

## **Madera County Jail**

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) inspected the Madera County Jail (Jail), located at 195 Tozer St., Madera, on October 27, 2023. The facility's capacity is 564. The population at this inspection was 446, of which 28 were female. Approximately 80 percent of the current inmates are pending sentencing or awaiting trial. The remaining 20 percent are serving local time sentences.

At the time of inspection, there were 15 correction officers and one supervisor per shift, AM and PM. Nineteen sworn administrative officers may serve in the same capacity as correctional officers and are available to oversee inmates.

### **Exterior/Interior of Building:**

The Jail consists of an Administration and training building, the main inmate housing building, a separate kitchen facility, and a central plant. The exterior of the main housing facility is made of concrete blocks and is fully equipped with lights and a surveillance system. There is a 12-foot-high perimeter chain-link fence topped with razor wire. Outside of the facility, there is a large parking lot to accommodate visitors. The exterior of the building appears neat and well-maintained. Inmate yards are enclosed with two-story block walls, ensuring the inmates are not visible to the public at any time. The lobby's interior has new phone systems with video capability for visitors to speak with inmates. Separate private rooms are available for attorney meetings with inmates. This area, along with the administrative offices and training and break rooms, was added to the older part of the facility.

The interior windows of the hallway leading to the central housing unit need to be cleaned and cobwebs removed. Several doors throughout the facility were dented and marred by carts and need to be painted. Bugs were in the overhead lights in the inmate housing units. Litter was on the floor in a hallway near a staff member's office, and staff ignored it instead of retrieving it.

### **Intake and Orientation of Inmates:**

The MCGJ observed the Intake area and interviewed staff. When an inmate is booked into the jail, inmates undergo a series of procedures, such as being photographed and fingerprinted, conducting contraband searches, and doing body and metal detector scans. Inmates are provided an Orientation Handbook in printed form and reviewed verbally. Numerous policies, procedures, and programs are described, such as visitation, correspondence, medical/dental and mental health services, programs and activities, housing assignments, and grievance forms. The correctional officers know current gang information and are skilled in gaining the inmates' trust to gather needed information for housing assignments.

## **Medical Health/Behavioral Health:**

Wellpath medical employees initially screen inmates. The screening encompasses the patient's medical and mental health care needs.

Two registered nurses, one Licensed Vocational Nurse, and one Certified Nurse Assistant, are available seven days per week on AM and PM shifts. One Family Nurse Practitioner is available. A dentist is available every Monday. Two mental health clinicians are available Monday through Friday. Inmates can submit a "sick call" request to speak with a medical or mental health staff person. The response depends upon the nature of the complaint and can be responded to at any time, 24 hours a day.

The medical department oversees a separate housing unit with four cells and one negative pressure isolation cell designated for persons requiring notable observation. Two safety cells are intended for temporary housing inmates exhibiting destructive behavior. These cells are subject to direct visual observation and camera monitoring at least every 15 minutes. At the time of the inspection, one incarcerated person was in a Safety Cell.

A recent program resulting from state legislation allows the medical staff to assist inmates in enrolling in Medi-Cal services at discharge. Enrollment enables the inmate to receive medical care upon release.

## **Kitchen:**

The kitchen serves over 1,000 meals per day for inmates and staff. The facility was clean, with modern equipment and refrigerator units in banks. There are up to eight morning shift kitchen inmate workers, and there can be up to 12 afternoon workers. The chef has a long history of experience working in restaurants. The inmates must qualify to work in the kitchen by having no disciplinary actions, having a bail amount under \$65,000, and being sentenced to local county jail rather than prison time. Inmates assigned to the kitchen are trained in culinary safety, kitchen rules, food preparation, proper food storage, hygiene, and cross-contamination. This training can assist inmates in obtaining jobs in food services when they are released. The staff chef can provide a certification for those who qualify.

