



**2011-2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Madera County Warrant Process**

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Introduction:

The Grand Jury reviewed the current Madera County warrant process to determine the adequacy and timeliness of the system. The Grand Jury believed it appropriate to inquire into this process based on information obtained during the review of the Madera County Department of Corrections (MCDC).

This review included interviews with staff of the Sheriff's Office, MCDC, and the Courts who are responsible for the warrant system. Issues of concern for this review were officer safety and potential liability to the County.

Findings:

1. The Grand Jury found that in the past three years the County settled a claim for approximately \$67,000 for false arrest related to a warrant issue.
2. The Grand Jury found that the Courts issue all warrants within their jurisdiction including bench warrants and warrants of arrest.
3. The Grand Jury found that the Court Clerk prepares warrants daily.
4. The Grand Jury found that the warrants are picked up by Sheriff's personnel and delivered to the Sheriff's Office daily.
5. The Grand Jury found that up to 200 new warrants are issued weekly, and an equivalent number are recalled.
6. The Grand Jury found that warrants with a bail amount of \$5,000 or greater are entered by Sheriff's Records personnel into the state-wide warrant system via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS).
7. The Grand Jury found that the California Department of Justice requires that CLETS terminals be located in CLETS-approved secured locations, and personnel authorized to access CLETS must pass a background check.
8. The Grand Jury found that the Sheriff's Office and MCDC have personnel with the appropriate CLETS security clearance.
9. The Grand Jury found that all warrants are processed into the Sheriff's local automated system by Sheriff's Records personnel.

10. The Grand Jury found that the Court Clerk faxes a list of warrant recalls daily for immediate entry into the system.
11. The Grand Jury found that Sheriff's Records personnel process the recalled warrants by:
 - a. pulling the hard copy from the files;
 - b. updating the local and statewide automated systems; and
 - c. returning the original warrants to the Court for disposition.
12. The Grand Jury found that Sheriff's Records day shift personnel process warrant recalls daily.
13. The Grand Jury found that warrant recalls arriving toward the end of the day shift are sometimes held over for processing on the next scheduled work day.
14. The Grand Jury found that if the arrested prisoner has an outstanding local warrant, the arresting officer is required to stop at the Sheriff's Office to obtain the hard copy of that warrant prior to booking.
15. The Grand Jury found that the arresting officer must leave the handcuffed prisoner unattended in the vehicle while retrieving the hard copy of the warrant.
16. The Grand Jury found that after retrieval of the hard copy warrant, the arresting officer proceeds to the Jail and completes the transfer of the prisoner.

Conclusions:

1. The Grand Jury concluded that delayed processing of recalled warrants creates potential for County liability.
2. The Grand Jury concluded that the requirement to leave a prisoner unattended in the patrol car for the purpose of retrieving the hard copy warrant is a security and officer safety issue.
3. The Grand Jury concluded that security and safety issues would be substantially reduced if the paper warrant files were located at the Jail.
4. The Grand Jury concluded that to insure the integrity of the warrant process, updating of the automated systems and maintenance of the paper files must remain closely coordinated and managed within a single department.

Recommendations:

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff and MCDC jointly develop a plan to transfer the warrant system to the Jail. The plan should include:
 - a. Jail privileges to update warrants in the local automated system;
 - b. relocation of the paper warrant files from the Sheriff's Office to the Jail;

- c. transfer of the required number of personnel from the Sheriff's Office to MCDC to maintain the warrant system; and
 - d. additional second shift processing of warrants and recalls.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the transfer of the warrant system from the Sheriff's Office to MCDC be accomplished as soon as possible to improve officer safety and to reduce the County's exposure to liability.

Respondents: written response required pursuant to PC 933(c)

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W. Fourth St.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Sheriff
14143 Road 28
Madera, CA 93638

Informational: response optional

Madera County Department of Corrections
14191 Road 28
Madera, CA 93638

Madera Superior Court
209 W. Yosemite Ave.
Madera, CA 93637