



**2011 – 2012  
Madera County Grand Jury  
Final Report  
Madera County Department of Corrections  
Madera County Jail**

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**Introduction:**

As part of its responsibility pursuant to section 919(b) of the California Penal Code to evaluate the conditions and management of public jails and prisons within the county, the Madera County Grand Jury made scheduled visits to the County Jail on September 27 and October 10, 2011.

The facility, located at 14191 Road 28 in Madera, was completed for occupancy in December 1988 and is one of two county jails in the State not run by the elected County Sheriff. The Jail is managed by the Director of the Madera County Department of Corrections (MCDC) who is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Director oversees a staff of 63 sworn officers, 10 clerical personnel, 6 civilian kitchen workers, and a contracted medical staff.

The current jail facility is certified to house up to 419 inmates including a maximum of 70 females.

**Findings:**

1. The Grand Jury found that the Jail operation consists of those activities required to safely accommodate inmate booking, incarceration, and release or transfer to prison.
2. The Grand Jury found that both sentenced and non-sentenced inmates are housed in the Jail.
3. The Grand Jury found that the population of the Jail on September 27 was 382, of which 47 were females.
  - a. Prior to October 2011, non-sentenced inmates comprised approximately 80% of the inmate population.
  - b. The number of illegal aliens in the inmate mix averages between 10% and 15%.
4. The Grand Jury found that \$30 million in grant funding was awarded to Madera County for construction of a new jail housing unit adjacent to the current Jail. The funding was made available as a result of AB 900 passed in 2007.
  - a. The new unit is scheduled for completion in the Spring of 2013.
  - b. Staffing for the new unit is included in the current position allocation; however, 20 of these positions are unfunded in the current 2010-11 budget.
5. The Grand Jury found that the new unit will provide housing for an additional 144 inmates.
  - a. MCDC currently plans to use the new unit to house low risk inmates with a small area for segregated inmates.

- b. AB 109, implemented in October 2011, stipulates that offenders who have been sentenced for non-violent, non-sex related crimes will serve their time in the county where sentenced.
  - c. MCDC projects that 30 to 35 inmates per year will be added to the Jail population as a result of AB 109. After a four year period, the intake and release cycle will level off, yielding an estimated additional permanent population of 135. Of that number, approximately 15% will be female.
6. The Grand Jury found that qualified inmates may be released from custody to the supervision of the Probation Department with the use of electronic ankle bracelets.
  - a. There are currently 30 to 40 inmates in this program.
  - b. The program cost of \$14 per day is borne by the inmate.
  - c. With the implementation of AB 109, MCDC anticipates a significant increase in the use of electronic monitoring.
7. The Grand Jury found that all inmates are classified for the purpose of officer and inmate safety. Inmate classification enables the officers to know which inmates are more likely to cause trouble, to become violent, or are suicidal, mentally unstable and/or medically dependent. Special handling of these inmates is accommodated based on classification.
  - a. The classification process is based first upon charges so that individuals with less serious crimes such as child support delinquency or other civil citations are classified as “segregated” and kept away from the general population.
  - b. Uniforms are color coded for immediate recognition of inmate classification.
  - c. Unlike male inmates, females are not separated by their classification regardless of charges, gang affiliation, or sexual orientation.
8. The Grand Jury found that physical security of the Jail is enhanced by facility layout.
  - a. The housing modules are self-contained, consisting of exam, interview, handicap and multi-purpose rooms, visiting booths, cells, and exercise yards.
  - b. The use of self-contained modules eliminates the need to move inmates out of their assigned module.
9. The Grand Jury found that Jail security is maintained by rigid procedures, including but not limited to Direct Supervision.
  - a. Direct Supervision puts the officer with the inmates during Program Time when appropriately classified inmates are together in the day room and/or exercise yard.
  - b. Direct Supervision enables the officer to develop communication with and more closely observe inmates, and to determine if there is unusual activity.
10. The Grand Jury found that there are 46 cameras strategically placed for monitoring inmate activity, excluding private areas such as the bathroom and shower. The camera system allows for multiple monitoring locations throughout the Jail.
11. The Grand Jury found that the Jail does not have nor provide stab vests.

