



# Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

## Office of Detention Facilities

November 9, 2020

Sheriff Jeffrey Wallace  
Rusk County Sheriff's Department  
311 E. Miner Ave, Suite L 100  
Ladysmith, WI 54848

### **Re: 2020 Annual Inspection**

Dear Sheriff Wallace:

On October 14, 2020 the annual inspection of the Rusk County Jail was conducted pursuant to WI Statute 301.37(3). The inspection compared the facility and its operation to applicable state statutes and Department of Corrections Administrative Code Chapter DOC 350. This inspection consisted of a tour of the facility; interviews with administration, staff and inmates; review of inmate files; a review of the policy and procedure manual; and a review of facility records and documentation.

The maximum rated capacity of the facility is 52. On the day of the inspection, there were 21 inmates incarcerated in the facility.

### **Improvements since Previous Inspection**

- Purchased and installed commercial washer and dryer for inmate laundry.
- Updated the video visitation and kiosks.
- Hired four new jailers.
- Switched pharmacy providers for inmate medications.
- Installed a new alcohol kiosk in the jail lobby for day reporting.
- Due to COVID-19 concerns, all inmates on Huber have been placed on electronic monitoring.
- Most court hearings have been conducted remotely.

### **Goals and Initiatives**

- Remain at full staff.
- Have all new jail staff attend jail school and complete training.
- Continue to implement POSC training with Deputy Kerry Read.
- Increase staff training.
- Continue to work towards PREA compliance.
- Upgrade the jail camera system.
- Update current jail policy and procedure manual.

## **Summary of Jail Operations**

I met with the administrative, security, and healthcare staff to conduct the annual inspection. The site visit included a review of the facility records and documentation, as well as a walkthrough of the detention areas.

The jail is old and antiquated, limiting the opportunity to provide programming and education, along with meeting safety and security expectations. The facility lacks the proper space needed for booking in new inmates, providing proper classification, and housing individuals on suicide watch as there are only two receiving cells for the whole facility. The lack of receiving cells in the facility also makes it very difficult for staff to have inmates change clothing. If the two receiving cells are occupied, staff have an inmate step into a closet area to change over. Also, the medical room just off the booking area is very small, making it hard for medical staff to provide treatment and examinations while also having adequate space for administrative duties and properly securing confidential medical records.

While walking through the facility, several maintenance issues were brought to my attention. The trim in the booking area is missing, several ceiling tiles throughout the jail are broken, the vents throughout the facility need cleaning, and several cameras were not working.

Another area of concern is that professional visitors are brought into the secure perimeter of the jail to meet with inmates in person. This practice is a security and safety concern as it does not provide any physical barrier from the inmate in the case an inmate was to become assaultive or disruptive.

While conducting a walkthrough of the detention areas, it was noted that there are no intercoms in the inmate living areas. Inmates reported that if there is an emergency, they need to yell or wave at the cameras to get staff attention. This is of concern and an area you may want to consider when upgrading the facility.

In addition to the above issues, the jail and the dispatch center are combined and centrally located within the jail. This makes it difficult to provide proper staff supervision with the added responsibilities when 911 calls come into the jail. This often takes staff away from jail duties and negatively affects overall safety and security. As referenced in past inspections, it is recommended that control center and dispatch be separated so staff can focus on their jail duties.

Although most maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner, it should be noted that the needs of the facility are more than general upkeep and an occasional issue. The facility is over 30 years old and since it opened, corrections has changed dramatically. There should be thought given to future needs of the facility when it comes to conditions of confinement, housing options for classification, programming, and efficiency.

## **Variiances**

- The Rusk County Jail has one variance on file with the Department.

**The following codes were found not to be in compliance:**

- ***DOC 350.12(1) Sanitation and Hygiene***

***Inspection Findings:***

On the day of inspection, the facility the facility appeared to be clean but several maintenance issues were found and outlined above.

***Corrective Actions:***

If these issues have not already been addressed, please have maintenance correct them immediately.

- ***DOC 350.07(7) Physical environment of jails constructed before March 1, 1990.***

***Inspection Findings:***

On the day of inspection there were inmates with different security classifications being housed together in a dormitory.

***Corrective Actions:***

Although the Rusk County Jail lacks the adequate space needed, jail staff still need to ensure that inmates that are housed together are of the same security classification. If this code requirement cannot be met, then you may need to house those inmates with another county.

**Approval**

The Rusk County Jail is approved by the Department of Corrections for the secure detention of adult inmates with the maximum capacity of 52.

I wish to thank Captain Murray and his staff for their assistance, cooperation, and professionalism during the inspection process.

If you have any questions regarding the inspection results summarized in this letter or any other correctional matters, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Brad Hoover  
Detention Facilities Specialist

cc: George Murray, Jail Administrator  
Greg Bucholtz, Director-ODF  
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