average daily population of 24.7 (fiscal year).
51. This facility has passed inspection by the State Board of Corrections, the local Fire Department and Nutritional Health.
52. The County Board of Education provides school programs for Juvenile Hall wards.
53. The average length of stay in Juvenile Hall is between nine and 11 days.
54. Counseling and substance abuse treatment are part of the Juvenile Probation process. Juvenile Hall is not a treatment program but has a drug counselor on staff 20 hours per week. Mental health services are provided 80 hours per week.

55. Juveniles are housed in two units. One of the units houses boys who are more “criminally sophisticated.” The other unit houses girls and less “criminally sophisticated” boys.
56. Juveniles are given an orientation to the facility upon intake. They are given a list of the rules and consequences which they must acknowledge and sign.
57. Rules and grievance procedures are posted, and a box is provided to receive the grievance forms. The box is checked twice daily.
58. Juveniles are assigned to a housing unit based on a classification system that includes consideration of:
 - age;
 - gender; and
 - type of crime.
59. Parents are charged \$24 per day while their child is in Juvenile Hall.
60. Juvenile Probation has a Home Electronic Monitoring Program which allows for early release. Two counselors make daily visits to wards released on this program.
61. This facility houses juveniles between the ages of 12 and 18. Children under the age of 12 are the responsibility of Child Protective Services and are not housed at Juvenile Hall.
62. This facility does not have a covered gymnasium.
63. The detainees’ rooms are small, and they contain:
 - a bed;
 - a sink;
 - a drinking fountain; and
 - a toilet.
64. Juvenile Hall does not have adequate heating, ventilation or air conditioning. The walls of the detainees’ rooms are made of cement blocks. They retain extreme temperatures. Juvenile Hall staff report that the inadequacy of the heating and air conditioning is not compatible with good public health.
65. There are electronic doors entering the facility and the courtyard, but other areas do not have electronic doors. Staff reported that electronic doors throughout the facility would improve the response time in an emergency.

Conclusions

15. Juvenile Hall is well managed with a caring and diverse staff.
16. The Juvenile Hall buildings and grounds are well maintained.

17. Construction of a closed gymnasium would allow for adequate physical activity during poor weather.
18. The Home Electronic Monitoring program reduces the Juvenile Hall population.
19. For security and safety reasons, electronic doors need to be installed throughout the facility.
20. The heating and ventilation system in Juvenile Hall is inadequate.

Recommendations

13. The Home Electronic Monitoring Program should be continued as it reduces the facility population.
14. The Board of Supervisors should budget money to upgrade the security system to include security cameras and electronic doors.
15. The Board of Supervisors should give higher priority to funding the construction of an enclosed gymnasium.
16. The Board of Supervisors should budget to upgrade the heating and ventilation system in Juvenile Hall.
17. The staff is to be commended for its efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment and help juveniles under their care.

California Youth Authority Findings

66. This facility had a State Board of Corrections rated capacity of 85. Prior to closure, its average daily population was approximately 46.
67. The wards were all at least 18 years old and sentenced to the California Youth Authority, where they would stay until they were 25 years old or had completed their sentences.
68. The wards had already served a portion of their sentences in a locked California Department of Corrections Youth Authority facility before being moved to the Fire Camp.
69. This facility provided a full high school program.
70. This facility employed seven counselors to work with the wards to address any emotional problems they may have had and to prepare them for release back into the community.
71. Many of the wards were trained to work on a fire crew, which could prepare them for employment upon their release.
72. The grievance procedure was well defined and taken seriously by the staff. Both written and verbal responses were provided to the wards.
73. There had never been a suicide or suicide attempt at this facility.
74. This was a minimal security facility and the wards slept in a dorm setting with shared showers and toilet facilities. The heating system was old and unable to heat the facility adequately.
75. Meals were shared in a central dining area and the food served was plentiful and well prepared.
76. There were 22 escapes during the past year. All were “walkaways” from job sites.

Conclusions

21. The California Youth Authority Camp facility was well managed by a professional and well-trained staff.
22. The California Youth Authority Fire Camp provided a community service to Santa Cruz County.
23. The support provided to the CDF by the CYA wards was a beneficial service to our community.
24. The wards once housed there have lost an enriching opportunity to learn an employment skill, which might have kept them from returning to a life of crime.

Recommendations

18. There are no recommendations as the facility is closed.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	1, 22, 25, 30, 39-49, 64, 65	1-3, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15	60 Days (August 30, 2005)
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1, 4, 27, 30, 31, 39-49	1, 4, 6, 9-12, 14, 15	60 Days (August 30, 2005)

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