

Detention / Holding Facilities 2002 – 2003 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason for Investigation

In accordance with California State Penal Code §919(b) the Grand Jury is required to inspect all county detention facilities.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury inspected detention/holding facilities in each of the following:

- City of Benicia
- City of Dixon
- City of Fairfield
- City of Rio Vista
- City of Suisun City
- City of Vacaville
- City of Vallejo
- Solano County Superior Court

III. Background

1. The California Board of Corrections, in accordance with the California Code of Regulations “Title 15 Crime Prevention and Corrections” guidelines, closely monitors the various detention/holding facilities. The Grand Jury conducted visits to the various facilities throughout the County. The local police departments control the detention/holding facilities in their cities. These are facilities where detainees are held temporarily until transported to the County Jail in Fairfield.

2. Local Fire Marshals and the Board of Corrections annually inspect these facilities. The Grand Jury also inspects these facilities to ensure compliance with Title 15.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

Benicia Police Department

Finding #1 – There are no toilet facilities in the holding cells or in the holding cell area. Prisoners are escorted to the main police department toilets and share facilities with the staff. This requires officer time in escorting prisoners and creates possible health risks to police personnel from exposure to bodily fluids from prisoners.

Recommendation #1 – Install separate toilets for prisoners in the holding cells or in the holding cell area.

Dixon Police Department

Finding #1 – The Sally Port, an enclosed secure parking area used for transferring a prisoner from a vehicle to the detention facility, is not in use. Items were stored in the area.

Recommendation #1 – The Sally Port area should be cleared of stored material and used as intended.

Finding #2 - There is no restraining bar to handcuff prisoners during the booking process.

Recommendation #2 – Install a safety bar to restrain prisoners during the booking process to ensure staff and prisoner safety.

Fairfield Police Department

Finding #1 – The Captain did not know the combination to the holding cell area. This would be a problem in an emergency.

Recommendation #1 – All personnel authorized to enter the holding cell area be required to know the combination.

Finding #2 – There are two holding cells. One was not being used because of repairs. The other cell was not currently occupied and had a piece of wood dangerously protruding from the ceiling vent.

Recommendation #2 – Repairs be made to eliminate any dangerous conditions and performed in a timely manner.

Finding # 3 – Fluid was noted on the floor of the empty holding cell.

Recommendation # 3 – The holding cells be cleaned and inspected after each use.

Finding # 4 – The Sally Port, in addition to its intended use, is used for storage and auto repair.

Recommendation # 4 – To ensure safety to the staff and prisoners, the Sally Port area be cleared and used only as intended.

Rio Vista Police Department

Finding #1 – Rio Vista does not have a holding cell. It also does not have a restraining bar to handcuff prisoners during the booking process.

Recommendation #1 – A restraining bar be installed.

Suisun City Police Department

Finding #1 – The holding cell and toilet were filthy. Once-a-week janitorial service is not adequate.

Recommendation #1 – Clean and inspect the holding cell after use.

Finding #2 – The Sally Port contained several objects (boat propeller and other items) that could be used by a violent prisoner as a weapon and cause injury to an officer.

Recommendation #2 – To ensure safety to the staff and prisoners, the Sally Port area be cleared and used only as intended.

Vacaville Police Department

Finding #1 – The holding cells have built-in tables and benches with sharp edges that can cause injury to prisoners and staff.

Recommendation #1 – Round edges on tables and benches.

Vallejo Police Department

Finding #1 – Holding cells were clean and well monitored with cameras. The Sally Port area was clean and well maintained.

Recommendation #1- Continue to maintain required standards.

Finding #2 – An officer was observed entering the holding cell without removing a side arm in violation of police procedures.

Recommendation #2 – Follow established procedures.

Solano County Superior Court

Finding #1- The holding cells used for the Solano County Superior Court were clean and well maintained.

Recommendation #1 – Continue to maintain required standards.

V. Comments

When the Grand Jury visited the various detention/holding cell facilities, it was noted that some officers indicated resistance to the use of the newly installed LiveScan automated equipment. This is part of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) used throughout the County. Concerns were also expressed with the time involved in the booking process from arrest to acceptance at the County jail. At the October 4, 2002, monthly Solano County Police Chiefs' Association meeting held in Dixon, the Grand Jury related these concerns to the Chiefs present.

Affected Agencies

- Benicia Police Department
 - Dixon Police Department
 - Fairfield Police Department
 - Rio Vista Police Department
 - Suisun City Police Department
 - Vacaville Police Department
 - Vallejo Police Department
 - Solano County Sheriff's Office
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