

**SOLANO JUSTICE BUILDING
COURT HOLDING FACILITY – VALLEJO
2006-2007 Solano County Grand Jury**

REASON FOR INSPECTION

California Penal Code §919 subdivision (b) provides: “The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.” Pursuant to the statute, the 2006-2007 Grand Jury inspected the Solano Justice Building Vallejo Court Holding Facility located at 321 Tuolumne Street, Vallejo, CA.

GRAND JURY ACTIONS

- Met with the Captain in charge of in-custody operations and staff
- Interviewed staff
- Toured and inspected the holding facility
- Reviewed the California Standards Authority facility evaluation report

BACKGROUND / SUMMARY

This 5500 square foot holding cell facility is inside the Solano Justice Center Building located at 321 Tuolumne Street, Vallejo, California. The facility is used exclusively for the temporary holding and securing of inmates for their court appearances. It is staffed, operated and under the command of the Solano County Sheriff’s Department and is designated a court holding detention facility by the Corrections Standards Authority. Inmates are transported from the Claybank facility and the main jail in downtown Fairfield to this facility for court appearances. Lunch is served to all inmates waiting for their court appearance if present during the noon hour. Inmates are not housed overnight.

The facility inmate capacity is 85. There are nine holding cells, two of which are large enough to hold and secure 32 individuals. In total, 34 female and male inmates were present, the facility was neat, clean and odor free on the day of our walk through. Seven deputies provide court bailiff duties and they assist three correctional officers with monitoring and securing of inmates waiting for their court appearance.

The holding cell area is equipped with warning lights and an audible alarm system. There are security cameras in the holding cell area and in all of the courtrooms. Judges, officers of the court and court employees can access courtrooms from the holding cell area. An automatic door locking system is in place, which is activated when inmates are escorted between the holding cells and court.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 – Inmates are transported daily from the main jail downtown Fairfield and the Claybank facility to the holding cells in Vallejo. The number of inmates that have court appearances dictate the number of trips made daily.

Recommendation 1 – The Sheriff’s Department coordinates activities with the courts to minimize transportation of inmates within the county.

Finding 2 – Judges, officers of the court and court employees can access a courtroom from the holding cell area.

Recommendation 2 – Although adequate security appears to be in place, the Sheriff’s Department should continue to be vigilant in monitoring safety and security concerns of the judges, court officers and court employees when escorting inmates from the cell(s) to the courtroom.

COMMENTS

The facility appears out-dated in design. On the day of this review, the facility commander and staff were diligent in providing security. The Sheriff’s Department utilizes precautionary measures when transporting the inmates from Fairfield and Claybank to the court in Vallejo and when escorting the inmates from the holding cell to a courtroom. The Commander and staff are to be commended for operating this facility in a professional manner.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

- Solano County Sheriff/Coroner’s Office
- Solano County Board of Supervisors