

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

civilgrandjury.org is a project of UnGovr.org, a US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to government transparency and public accountability.



INMATE CLOTHING

BACKGROUND

The Tulare County Sheriff's Department Detentions Division (Division) has facilities to house approximately 1700 inmates. This Division is likened to running a small city. Food, clothing, shelter, protection, security, garbage/trash removal, sanitation, medical, and medication all have to be provided for the inmates. This Division is committed to housing all inmates in a cost effective and efficient manner. The Tulare County Sheriff's Department employs a trained professional staff to maximize the safety, security and health of all inmates, staff and visitors under their control.

REASONS FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2009-2010 Tulare County Grand Jury received a complaint alleging that clothing provided did not always fit. Another complaint alleged that jackets available for use at the Main Jail rooftop exercise area were dirty and could contain contamination from previous users.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Interviewed relevant witnesses.
2. Visited the Main Jail and the Bob Wiley Detention Facility (BWDF).
3. Reviewed relevant documents.

FINDINGS

1. Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations covers inmate clothing and bedding requirements. The Division's Policy and Procedure Manual (Manual) supplements this regulation and outlines requirements for issue and exchange of inmate clothing and bedding.
2. Some Correctional Officers involved in the clothing exchange are not familiar with the policy.

3. Clothing and bedding for inmates at all facilities are laundered at the BWDF and returned.
4. Clothing of various sizes, towels and bedding are loaded onto carts at the Main Jail with supervision from Correctional Officers for distribution to inmates.
5. Approximately 40% of soiled clothing sent to the BWDF for laundering was not returned. Occasionally a "Shake Down" would be necessary at the Main Jail and BWDF where inmate cells would be searched for unauthorized clothing.
6. Occasionally a few days would pass before the correct size could be found for an inmate at the Main Jail.
7. In dormitory type facilities, the inmates give their clothing to be exchanged to the trustees and request the size of clothing they want. The trustees take the clothing from the linen cart where it is stacked by size and issue it to the inmates. The inmates have sufficient time to inform the trustees if the size is not correct. A Correctional Officer is always in the immediate area and watching the exchange process.

8. In locations where the inmates are in close confinement, the inmates push their soiled clothing out from under their door and request the size of clothing they want. The trustee picks up the soiled clothing and pushes the clean clothing back under the door to the inmate.
9. There is a transition to all white clothing except for high risk inmates, who are clothed in stripes for easy identification. White clothing has no gang affiliation and is easier to spot blood. This transition will take some time because they only replace worn out clothing.
10. A supply of jackets is available for issue at the roof top exercise area of the Main Jail. The Correctional Officer on duty stated they are laundered regularly.
11. Over the last several months the laundry and clothing exchange process has improved.

RESPONSES REQUIRED

Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Tulare County Sheriff's Department
Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency

CONCLUSIONS

Because jackets for use at the Main Jail roof top exercise area are shared, it is possible to transfer disease and/or infestation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Comply with Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations and the Division's Manual.
2. Ensure all Correctional Officers involved with clothing (issue and exchange) are familiar with the Division's Manual.
3. Health and Human Services Agency review the policy of sharing jackets at the Main Jail.