12. The Grand Jury found that the officers receive a \$25 monthly uniform allowance with which they can purchase the vests.
13. The Grand Jury found that armed officers responsible for transporting inmates are required to wear ballistic vests.
14. The Grand Jury found that inmates have available a formal grievance process. If a grievance is unresolved at the Jail, it may culminate in a Court hearing using the writ process.
15. The Grand Jury found that the Jail offers GED training to inmates.
16. The Grand Jury found that the kitchen is managed by civilians, and the inmates do the cooking.
17. The Grand Jury found that inmates who volunteer to wash and wax the floors, paint, and keep the areas clean are rewarded with extra food, yard time, and visitation.
18. The Grand Jury found that the booking unit uses Jail Management System (JMS) to book inmates into the Jail.
  - a. The inmate is searched, photographed, fingerprinted, and classified. A warrant check is conducted, and a DNA sample is collected.
  - b. All information collected in the booking process is immediately transmitted to the FBI-NCIC database.
  - c. After the initial booking process, the inmate is placed in a holding cell with access to a telephone to arrange bail if possible.
  - d. Inmates who are a danger to themselves are held in a padded cell.
  - e. Inmates under the influence are held in cells with padded floors to reduce the risk of injury.
19. The Grand Jury found that the Jail uses an automated State database to check for warrants.
20. The Grand Jury found that the Jail contracts with a vendor for medical services.
  - a. The services include 24/7 onsite staffing with nurse practitioners, RNs, and CNAs.
  - b. A physician is scheduled for visits on a weekly basis and is on call in case of emergency.
  - c. Pregnant inmates are checked by the medical staff within the first 24 to 72 hours of incarceration and are then transported to an outside OB/GYN. The medical staff monitors their progress until the eighth month, when they are transported weekly to an outside OB/GYN.
  - d. Medical personnel go to the housing units twice daily to treat inmates and dispense medications.
  - e. Inmates are seen immediately for emergencies and, if taken to a hospital, are guarded by a private security company under contract.

- f. Psychiatric services are available via video conferencing once a week.
  - g. Crisis workers are on call, and anger management services are available.
  - h. Emergency dental services are available.
21. The Grand Jury found that JMS is an automated records storage and retrieval system as well as a case management and tracking system. JMS is maintained by three clerical employees who brought the system current, enabling the archival of the paper files.
  22. The Grand Jury found that the budget and staffing for the Jail have been reduced for the past several years. The current budget is \$10.3 million of which approximately \$6.1 million is appropriated for salaries and benefits. The allocated staffing level includes 6 vacancies plus 20 unfunded positions.
  23. The Grand Jury found that in addition to the vacancies, Jail staff are required to take two furlough days per month. The Jail management stated that operating with reduced staffing puts the officers and inmates at risk.

**Conclusions:**

1. The Grand Jury concluded that the Jail may experience overcrowding prior to the opening of the new facility in the Spring of 2013. Based upon current demographics coupled with the effect of AB 109, 50-60 inmates will be added to the population within the next 18 months.
2. The Grand Jury concluded that the use of electronic monitoring will reduce costs and help alleviate jail overcrowding.
3. The Grand Jury concluded that the lack of separation by classification of the female inmates causes safety and security issues.
4. The Grand Jury concluded that the mandatory furlough schedule reduces officer staffing to unsafe levels.
5. The Grand Jury concluded that the procedures required for Jail security, officer safety, and male inmate safety are adequate and professionally followed.
6. The Grand Jury concluded that the inmate programs, privileges, and grievance procedures are adequate and professionally followed.
7. The Grand Jury concluded that the booking procedures are adequate and professionally followed.
8. The Grand Jury concluded that the medical services are adequate and professionally followed.
9. The Grand Jury concluded that JMS is current, well maintained, and used effectively.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Jail and the Probation Department aggressively pursue increased use of electronic monitoring to reduce costs and possible jail overcrowding.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the County fill all or most vacancies prior to the completion of the new facility to assure all new officers are fully trained and prepared to manage the additional Jail modules and population.
3. The Grand Jury recommends that the County discontinue the mandatory furlough schedule for Jail staff as soon as possible and before hiring new staff.
4. The Grand Jury recommends that the female inmate population be separated by their classifications in both housing and programming to enhance safety.

**Respondent:** written response required pursuant to PC 933(c)

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**Informational:** response optional

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