

Madera County Department of Corrections (Jail)

General Information: Madera County Grand Jury conducted the mandated Detention Facility Inspection at the Madera County Department of Corrections Facility (Jail), located at 14191 Road 28 in Madera, CA on April 14, 2022. Those conducting the inspection were both transparent and accommodating of the MCGJ's requests for information and members of the Grand Jury had an opportunity to speak with management over lunch.

Overview: The oversight and management of the county jail was transferred to the Madera Sheriff's Office as a result of action by the Board of Supervisors in April of 2021. On April 14, 2022, when the MCGJ's inspection was conducted, the population was 430 which did not exceed the design capacity of 564.

Over the course of two years 510 inmates were placed in safety cells, 464 were placed in sobering cells, and six deaths occurred. Two suicides were reported and one is awaiting the coroner's final report.

Staffing: Staffing ratios are assessed and adjusted depending on the inmate population, classification, diversity, and special needs of inmates. Staffing for the 430 inmates housed at the county facility included 13-14 officers on each of three shifts. This provides a ratio of 1 officer to 31-33 inmates on each shift. The number of inmates in each housing unit varies and officers are assigned based on availability. During the MCGJ visit and witnessed, in one unit, only one officer was charged with handling an entire unit whereas, in other units more than one officer was available to maintain safety for the officers and inmates.

Environmental Conditions: The exterior and the interior of the Administrative and Training portion of the facility is well-maintained and manicured. Although the Grand Jury did not see the outdoor areas intended for inmates, it was described as having a 12-foot perimeter fence topped with razor wire. The yard is enclosed with 2-story high block walls, so inmates are not visible to the public at any time. Information provided by the jail indicates that inmate housing areas are fully equipped with lights and a surveillance system.

Lighting and temperature of the housing unit are within the California Title 24 standards and are maintained by on-site maintenance personnel. Title 24 standards includes ADA accessibility. The facility is not new, however, routine maintenance has been deferred for an extended period of time. The look of the inmate housing area of the building is aged and has significant wear. This is evidenced by worn flooring, and detached rubber floor coving.

Orientation of Inmates: The intake area is typically staffed by three officers although the time may be divided as they attend to arriving inmates. A watch commander also assists as arriving inmates are searched for contraband with a pat search, body scan, and metal detectors. Incoming inmates are divided into three types of holding cells: intake cells, safety cells, or sobering cells. The various cells require differing levels of monitoring. Processing of inmates includes checks for warrants and warrants, pictured, fingerprinted, and booked. Inmates are then evaluated for either release or housing. Those moving onto housing are further evaluated based on their classification, in order to minimize disruptive housing issues. The MCGJ was not provided with a daily schedule for inmates. Time appears to be at-will of inmates.

Incoming inmates are oriented to the facility both verbally and in written form. Topics addressed during the orientation include correspondence, visiting, telephone use, inmate grievance procedures, available programs, how to participate in activities, medical services, housing assignments, court appearance, voting registration, inmate discipline, and rules for the module and facility.

Housing: At this facility most inmates have individual cells. Individual cells are provided as safety measures as many inmates are involved in gangs and need to be housed separately. However, those without gang ties may be housed in dorm units of 10 inmates. The average detainment is 34- 36 days. The most common cause for detainment is Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

Kitchen/Nutrition: Contracted kitchen service provider, Aramark, supervises between six and 12 select inmates who work in the kitchen area preparing and packaging meals while learning marketable skills. Those working in the kitchen are screened by medical and are trained in culinary safety, the rules of the kitchen, food preparation, proper food storage, hygiene, and cross contamination.

Personal Appearance of Inmates: Inmates and their surroundings appeared dirty and disorganized. Inmate grooming was found to demonstrate a lack of concern for their personal appearance. Evidence of personal hygiene was lacking. Clothing was untucked, and their hair was both unwashed and uncombed. The interior of the multi-inmate cells also lacked regular cleaning as used food containers, dirty laundry, and unmade beds were viewed by the MCGJ. Each inmate is issued clothing and linens.

Medical Services: During the week one RN, one LVN, one CNA as well as two mental health clinicians are available to handle the needs of the inmates. One FNP, one health service administrator, and a medical director are available for eight hours per week. Medical services are provided by Well Path, the county' contracted provider. Limited dental services are also available.

Program-Vocational: Classes are available to inmates on preparing resumes, doing mock interviews, and completing classes to meet court directives. A solar program is an on-going program for solar installation. Inmates are very excited about participating. Once released, those completing the in-custody part of the solar installation program, are eligible to move to the continuation of the program at the non-profit GRID facility. Once completing the program, inmates may earn up to \$70,000 per year.

Findings:

1. **MCGJ finds that** in housing areas of the jail, staffing levels are not adequate to ensure the safety of the staff and inmates.
2. **MCGJ finds that** the custody areas lack routine maintenance.
3. **MCGJ finds that** a lack of a daily structured regimentation contributes to a lack of self-pride by inmates.

Recommendations:

1. **MCGJ recommends that** staffing levels in housing areas be increased immediately to ensure the safety of both the staff and inmates.
2. **MCGJ recommends that** long-deferred maintenance issues be immediately addressed.
3. **MCGJ recommends that** immediately a daily regulated schedule be implemented for inmates.

Required Respondents: Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury request responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

Board of Supervisors

200 West Fourth Street

Madera, CA 93637

Sheriff Tyson Pogue

Madera County Sheriff Headquarters

2725 Falcon Drive

Madera, CA 93637

Invited Respondents: Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury request responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

Assistant Sheriff Darin McMechan

Madera County Sheriff Department-Jail Division

2725 Falcon Drive

Madera, CA 93637

Assistant Chief Chris Rodriguez

Madera County Jail

195 Tozer Road

Madera, CA 93637