

Scott Walker
Governor

Jon E. Litscher
Secretary



**State of Wisconsin
Department of Corrections**

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March 31, 2017

Sheriff Jeffery Wallace
Rusk County Sheriff's Office
311 Miner Avenue East, Suite L100
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Re: 2016 Jail Inspection

Dear Sheriff Wallace:

Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute §301.37(3), an inspection of the Rusk County Jail was conducted on December 28th, 2016. The inspection compared the facility to the Department of Corrections Administrative Code Chapter DOC 350, applicable State Statutes, and best correctional practices. The process included a review of records, dialogue with staff and inmates, and a walkthrough of the building to assess the safety, sanitation, adequacy, and fitness of the facility. This correspondence will summarize the findings of the inspection.

SUMMARY OF FACILITY

The Rusk County Jail was originally constructed in 1985 and consists of six linear-designed housing units and four dormitories. The facility has a maximum rated capacity of 52 adult detainees (verified during the inspection) and is not approved to hold juvenile offenders. There were 43 inmates at the jail on the date of the inspection.

INMATE RESOURCES

- **EDUCATION** – General Educational Development (GED) through Indianhead Technical College.
- **SUPPORT GROUPS** – Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA).
- **LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMING** – There are no regularly scheduled life skills programs.
- **RELIGIOUS SERVICES** – Various services and Bible Studies are held each week (inmates are also afforded individual consultations).

- **VISITATION** – Inmates are generally afforded one 30-minute visit per week (visits are conducted through non-contact booths).
- **COMMISSARY** – Canteen is provided by Stellar Services and delivery is once a week.
- **RECREATION** – There is a multipurpose room for use (otherwise inmate recreation is limited to dayroom activities).
- **READING MATERIALS** – Inmates are afforded access to reading materials on a weekly basis.

CHANGES

The following is a list of changes since last year's inspection:

- All meals are now prepared and assembled offsite at the Senior Center.
- Remodeled the booking station.
- Replaced the digital video recorders (DVR's).
- Added eight security cameras around the dispatch area.
- Updated the inmate jail rules and printed them into handbook form.
- Updated the chaplain and volunteer handbooks.
- Installed a new television in the multipurpose room (with Xbox and videos).

GOALS

The following is a list of goals for the upcoming year:

- Replace metal bedframes in receiving cells with solid concrete slabs.
- Install kiosks in the housing units for inmate use (which could include facility rules, video visitation, canteen orders, inmate requests, etc.).
- Eliminate contact visits with attorneys.
- Install a metal detector outside of the jail entrance.

STAFF TRAINING

A review of records revealed the following staff training initiatives during this inspection period: PREA, Interviewing, Medical (to include medications), Fire Safety, and Suicide Prevention.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION

I met with Rusk County administrative, security, and healthcare personnel to conduct the annual inspection. The site visit included a review of records, dialogue with staff and inmates, and a walkthrough of the building to assess the safety, sanitation, adequacy, and fitness of the facility. The attached checklist details my findings as they relate to the Department of Corrections Administrative Code Chapter DOC 350 and applicable State Statutes.

In summary, the overall appearance of the jail was in satisfactory condition. There were no significant signs of graffiti or property defacing. It appears both inmates and staff are held accountable for the cleanliness of the facility. Two physical plant concerns were identified as a part of the inspection process: 1) there was no hot water in the court holding washbasin; and 2) insects were observed in the dormitory #3 shower.

Detainee feedback regarding conditions of confinement and staff supervision was generally positive. The only common-themed complaint was specific to bugs in the dorms (documentation of monthly pest control was observed). It should be noted I heard multiple compliments regarding the staff. My observations during the walkthrough revealed cordial and professional interactions between employees and inmates. Staff are to be commended for the positive feedback and facility climate.

VIOLATIONS

The following violations were noted during this year's inspection process:

- Administrative Codes DOC 350.03(2) and DOC 350.07(2)** define what a "cell" is and how it can be used. It was reported there were occasions during this inspection period where inmates slept on cell floors due to overcrowding. Additionally, a review of records revealed there were occasions during this inspection period in which the jail exceeded its maximum rated capacity. As such, it is recommended a thorough review of the facility's classification system/housing plans is conducted to establish a population threshold which prevents individuals from having to sleep on the floor.
- Administrative Codes DOC 350.18(1)(a) and 350.18(1)(b)** require that all inmates are personally observed by security staff at staggered intervals not to exceed 60 minutes in length (15 minutes for those inmates on a suicide watch). A spot check of records revealed noncompliance, as multiple overages were observed for both types of wellness checks.

MISCELLANEOUS

The following miscellaneous issues were also noted during this inspection process:

- Classification** – On the day of the inspection, two inmates with different classifications were assigned to the same cell. A review of population records suggests the jail has occasional issues with the proper separation of inmates by security classification. Given the limited bed space in the facility, it is likely this will be an ongoing issue. As such, it is recommended a thorough review of the jail's classification system/housing plans is conducted to ensure proper separation.
- Inmate Searches** – It was reported staff did not receive annual strip search training in accordance with WI Stat. §968.255.
- Inmate Disciplines** – A spot check of minor disciplines revealed general compliance; however, the documentation of due process procedural steps was limited in incident reports (e.g. specific jail rule violation, opportunity to make a verbal statement, supervisory review, etc.). Administration is encouraged to develop and utilize a standard form which encompasses this information.
- Medication Administration Records** – A spot check of MAR's verified general compliance; however, one unexplained gap was observed. Additionally, not all of the handwritten MAR's included who prescribed the medication.

- Court Holding Rooms** – It was reported there have been occasions when juveniles were placed in the court holding rooms (these areas are not authorized for this). It should be noted subsequent to the inspection, administration reported that juveniles will no longer be placed in there and instead taken directly to court. In addition to the juvenile issue, administration is also encouraged to replace the existing air vent grilles/screws in the court holding rooms with detention strength materials.



The Rusk County Jail is approved to hold adult detainees with a rated capacity of 52. This approval is contingent upon correction of the noted violations and the continued compliance with Chapter DOC 350 and applicable State Statutes. I would like to thank your staff for their assistance and cooperation during the inspection. All of the documents I requested were well prepared and organized.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions regarding this inspection report.

Professionally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan White".

Nathan White, Inspector
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Cc: Gloria Brunner, Jail Administrator
Kristi Dietz, ODF
Bradley Hoover, ODF
File