

**Contact: Olga Jones
Foreperson
(925) 957-5879**

REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF DETENTION FACILITIES IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

SUMMARY

In accordance with its statutory authority, the Contra Costa County Grand Jury completed inspections of county detention centers and court holding cells. It also completed inspections of a number of local police agency jails.

Overall, the grand jury found that the facilities met or exceeded the minimum operational requirements as set forth by the California Corrections Standards Authority. Additionally, the facilities' condition, procedures and polices appeared to be generally consistent with grand jury expectations with regard to the needs and safety of both detainees and staff.

The grand jury noted isolated instances involving delayed maintenance and the need for improved security that should be addressed.

The complete report is available on the Contra Costa County Grand Jury web site: www.cc-courts.org/grandjury.

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 0706

REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF DETENTION FACILITIES IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

One or more Grand Jurors recused themselves due to a possible conflict of interest and did not participate in the preparation or approval of this report.

**TO: Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Office of the Sheriff, Contra Costa County**

BACKGROUND

The California Corrections Standards Authority (“CSA”) is required to complete comprehensive, bi-annual physical inspections of detention facilities throughout the state. Inspections include verification of compliance with local building, fire, and health and safety codes.

The Contra Costa County Grand Jury is required by statute to conduct inspections separate from those completed by the CSA. California Penal Code section 919(b) states: “The grand jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.” By past practice, such inspections have also included temporary holding facilities in Superior Courts and jails within the county.

California Penal Code section 925 also allows the Grand Jury to investigate the operations of the Probation Department. This includes the county’s juvenile holding and detention facilities.

FINDINGS

1. Facilities inspected by the Grand Jury included:
 - a. County Detention Facilities – Martinez, West County (Richmond), and Marsh Creek (Clayton).
 - b. Superior Court Temporary Holding Facilities – Martinez, Pittsburg, Richmond, and Walnut Creek.
 - c. Probation Department – Juvenile Hall (Martinez), Chris Adams Center (Martinez), and the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility (The Byron Boy’s Ranch).
 - d. City Jails – Antioch, El Cerrito, Hercules, Kensington, Lafayette, Martinez, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek.

2. Grand Jury inspections of the above-mentioned facilities were conducted in accordance with California Corrections Standards Authority guidelines. California Corrections Standards Authority regulations are contained in Title 15 and Title 24, California Code of Regulations.
3. County detention facility inspections (Martinez, West County, and Marsh Creek) included a review of common incident reports, grievance procedures, inmate requests for information, medical care practices, telephone and visiting procedures, and adherence to “72-hour requirement” for court hearings. Performance in all areas was found to be satisfactory. Site visits also included selected interviews with detainees to identify any areas of concern. None were identified.
4. A review was made of the Inmate Welfare Fund-Canteen Program for the County Detention Facilities. The administration of the fund and program are consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by the oversight board. The operation of the fund includes appropriate and effective management controls and practices.
5. A review of the circumstances surrounding, and subsequent internal investigation of, two “Deaths in Custody” at the Martinez Detention Facility in 2006 led to the conclusion that procedures followed by the detention staff were consistent with CSA standards.
6. The Office of the Sheriff (“Sheriff”) plans to remodel the women’s holding area within the intake section in the Martinez Detention Facility to improve security.
7. Modifications are underway in the Martinez Detention Facility to secure all movable housing unit furniture to the floor or to adjacent stationary objects to reduce vandalism and to discourage its use as weapons. To date, four of six housing modules have been so modified.
8. The West County Detention Facility has experienced plumbing problems in several detainee housing unit showers. These problems were reported to the County General Services Department more than six months ago and corrections have not been made.
9. The West County Detention Facility’s security cameras offer only fixed views. Staff members are unable to modify their fields of view to focus on selected areas or individuals of interest outside of the cameras’ current fixed views.
10. The floor covering immediately adjacent to the jail cell area in the Richmond Superior Court Holding facility was found to be in need of replacement. Repair or refinishing does not appear to be a viable option.

CONCLUSION

All of the facilities inspected were found to meet or exceed the minimum inspection standards established by the State of California Corrections Standards Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Sheriff should implement the plan to remodel the women's holding area within the intake section of the Martinez Detention Facility.
2. The Sheriff should complete the project to secure all movable furniture to the floor or to adjacent stationary objects in the Martinez Detention Facility housing units to avoid vandalism and to discourage its use as weapons.
3. The Sheriff should insist that the General Services Department promptly repair the shower plumbing problems in the affected West County Detention Facility housing units.
4. The Sheriff should replace the West County Detention Facility's current fixed-view security cameras with new units that will allow staff members to modify their fields of view as required.
5. The Sheriff should follow-up with the General Services Department to accomplish the replacement of the floor covering immediately adjacent to the jail cells in the Richmond Superior Court Holding Facility.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Findings:

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors: 1-10

Office of the Sheriff, Contra Costa County: 1-10

Recommendations:

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors: 1-5

Office of the Sheriff, Contra Costa County: 1-5