During our inspection, the kitchen was preparing lunch meals. It appeared to be well organized, and the lunch menu included a variety of choices. Special food orders can be purchased by inmates who have funds in their accounts.

## **Educational Programs - Vocational:**

One full-time teacher is available to the inmates. Sign-up sheets are in each module to announce each new class. Inmates are selected on a first-come, first-served basis. High school education or equivalent and college-level courses are offered through the Edvo tablet programs. The Direct Instruction model typically has nine students for classwork. Two four-week Vocational training programs are provided for individuals through GRID and IN2WORK.

IN2WORK vocational training students are introduced to kitchen basics designed to build upon the skills taught while working in the kitchen. Upon successful completion of the program, inmates can earn ServSafe certification. Workforce programs that emphasize resume building, new job search techniques, job retention, soft skills development, and building leadership and communication skills are also available. In the past two years, the programs had 126 participants who received certifications.

The GRID program is a solar installation training program and provides certificates when completed. The inmates must meet specific qualifications. Once inmates have graduated from the four-week program, this program has an additional five-week training in Fresno. The program focuses on solar technology, electrical principles, safety protocols, and design, with practical hands-on installation training. Former inmates who earned certification in the program have contacted correctional officers to share their success in gainful employment and their new lives as a result of the training received.

### **Interactions Between Officers and Inmates:**

The MCGJ noticed equal respect between officers and inmates. Correctional officers have gained proficiency in inmate security, booking, and release procedures and have acquired insights into inmates' behaviors and traits. The staff receive training in building an inclusive work environment that values diversity, respect, and engagement is integral. The officers' responsibilities require an ability to discern signs of danger to people, property, and the surrounding areas, with the capacity to respond swiftly and calmly in emergencies. The officers stated it was a new inmate clientele. The administration described the Jail as a multifaceted operation network similar to running a "small city" with services such as medical, dental, pharmacy, kitchen, education, vocational training, money on accounts, clothing, housing, etc.

### **Inmate Housing:**

The MCGJ observed locked cells, an exercise area, women's, men's, and medical safety cells. In the women's cell area, the inspection in 2021-2022 by MCGJ noted the worn linoleum flooring and the problem with the linoleum areas with concrete showing through still persists. MCGJ observed and interviewed inmates in a dorm-like room that could house approximately ten inmates and was next to an activity area with tables and chairs. The inmates were friendly and talked freely with the officers and MCGJ members. Inmates who claim gang affiliations are separated accordingly. The MCGJ also observed the medical wing, which included a locked pharmacy area and dental treatment rooms with X-ray machines. Interviewed working, such as mopping floors, etc. These points can be used to watch movies on tablets or to purchase snacks, for example. inmates described incentives that allow points to be earned by reading books on tablets and working, such as mopping floors, etc. These points can be used to watch movies on tablets or to purchase snacks, for example.

## **Findings:**

F1. The MCGJ finds that the daily maintenance routine needs improvement to clean away the cobwebs.

F2. The MCGJ finds that the worn-out linoleum flooring, cited in 2021-2022, still needs to be addressed and repaired.

F3. The MCGJ finds that the Jail provides relevant training and certification programs for participating inmates.

F4. The MCGJ finds that the interaction between correction officers and inmates was respectful.

## **Recommendations:**

R1. The MCGJ recommends improving the daily maintenance routine to clean away the cobwebs.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that the worn-out linoleum flooring cited in this report be addressed by September 30, 2024.

R3. The MCGJ recommends the current vocational programs continue and consider expanding.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that the correction officers continue to interact respectfully with inmates.

## **Required Responses:**

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected officials within 90 days:

Board of Supervisors  
200 West Fourth Street  
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Sheriff Headquarters  
2725 Falcon Dr.  
Madera, CA 93637

**Invited Responses:**

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing body within 90 days:

Madera County Sheriff (Jail)

195 Tozer St.

Madera, CA 93637

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)

2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200

Sacramento, CA. 95833

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Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.

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