



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

March 4, 2019

Sheriff Jeffrey Wallace
Rusk County Sheriff's Department
311 E. Miner Ave, Suite L100
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Re: 2018 Annual Jail Inspection

Dear Sheriff Wallace:

On October 16, 2018, 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 report summarizes my findings, including the progress made following the 2017 inspection, any statute or administrative code violations, physical plant and maintenance issues, and an overall summary of facility operations.

On the day of the inspection, there were 42 inmates incarcerated in the facility.

Progress following the 2017 Inspection

- Removed the metal bunks out of both receiving cells and replaced them with concrete slabs.
- Upgraded the jail management software.
- Video visitation and kiosks installed in the jail.
- All security staff are wearing body cameras.
- All staff have completed PREA training through Educorr.
- Original metal shelving in the library and media room was removed and replaced with detention grade units.
- Added an Anger Management program for inmates.
- Brought back the inmate work program.

Goals and Initiatives

- Fill vacant positions and operate at full staff.
- Train staff in POSC using POSC instructor Deputy Kerry Read.
- Increase staff training.
- Continue towards PREA compliance.

- Install a drug and alcohol testing kiosk for offenders.
- Continue to build on inmate programming within the jail.

Physical Environment

Built in 1985, the Rusk County Jail is a linear designed jail that houses both male and female inmates. The Rusk County Jail has a maximum rated capacity of 52 beds and is not authorized to house juveniles.

Summary of Jail Operations

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

Admissions

On the day of inspection, I spoke with staff, and they showed me an in depth look at the daily operations of the facility. The staff is knowledgeable regarding the operations of admitting and releasing inmates to and from the jail. A review of records regarding classification showed staff completing the required documentation along with the expectation of housing inmates based upon their classification. The jail utilizes the Northpointe classification system, on which all staff is trained, and a re-classification procedure is in place.

Safety and Security Practices

On the day of inspection, during the walkthrough portable radios were in working order. A review of the documentation provided on the day of inspection indicated staff conducts well-being checks of inmates at staggered 60 minute intervals.

A review of documentation showed many security practices taking place. Documentation reviewed of the day of inspection showed staff conducts three counts per day, security inspections of the facility occur weekly, inventory of keys, tools and sharps happens daily, and monthly door and lock inspections takes place. During the inspection process, it was discovered that an annual training on strip searches did not occur in 2018. It is recommended that this training takes place with all staff who conducts strip searches.

An area of concern that is referenced annually is that the Dispatch Center is located centrally within the jail. With a minimum staffing pattern of three staff assigned per shift, one assigned strictly to Dispatch and two to the jail, it makes it difficult to provide proper supervision of inmates when 911 calls come into Dispatch. Staff then needs to assist in Dispatch with emergency calls, limiting the amount of staff providing assistance and proper supervision on the floor. It is recommended that Control Center and Dispatch be separated so staff can focus on their jail duties.

A review of inmate discipline materials indicated that there were no major disciplinary reports for 2018. While reviewing the minor disciplinary materials, it was hard to determine on some reports

what the discipline was that was administered along with other required material such as if the inmate afforded the opportunity to make a verbal statement about the alleged violation, when the supervisor was notified, and whether the inmate notified of their right to an appeal. It is encouraged that a procedure be implemented to ensure all of these code requirements are met.

Health Care

The Rusk County Jail has a designated space to provide medical treatment to inmates. The jail contracts with Advanced Correctional Healthcare to provide medical services to inmates an estimated 15 hours per week. A review of random samples of inmate files showed that your staff is completing health screening forms in a timely manner. The review of the files also showed staff completing the health assessments within the 14 day time frame. Dental treatment is provided by a local provider, and any emergencies that require medical attention are seen at the local hospital. Inmates who wish to see Medical can send a request through the kiosk which is located in the inmate living areas.

High Risk Supervision

The Rusk County Jail does have policies and procedures in place regarding suicide prevention and intervention. Inmates who pose a risk of self-harm are placed on suicide watch and placed in a designated area where staff observe them at documented, staggered 15 minute intervals.

Mental Health Services are provided as needed by the Rusk County Department of Health and Family Services. While reviewing documentation regarding inmates who are placed on a suicide watch, it was hard to determine the time of the suicide watch placement, who initiated the suicide watch, and the name, date and time of referral to the mental health professional. It is recommended that a procedure be implemented to ensure this required information is being documented in a centralized location.

Maintenance of Jail, Sanitation and Care of Prisoners

Although the jail appeared to be clean the jail does show wear and tear from years of heavy use and these issues were shared with the jail administrator on the day of inspection. All inmates who are admitted to the jail are issued clean clothing along with clean, sanitized footwear. They are also issued toiletries before they are moved to general population. During the inspection, inmates stated that their laundry is being completed without issue and cleaning supplies are offered daily.

Inmate Services

The Rusk County Jail has policies and procedures in place regarding inmate services. The jail contracts with STELLAR services to provide canteen to inmates once per week. Inmates can also order snack packs onsite 7 days per week. Inmates at the jail have access to the courts, their attorneys, and legal materials. Inmates can access the law library via the kiosk located in the housing units. One area of concern that was noted is professional visits are conducted face to face inside the secure perimeter of the jail. This practice raises concern as there is no physical barrier to protect professional visitors from inmates if they were to become physically assaultive.

Food Service

The Rusk County Jail does not prepare inmate meals on site. Meals are prepared off site at the local senior center and delivered to the jail. Menus are reviewed monthly by a registered dietician, and all meals are covered during transit throughout the jail.

In summary, the overall appearance of the jail was in satisfactory condition. After a walkthrough of the detention areas, there were no repetitive complaints from inmates regarding conditions of confinement or staff supervision. The staff is to be commended for the overall positive climate and their observed professional interaction with inmates.

Violations:

The following violation was documented during this inspection:

- DOC 350.24(2) - While reviewing the minor disciplinary material, it was hard to determine on some reports what the discipline was that was administered along with other required material such as if the inmate afforded the opportunity to make a verbal statement about the alleged violation, when the supervisor was notified, and whether the inmate was notified of their right to an appeal.

Recommendations

- Implement a procedure to ensure all the required information is documented when it comes to placing an inmate on a suicide watch.
- Ensure that strip search training is conducted and documented for 2019.

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. This approval is contingent on the continued compliance with all applicable state statutes and administrative codes.

I wish to thank Captain George 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 if I may be of any assistance regarding correctional matters, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Hoover", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad Hoover
Detention Facilities Specialist

cc: George Murray, Jail Administrator
Melissa Roberts, Director-ODF
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