

**TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS
JAIL INSPECTION REPORT**

Facility Name: Harris Co. Jail

Date: November 15-17, 2021

Item	Section	Paragraph	Comments
1	275	.1	<p>Every facility shall have the appropriate number of jailers at the facility 24 hours each day. Facilities shall have an established procedure for documented, face to-face observation of all inmates by jailers no less than once every 60 minutes. Observation shall be performed at least every 30 minutes in areas where inmates known to be assaultive, potentially suicidal, mentally ill, or who have demonstrated bizarre behavior are confined. There shall be a two-way voice communication capability between inmates and jailers, licensed peace officers, bailiffs, and designated staff at all times. Closed circuit television may be used, but not in lieu of the required personal observation. Electronic sensors or cameras capable of recording the required personal observations of inmates in high-risk cells or groups of cells shall be installed no later than August 31, 2020.</p> <p>A review of documentation revealed that some face-to-face inmate observations were not performed by jailers no less than once every 60 minutes as required. In some instances, anywhere between 90 and 144 minutes passed between rounds conducted.</p>
2	275	.4	<p>Inmates shall be supervised by an adequate number of jailers to comply with state law and this chapter. One jailer shall be provided on each floor of the facility where 10 or more inmates are housed, with no less than 1 jailer per 48 inmates or increment thereof on each floor for direct inmate supervision. This jailer shall provide documented visual inmate supervision not less than once every 60 minutes. Sufficient staff to include supervisors, jailers and other essential personnel as accepted by the Commission shall be provided to perform required functions. A plan concurred in by both commissioners' court and sheriff's office, which provides for adequate and reasonable staffing of a facility, may be submitted to the Commission for approval. This rule shall not preclude the Texas Commission on Jail Standards from requiring staffing in excess of minimum requirements when deemed necessary to provide a safe, suitable, and sanitary facility nor preclude submission of variance requests as provided by statute or Chapter 299 of this title.</p> <p>A review of documentation revealed that while the 1:48 officer to inmate ratio is being met, Harris County Jail utilizes supervisors as well as other essential staff members in assigned duty posts in order to meet this requirement. This practice removes personnel from their assigned supervisory duties as well as from auxiliary duties such as intake, classification and mailroom. It was determined that there are times when there are not enough personnel to perform duties other than to meet the 1:48 requirement.</p>
3	279	.1	<p>Each facility shall have and implement a written plan, reviewed and approved by the commission, for the maintenance of an acceptable level of cleanliness and sanitation throughout the facility. Such plan shall provide for:</p> <p>(1) a regular daily schedule for the work and inspections necessary to keep the facility clean; which schedule shall be assigned and supervised by jailers who have the responsibility for keeping the facility clean and making regular sanitation inspections;</p>

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A walkthrough of the jail facilities revealed a lack of cleanliness in the inmate housing areas. There are numerous burn marks throughout a majority of the housing units, which are the direct result of inmates burning 'wicks'. There were multiple cells at the 701 N. San Jacinto facility with an unidentified black substance in and around the mop-sink areas in the housing units. There is excess clutter throughout all housing areas that leads to an overall appearance of uncleanliness.

Inspector's Note:

It is the professional opinion of the members of the inspection team that the lack of sufficient staffing has contributed to the heightened level of tension and inmate hostility at the Harris County Jail System that was experienced during the course of this inspection. A review of Serious Incident Reports reveals that inmate assaults have increased when comparing 2020 numbers to 2021 numbers. While this was a limited inspection to review specific areas, it was evident that while the administration strives to meet the 1 officer to 48 inmate ratio, it can only be accomplished by reducing the resources allocated to other ancillary but necessary and required services.



Byron Shelton, TCJS Inspector



Michael Gravitt, TCJS Inspector